

# TALON

Operation Joint Forge  
Saturday, August 18, 2001

Task Force Eagle  
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**Kiowas Fly High**

**Rebuilding Route Buford**

**Iron Dragon Tests Soldiers' Strength**

# Overcoming Your Obstacles

“I really would like to move ahead in life, to earn my college degree, to improve my marriage, to progress spiritually, but it’s such a struggle. You see, chaplain, there is this one particular obstacle...” Obstacles, problems, barriers, choke-points, whatever you wish to call them – we know what they are and we know what they do to us – they prevent us from attaining the true desires of our hearts. Is this not true?

Do you ever ask yourself, “How can I overcome the obstacles in my way? What must I do to plow through my problems? Is it really possible for me to bypass the barriers to happiness?” If you do, please do not feel ashamed, for most of us from time to time also have these or similar questions. These really are important questions and the good news is this: There are answers.

Don’t you remember that Jesus said, “If you have faith the size of a mustard seed you can say unto this mountain, be thou removed and be cast into the sea; and it shall be done; and nothing shall be impossible for you” (Matthew 17:20; 21:21)? Think of it! Faith the size of a mustard seed is able to move a mountain! Unfortunately, we all too often reverse his words. We tend to believe that it takes faith the size of a mountain to move a little mustard seed. Is this not also true?

I once heard a story told by Norman Vincent Peale that gets to the heart of our struggle with overcoming obstacles. In the story, he tells of a famous trapeze artist who was teaching his students how to perform on the high trapeze bar. After giving a full explanation, the instructor told the students to give it a try. Most students demonstrated good ability, however, one student stood on the perch – frozen with fear. He had a terrifying vision of falling to the ground. He couldn’t move a muscle because of his deep fright. “I can’t do it!” he gasped.

The instructor put his arm around the boy’s shoulder and said, “Son, you can do it, and I will tell you how.” He then made this choice statement, “Throw your heart over the bar and your body will follow!” Memorize that statement. Place it in your heart. The next time you are facing a tough obstacle, remember you can overcome it. Just throw your heart over the bar and your body will follow!

Now you may be asking, “How can I? It seems kind of risky. How can I throw my heart over the bar?” The answer lies in putting your heart in the hands of one you can trust. One who is above the bar. In reference to the Lord, the Bible states, “He who comes from above is above all” (John 3:31). Yes, the Lord is above all, and this includes all obstacles. Putting your heart in the hands of the Lord means your heart is over the bar, for it is in the hands of the one whose mighty presence makes obstacles crumble. Do you believe that? Do you believe the Lord can help you overcome that obstacle you are currently facing?

When I am facing an obstacle as wide as the walls of Jericho and I read in the Bible, “With God all things are possible,” (Matthew 19:26) – I hear the Lord whispering, “Go ahead. Throw your heart over that bar!” When I am confronted with a problem as big as Goliath and someone reminds me of that precious verse, “If God is for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31) – I hear the Lord saying, “Go ahead. Throw your heart over that bar!” When I find myself doing battle with fears as strong as a fortress, and I hear another chaplain preach, “No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper,” (Isaiah 54:17) – I hear the Lord shouting, “Go ahead. Throw your heart over that bar!”

May the blessed One grant you a great week and may he fill you with a strong desire to overcome your obstacles.

## Thoughts for the Week

**Saturday:** “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:3)

**Sunday:** “Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.” (Matthew 5:4)

**Monday:** “Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.” (Matthew 5:5)

**Tuesday:** “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.” (Matthew 5:6)

**Wednesday:** “Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.” (Matthew 5:7)

**Thursday:** “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” (Matthew 5:8)

**Friday:** “Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.” (Matthew 5:9)

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Published in support of Operation Joint Forge  
August 18, 2001  
Volume 7, No. 33

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The *Talon* is produced in the interest of the service members of Task Force Eagle. The *Talon* is an Army-funded magazine authorized for members of the U.S. Army overseas under the provisions of AR 360-1. Contents of the *Talon* are not necessarily the official views of, nor endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army or Task Force Eagle.

The *Talon* is published weekly by the 3d Infantry Division (Mechanized) Task Force Eagle Public Affairs Office, Eagle Base, Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina APO AE 09789. Telephone MSE 551-5230, Sprint 762-5230. E-mail: talonpancoic@email-tc3.5sigcmd.army.mil. Printed by PrintComTuzla. Circulation: 5,500.

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## Weapons Safety Requires Full Attention

By Capt. Sam Gethers  
Eagle Base Safety Officer

Recently, a U.S. soldier was charged with negligent homicide and dereliction of duty in the death of an Albanian boy in Kosovo. The soldier was 19 years old and was serving as a peacekeeper at the time of the accident. The maximum punishment he faced for these charges was three-and-a-half years in prison, a dishonorable discharge, reduction in rank to private and forfeiture of all pay and allowances.

The soldier was guarding his squad's vehicles while the rest of his unit worked to repair a fence at a local school. He was surrounded by a group of inquisitive children who were naturally curious about the weapon he was carrying. He allowed the children to handle his M-249 SAW. When he got his weapon back from the children, he pointed it away from them and pulled the trigger to check if the safety was on. To his shock, a three-round burst fired. One round ricocheted off a vehicle and struck a child in the chest. The boy later died from his wounds.

During the trial, the prosecution urged the seven-member panel to find the soldier guilty of all charges. They claimed the soldier was clearly at fault. The soldier set his weapon on the ground, allowed the children to handle it, and then pulled the trigger before checking to see if the SAW was on safe. "It is not an accident when you give up control of a loaded weapon," the prosecutor declared, "It's not an accident when you pull the trigger."

The jury asked to see the weapon before they reached the verdict. They wanted to see how easy it was to turn the safety on and off. The safety select on an M-249 SAW is marked with a red band on the 'push' button and is simple to operate. The prosecution dismissed the defense argument that the soldier was not properly trained on the weapon, as he apparently knew enough to load the weapon and pull the trigger. The soldier was found guilty and is still serving his sentence.

Weapons safety and training go hand in hand. Always handle any weapon as if it were loaded. Most accidental discharges occur with weapons that were assumed to be unloaded. Always check and clear any weapon before handing it to someone else. That way, both parties will know the weapon's status. Never lean or prop a weapon against a fence, wall, tree, etc. An accidental discharge could occur should the weapon fall.

Clear all weapons before entering facilities with clearing barrels. The instructions are located above all clearing barrels. Only one service member is allowed to clear his weapon at a time. These weapon-clearing procedures will prevent an accidental discharge and may even prevent a serious injury or death.

## Law Upholds Re-Employment Rights

By Task Force Eagle  
Staff Judge Advocate Office

As SFOR 9 draws to a successful close and soldiers prepare for redeployment, members of the Army Reserve and National Guard may have questions about returning to their civilian jobs. A Federal statute, the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-employment Rights Act of 1994, protects servicemembers' re-employment rights after they have completed military service.

### Does USERRA Protect You?

USERRA applies to voluntary as well as involuntary military service. This federal law thus protects military personnel called up or activated for service in Task Force Eagle. You are eligible for re-employment rights under USERRA if you meet these five tests:

- (1) You must hold a civilian job.
- (2) You must have given notice to your civilian employer before you left the job for military service.
- (3) You must have been released from service under honorable conditions.
- (4) You must report back to the civilian job in a timely manner or submit a timely application for re-employment.

(5) You must not have exceeded the five-year cumulative limit on total military service.

The "five-year cumulative limit on total military service" is an important feature of USERRA. All your active military service after December 12, 1994, counts towards this total, *except for* drills, annual training, wartime service and service during national emergencies.

### What Does USERRA Require of Soldiers?

A soldier called up to service in Task Force Eagle for up to 30 consecutive days must report back to work on the first full workday after he returns home from deployment, plus an eight-hour period for rest.

A soldier called up to service for 31 to 180 days must submit an application for re-employment with the employer within 14 days after he returns home. If submitting the application within 14 days is impossible or unreasonable through no fault of the returning soldier, he must submit the application as soon as possible thereafter.

A soldier called up to service in Task Force Eagle for more than 180 days must submit an application for re-employment within 90 days after he returns home.

### What Are An Employer's Duties Under USERRA?

Your employer must do the following for returning servicemembers:

- (1) Reinstatement promptly (generally a matter of days, not weeks).
- (2) Grant accrued seniority, just as if you had remained continuously employed at your civilian job.
- (c) Provide training or retraining so that you can resume your duties at work.
- (d) Protect you against discharge, except for cause. The period of this protection is 180 days following service of 31 to 80 days. For service of 181 days or more, the protection extends for one year. A returning employee is not, however, always entitled to have his former job back.

For service of more than 90 days, the employer may re-employ the employee as above, or in a position of "like seniority, status, and pay" to the duties which the person is qualified.

You can contact a National Committee for Support for the Guard and Reserve ombudsman toll-free at 1-800-336-4590. Ombudsmen are trained to provide information and informal mediation services concerning civilian job rights of National Guard and Reserve members.

# On the Route Again



**Sgt. Randy Scamfer, an equipment operator for Company C, 648th Engineer Battalion, guides a dump truck while working on Route Buford.**

**Story and photo by Cpl. Anthony Koch Eagle Base**

**S**wamps and wetlands offer little in the way of traction for vehicles. Routes through these areas are often impassable, as was the case for Route Buford.

Stabilization Force engineers have rebuilt the route,

formerly known as Route Sluggo for its mud and muck.

Route Buford is a seven-kilometer road encircling Eagle Base. It allows the guard force a route to patrol the perimeter of the base camp.

The project, which has been ongoing for three rotations, will be officially finished at a ribbon cutting ceremony scheduled Aug. 31. However, the road was finished Aug. 10, according to the project non-commissioned officer in charge Staff Sgt. Cornell Ellis, a heavy construction equipment supervisor with Company C, 648th Engineer Battalion.

There has been no short supply of challenges while rebuilding this road. Besides contending with the weather, the engineers have also had to simultaneously carry out their other missions while still working on this project. The land they have been building the road on hasn't been very cooperative either.

Rebuilding the road through

the wetlands proved to be no small task due to the high water table, or depth below which the ground is saturated with water. This in turn caused vehicles and personnel to sink into the mud while trying to work on the road.

This provided a problem for the engineers who couldn't build a sturdy road from this unstable base, or first layer.

"The sub-base (second layer) is pretty moist and it's mostly clay, so when you run into areas like that you have to dig them out and backfill them," Staff Sgt. Ellis explained. "That takes a lot of time, but we were able to get some rock and since then we've just been rolling along."

The rock for the project has been coming from a rock quarry in Lukavac, said Staff Sgt. Ellis. He explained that the engineers have been using two sizes of rock for the project, 50-150 millimeter, or about the size of a softball, and 30-60 millimeter, about the size of a Ping-Pong ball.

"First you want to establish your base, then your sub-base,

then your wear course (final layer). We've been building up with 50-150, and then been coming back with the 30-60."

The project has taken more than 150 dump-truck loads of 50 to 150 millimeter rock alone, according to Staff Sgt. Ellis.

Soldiers of Co. C, 648th Engineer Battalion's earth-moving platoon have taken on most of the work of rebuilding the road. The soldiers have been building the culverts, checking for proper drainage, operating equipment and acting as safety inspectors, among other things.

Rebuilding the seven-kilometer stretch of road from the ground up proved to be a long and arduous task, but the cooperation of each rotation has finally paid off.

"Soldiers from the platoon have been putting in a lot of hard work and long hours. Their attitudes have been very positive and upbeat, and I never hear them complain," complimented Staff Sgt. Ellis.

"Everyone knows their role and the job they play in the building of this road."

## Rebuilding Mosques, Rebuilding Hope

**Story and photo by Spc. Daniel Lucas Camp McGovern**

"God made the world on a Friday, the main Islamic prayer is on Friday, and even in America, they have a saying; 'Thank God It's Friday'. This is a big day for believers," said Senahid Nezirovic, interpreter for Troop C, 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry.

"There are going to be three mosques rebuilt," said Staff Sgt. Daniel Thompson, 4th Platoon, Troop C, 3-7th Cav. "They are all going to be rebuilt in the same places where they were before being destroyed."

Since the war ended, Muslims have wanted to rebuild the mosques destroyed during the war. With support and money from the international community, the dreams of rebuilding the mosques have started to take shape.

But because of tensions between ethnic groups caused by the partial integration of the schools, the Civil Committee which is planning to rebuild the mosques, doesn't



**Crews begin to dig the foundation for a mosque in Brcko. This ground-breaking is the first of three planned rebuildings of mosques destroyed during the war.**

want to aggravate matters by continuing to rebuild now. Instead, they want to wait until after the school year is underway and tensions have died down.

During the preliminary digging for the first of the three mosques, Hasan Osmic, a member of the Civil Committee, talked to a resident who told a story about the mosque. According to the story, a massacre

probably took place at the site. The story states Serbs shot everyone in the mosque. The building was then demolished with bodies still inside. All that remains is the old foundation covered with mud. Some of the locals believe if the crews dig deep enough, they will find the remains.

Later in the day, the Stabilization Force patrol monitoring the first hour of the ground-breaking moved to the Arizona Market to conduct a presence patrol. The patrol returned later to make sure the crew was left unmolested.

"(The digging crew) will set the foundations real soon," said Mr. Osmic. "We plan to do this by the end of October. We are going to take a one-month break during the time the schools start up. That is why we have delayed the laying of the cornerstone."

"Every new mosque is a place for Muslims and Christians to begin to make amends," said Dr. Mustafa Ef Ceric, Reis Ul-Ulema (high priest) of the Muslim church.



(Left) An OH-58D Kiowa Warrior flies off after firing several 2.75-inch rockets during a gunnery exercise near Glamoc.



(Right) A damaged vehicle that served as a target for Hellfire missiles sits in ruins on the gunnery range.

# Kiowa Gunners: Hits and ‘Miss

Story and photos by Spc. Grant Calease  
Camp Comanche

As a tank rolls across an open field, the predator lies waiting. It watches its prey with a giant eye and prepares to attack.

At just the right moment the predator, an OH-58D Kiowa Warrior, pops up from behind a hill, and fires an anti-tank missile which hits its target and engulfs the enemy armor in an exploding ball of flames.

Soldiers from Camp Comanche participated in this and other scenarios at a gunnery range near Glamoc in Multinational



Division (Southwest), Aug. 1-14.

The purpose of the exercise is for aircrews to maintain proficiency on their weapons systems, said Sgt. Kelly Barnes, from Co. D, 1st Battalion, 82nd Aviation. Sgt. Barnes is attached to Task Force 2nd Battalion, 3rd Aviation.

“It’s just like you or I would need to go out and qualify on our M-16,” he said, while serving as the non-commissioned office in charge of the armament team during the exercise.

The support crews featured soldiers from Task Force 2-3 as well as from Company K, 148th Logistics Task Force.

“We maintain the weapons systems on the OH-58D, do maintenance checks and we also perform the loading functions during aerial gunnery,” said Sgt. Barnes.

The armament and refueling teams were hard at work as well, functioning as if the training exercise were the real thing.

“This is where the ‘rubber meets the road’. We get a chance to come out here and get our hands on the helicopters and do our jobs,” said Sgt. Barnes.

“This is like a front-line operation out here. It simulates very closely what we would be doing in a combat situation,” he said.

The soldiers relished the opportunity to work together as a team to accomplish the mission.

Task Force 2nd Battalion, 3rd Aviation consists of several separate companies coming together under one banner.

“I’ve got a lot of new soldiers out here with me. We are a ‘compilation unit’ made out of four units so a lot of us

haven’t worked together before,” said Sgt. Barnes.

“Coming out here gives us the opportunity to gel as a team and gives those of us with some experience the opportunity to knock the rust off. And it gives the newer guys a chance to bring their skills up to par,” he said.

The training provided the pilots a real-life flying mission as well as letting the ground crews polish their skills.

“This is a good opportunity for us to go out and train like we go to war,” said Chief Warrant Officer Rex Finley, an OH-58D pilot with Co. B, 1-82.

The pilots with 1-82 flew the gunnery the first few days and fired several different weapons systems from their OH-58Ds.

Fifty-caliber machine guns and 2.75-inch rockets were fired Aug. 1 and 2. Hellfire missiles were fired



Sgt. Eric Folsom, Co. D, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Aviation works to attach the rails for a Hellfire missile to a Kiowa.



(Right) Sgt. Christopher Hartley (left), Co. D, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Aviation and Spc. John Rutledge, Co. K, 148th Logistics Task Force, work to attach a Hellfire missile to a Kiowa Warrior during the gunnery exercise.

# 'iles

Aug. 3.

To provide a well-rounded training environment, pilots fired the .50-caliber machine guns and rockets at night as well as during the day.

“At night we mostly use night-vision goggles,” said Chief Warrant Officer Finley. “The system on the aircraft does support night operations, but at a range like this with the illumination there is, we have no problem finding the targets.”

Chief Warrant Officer Finley felt the whole company fired really well. He was surprised by their good performance since they hadn't shot since last October, he said.

“Back at Ft. Bragg (N.C.) we get to shoot live about twice a year,” said Chief Warrant Officer Finley.

The group fired 54 Hellfire missiles that were nearing the end of their shelf life.

As the stock at Comanche gets older it gets rotated in storage so the missiles can be shot before they go out of date and can't be fired, he said.

“Normally when we do this it's a graded event but here it's a treat because it's missiles we have to shoot. Because of that, we can go out and do what we do without the pressure of getting graded,” said 1st Lt. Jason King, a platoon leader and pilot with Co. B.

“It's a blast. This is the best job in the world,” said Chief Warrant Officer Finley, who flew helicopters in both the Persian Gulf War and Operation Just Cause, which was the invasion of Panama.

“Flying is not even a job. I've been doing this for 14 years and not once have I come in the morning and thought it was work,” he said.



(Left) An OH-58D Kiowa Warrior from Co. B, 1st Battalion 82nd Aviation fires a Hellfire missile at the gunnery range near Glamoc. The group fired .50-caliber machine guns and rockets as well.

(Right) Spc. John Rutledge, Co. K, 148th Logistics Task Force, walks away from an OH-58D Kiowa Warrior after loading Hellfire missiles.





Spc. Eliecer Solano, TFME, hauls a sand bag 100 meters during the competition.



The "Four Horsemen" from TFME carry a 250-pound telephone pole as part of the Iron Dragon competition.

# 'Iron Dragon' Tests Soldiers' 'Metal'

Story and photos by  
Pfc. Michael Bennett  
Eagle Base

It started early morning Aug. 10. The temperature was, to put it mildly, sweltering. And, according to predictions, it was only going to get hotter.

But there they stood, 15 teams of four men each, ready to prove their strength, both of body and of will.

These men were the participants in the Iron Dragon competition held Aug. 10 on Eagle Base.

The timed competition, sponsored by Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 121st Infantry, was designed to test strength, endurance and teamwork. 1-121 entered three teams in the competition. Of the 15 teams that began, 10 finished.

"Their time doesn't stop until the last man crosses the finish line," said Sgt. Michael Shelley, 1-121, explaining that it was designed to encourage teams to stay together rather than leaving weaker members behind.

"The morning starts out with the push-ups and sit-ups," said Sgt. Shelley. "Then it goes into the half-mile run and straight into the ruck march. Those are actually counted as one event."

The push-up and sit-up events were scored by the number of repetitions the team could complete in two minutes for each event.

The ruck march consisted of two laps around the perimeter fence, beginning and ending at the firearms simulation range.

The total distance marched was 20 kilometers, or approximately 12 miles. Soldiers were scored by the time it took for the last member of the team to complete the march.

After the march, the competitors performed a series of timed carries.

These consisted of carrying a 250-pound telephone pole, approximately twenty sandbags, a litter bearing one of their own teammates and a .50-caliber machine gun with ammunition, according to the Eagle Vision Web site.

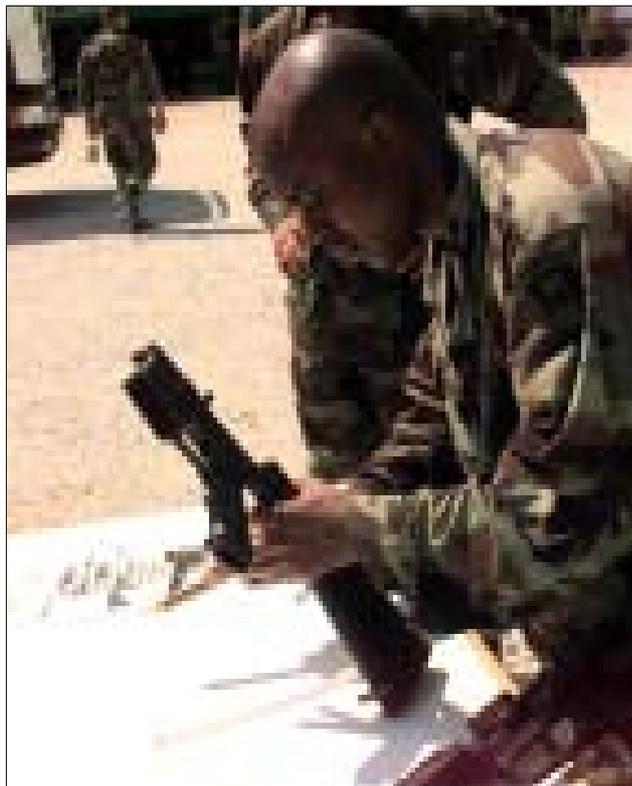
The final events were taking apart and reassembling an M-16 A2 and firing for score. The disassembly and assembly were scored for time and accuracy, and the shooting was scored by how many targets were hit. This competition featured several events that were not part of the 'Gunsmoke' Competition held last month, and also organized by 1-121.

"All of the teams that

participated (in the Gunsmoke Competition) came to us saying that it was good training, and would we elevate the level of training for the next one," said Capt. Ray Bossert, operations officer with 1-121, and coordinator of the event.

"It became more of an 'Iron Man' type of event, which is where the name 'Iron Dragon, came from" said Capt. Bossert. The dragon is the symbol of 1-121. The Iron Man is a triathlon, which has swimming, biking and running as its events.

"We decided to add in some more military skills. The teams were challenged before, and they were even more challenged this time," said Capt. Bossert.



Spc. Ayo Oladipofaniyi, from TFME's "Four Horsemen", disassembles an M-16 A2.

## Iron Dragon Results

**First Place:** "The Outsiders" Task Force Medical Eagle, Overall Score: 1899 points

**Second Place:** "Neptune's Revenge" 1-121st Infantry, Overall Score: 1708 points

**Third Place:** "Four Horsemen" Task Force Medical Eagle, Overall Score: 1475 points

# Danes Win Combat Medic Stakes

Story and photos by Spc. Lewis Hilburn  
Eagle Base

The first-ever Combat Medic Stakes competition in Multinational Division (North) was held at Task Force Medical Eagle July 31. What made the competition interesting was that there were three teams from three different countries competing – Latvia, Denmark and the United States.

Early that morning the competition began with a 10 kilometer road march. The Latvian team won with a time of one hour and 11 minutes, but the first soldier across the finish line was U.S. team member Spc. Ayo Oladipofaniyi, 32nd Medical Logistics, who finished the road march in 59 minutes, 14 seconds. The Danish team finished second and the U.S. team followed a close third.

The next part of the competition tested the teams on their emergency medical skills. Four stations were set up on the fitness track, and teams were scored on how fast they ran the course and performed the tasks, which included putting on a field or pressure dressing, applying dressings to an open abdominal chest wound, applying a tourniquet and splinting a suspected fracture.

Prior to this section of the competition, the teams from Denmark and Latvia were briefed on American standards of medical treatment. While going from station to station, each team was required to carry a litter with 100 pounds of sand bags on it.

The Danish team placed first in the first aid portion of the competition, the Latvians second and the U.S. team came in third.

The final competition of the day was a two-mile run. Teams had to run in their battle dress uniforms but were allowed to wear running shoes. The Danes finished first, followed by the Latvian team and finally the U.S.

Competitors were awarded trophies for their efforts. Maj. Gen. Herold Timboe, commander of the North Atlantic Regional Medical Command, was on hand to present the trophies. The Danish team won the overall competition.

Sgt. Peteris Suveizda, platoon sergeant and team captain for the Latvian team, said, "The competition was tough, all the teams competed very hard. I am very proud of what my team did, especially against the U.S. and the Danish teams."

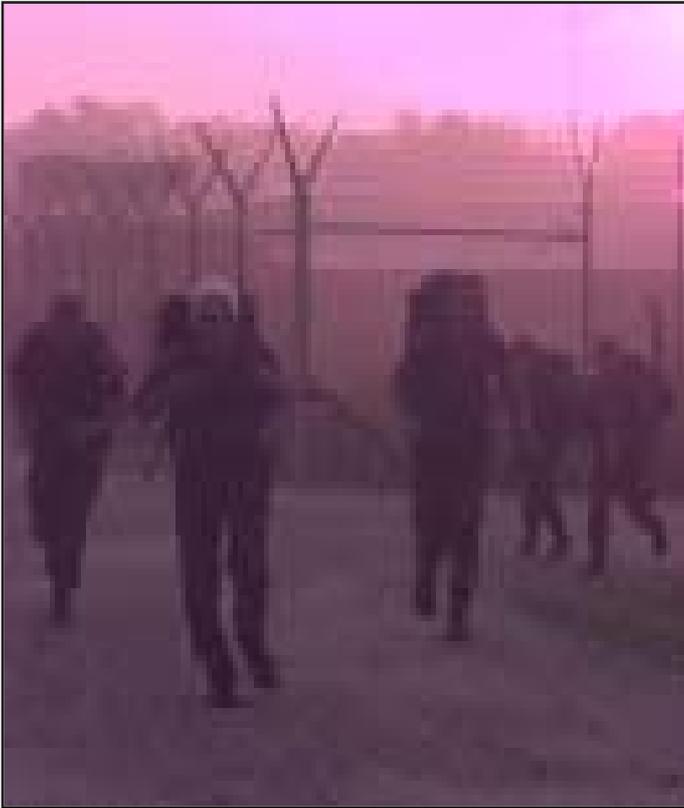
Sgt. Makonen Campbell, U.S. team captain from the 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry medical platoon, said, "This was a very good competition. We got to see what the other nations we were competing against could do, and show them what we could do. The Latvians and the Danish were very tough and they proved that," he stated. "Even though we came in last I am very proud of my team for finishing strong."

"I challenge the next American team competing in this to do better than we did," Sgt. Campbell said.

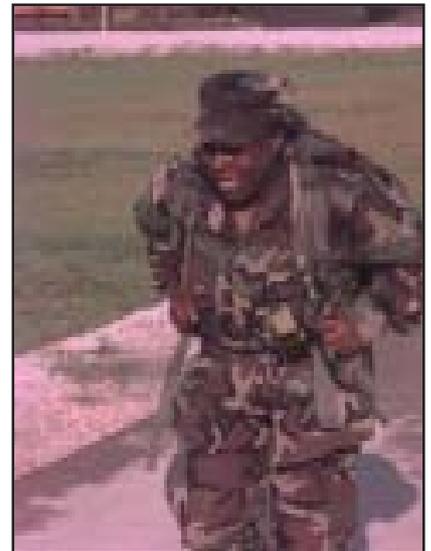
"By the end of the two-mile run everyone was sucking wind, and times were not the best everyone usually runs the course," he said.

Capt. John Eddy, 28th Combat Support Hospital's information operations officer, and the officer in charge of the competition, said it was a learning process for TFME since it was the team's first international medical competition.

"I think the competition went very well," he said. "All the teams gave it their all and it showed."



(Above) At the start of the ruck march, participants run to get position. Members of the U.S. team are close behind the Danes who came in second place in the event. (Right) Sgt. Debra Owens, 28th CSH, grimaces as she crosses the finish line of the ruck march. (Below) Latvian Sgt. Peteris Suveizda comforts a "patient" at one of four emergency first-aid stations.



# Teen Magazine Speaks Volumes

Story By Air Force Maj. Richard C. Sater  
Eagle Base

His name is Mirko. He likes music and movies. That's him in the baggy jeans and baseball cap. He could be any other teenager – and that's exactly the point.

Mirko gives a face to a magazine named after him, a monthly publication specifically targeted to teenagers in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The glossy, colorful pages include interviews with celebrities (singers, writers, film stars), both national and international, Britney Spears side by side with Boris Maric, a young poet from Brcko. Fashions, sports, films, the pop charts, reader letters – just like any other teen magazine.

In the upper left-hand corner of the cover, however, is the familiar blue and white logo of the Stabilization Force. A small box placed discreetly inside the magazine tells the rest of the story: published by North Atlantic Treaty Organization's Psychological Operations Task Force, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers, Europe.

So what is SFOR doing in the magazine business?

*Mirko* is indeed sponsored by SFOR – written, produced, and distributed for free throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina. The magazine is a tool, and a very effective one. A quick look at the contents reveals the subtle message: we share common interests, and we can get along. Tolerance is a key message, and *Mirko* is a forum aimed at a specific audience.

With a monthly circulation of 160,000, the publication has a devoted readership. Three versions are published each month; 90 percent of the run is Serbo-Croatian, with half printed in the Latinic alphabet and half in Cyrillic. The third version alternates each month between English and German.

The current editor, Chief Master Sgt. Ingo Kulot, is a reservist in the German Air Force's Operation Information Battalion. A journalist who runs a public relations firm back home, he will spend the next six months helming *Mirko* from its office at Camp Butmir, Sarajevo. The staff also includes two bilingual writers, Ivana Stipic and Damir Duran. Approximately two-thirds of the magazine's copy is locally written, with the remainder done in Germany.

In addition to music, movies, and sports, the staff writes about "everyday young people. Their lives, what they do – positive examples of how they take initiative to get things done. Examples of cooperation and multi-ethnic tolerance," Mr. Duran

says. Reader feedback is important as well; many boys and girls write to their friend Mirko with suggestions about what they'd like to see in his pages.

The name of the magazine has no special significance – it's simply a boy's name – but "Mirko" was chosen because the name is common to all three of the primary ethnic groups in Bosnia: Croats, Serbs and Bosniacs. "We try to speak the language of young people; 13 to 18 is our target audience," Chief Master Sgt. Kulot says.

Drafting stories is the easy part. Artwork and design, however,

are sometimes problematic. The production crew takes care to be all-inclusive, never to offend. The approval process for articles, photos and layout is a painstaking but essential step in the production each month. "It's a bit tricky, but this is what we're trained for." Once the issue has been approved for release, it is printed in Sarajevo and readied for distribution throughout the country by teams from the 10th

Psychological Operations Battalion.

The magazine has enviable name recognition.

"It's estimated that 89 percent of the young people know it," Chief Master Sgt. Kulot says with pride. "That's something no other magazine has accomplished."

Since its beginning five years ago, the *Mirko* project has been in the hands of the German armed forces – appropriately, Chief Master Sgt. Kulot believes, since many Bosnian refugees settled in his country. Forty-six issues have appeared so far with no end in sight. He hopes the magazine will always continue, perhaps as a commercial publication with the same aims: encouraging tolerance and fellowship among the youth.

Changing a culture is not an expedient process. Today's adolescents were children during the war. "They're growing up. We... (have) the task of educating them. It can't be done in a year or two years. It has to be ongoing," Chief Master Sgt. Kulot says.



# The 'Ins' and 'Outs' of the Ped Gate

**Spc. Jarmusz spent a week with the Eagle Base guard force, working all shifts at multiple locations. This is the first of several articles chronicling his experiences.**

Story by Spc. T.S. Jarmusz  
Eagle Base

"We have a special assignment for you. You're going to be a guard force soldier for all of next week," my supervisors said. And with those few words I was out on the wire.

My first assignment was to report to the 'pole barn' at 6:45 a.m., to work first shift at the pedestrian gate. The pole barn is where the guard force performs inspections and receives their guard-mount briefing.

At guard mount, I watched as members of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Platoon, 1st Battalion, 121st Infantry, conducted an open-ranks inspection, snapping to attention with precise movements. We were briefed on guard force procedures and new developments in security procedures affecting soldiers.

Loaded with wet-weather gear, Mission Oriented Protective Posture equipment, and Flak vest, we grabbed our rucksacks and headed out toward the pedestrian gate. The 'Ped' gate, as it's called, is really a large complex with a few smaller sections and one goal: Security.

"Our job at the Pedestrian Gate is to control access to Eagle Base and keep people out who are not supposed to be here," said Staff Sgt. Paul Finney, commander of the relief, north side, 48th Military Police Platoon, Macon, Ga.

The guard force divides Eagle Base into two sides, north and south. The pedestrian gate is part of the north side, while the West Gate is part of the south side.

I started off in an observation post, talking with Sgt. Crawford Hines, a guard force soldier with 1-121. His job is to look for potential hazards or violations along the fence line and at the pedestrian gate entrance.

"The soldier in the observation post is looking for threats: someone taking photos, suspicious behavior, cars left for long periods of time and people trying to breach the wire. He provides us with advanced notice of these threats by radio communication," said Staff Sgt. Finney.

Sgt. Hines and I talked for a while longer before I headed out to the next stop. It was only about 9:00 a.m., but already I knew it was going to be unusually hot outside.

At the rear shack I met Sgt. Ken Blackstone, whose job is to scan Stabilization Force identifications and handle radio communications. It looked difficult trying to balance the two tasks,

especially during the morning rush, but Sgt. Blackstone didn't have any problems.

Soldiers in the rear shack check SFOR IDs to make sure they are up-to-date, legal and the individual is allowed access to Eagle Base.

At about 10:00 a.m., Staff Sgt. Finney called me over to assist him with water deliveries. As I stepped outside the air-conditioned rear shack, I was blasted by a surge of heat.

Staff Sgt. Finney's role is to assign positions on the manning roster, and deliver food to the soldiers on the north

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**"The one time you get complacent is when the guy you see everyday tries to bring in a bomb."**

*Spc. Eric Givens,  
guard force soldier,  
HHC, 1st Battalion,  
121st Infantry*

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side. To make sure his soldiers are taken care of, he goes the extra mile. Literally.

Staff Sgt. Finney and I drove to the Longhorn dining facility and picked up water, sodas and snacks. We headed out to observation posts all over the north side, dropping off goods to thankful soldiers.

We talked for while, and interestingly enough, I discovered that most of the guard force soldiers are not infantry soldiers. Many are military police officers, or medics and some even work in administration. Most guard-force soldiers working at the pedestrian gate are from the 48th MPs and attached to HHC, 1-121.

Regardless of their background, their job remains the same: to provide the soldiers here with a safe and secure environment.

"The most challenging part of this job is making sure people who are entering and leaving base have proper authorization," Staff Sgt. Finney said. He also mentioned how it was difficult knowing that soldiers can't leave base anytime they want.

Staff Sgt. Finney remains confident the guard force soldiers are up to the task.

"While we are working, no one can run loose on the base, no bombs get on base, people can't steal our property or try to harm us," he said.

One of the ways the guard force stays on top of the mission is by practicing guard-mount training on a regular basis.

"We go through daily inspections and

cover all the different aspects of the drill to make sure we stay professional," Staff Sgt. Finney said. "You fight like you train. If you don't get things right in rehearsal, you'll go out there and perform poorly."

While they may be armed with weapons in plain view, the guard force always maintains a professional and military bearing toward the local civilians.

"One thing about a show of force is, all this firepower deters potential threats. And if for some reason someone gets through the gate, we have many backup measures," Sgt. Finney said.

If things get too heavy at the gate, Eagle Base has M.P.'s, Special Forces, the Quick Reaction Force and the Internal Reaction Force to provide backup. Not to mention that many soldiers here carry a little something called an M-16A2.

Staff Sgt. Finney told me that during SFOR 9, there have been relatively few incidents at the pedestrian gate. He assured me that the guard force is well trained to handle those that do occur.

"It's rewarding knowing that you have done what you were trained to do to the best of your ability," said Staff Sgt. Finney.

"All the guard force soldiers are doing an excellent job. They are a little fatigued and stressed out from the confinement, but they are nevertheless competent in their duties. They are ready to go home, but not until they complete this mission," he said.

We finished delivering water, and I returned to the pedestrian gate to work the front shack with Spc. Eric Givens, Spc. Paul Rogers and Sgt. James Jackson.

Armed with metal-detecting rods, the job of soldiers in the front shack is to look through bags for contraband. Items such as cell phones, weapons and cameras are prohibited, as they pose operational security risks. Individuals walk through a metal detector.

"Base security is not a bad job, but it's not an easy one either. You see the same people every day to a point where you can almost tell what they will be wearing in the morning," said Spc. Givens. "The one time you get complacent is when the guy you see everyday tries to bring in a bomb. Sometimes when searching people during the morning rush, lines can form and people can be in a hurry. You have to remember to do the job right and to standards," he said.

Soldiers inside the wire don't have to wonder how secure the base is. Guard force soldiers do the job the right way, so those on base can stay focused on their jobs.

"Knowing that you're taking part in making this base safe is a good feeling. I love being a guard force soldier because it brings new challenges everyday," said Spc. Givens.



Local police officials, United Nations International Police Task Force representatives, Stabilization Force officials and members of the international community gather for a photo outside Pegasus Hall on Eagle Base Aug. 3 before the beginning of their first formal conference.

## Local Police, Leaders Discuss Issues at Task Force Conference

Story and photo by Cpl. Anthony Koch  
Eagle Base

Leaders of the local police departments, United Nations International Police Task Force and Stabilization Force had their first formal meeting on Eagle Base Aug. 3 to discuss goals and priorities of the local police force in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Local chiefs of police, canton ministers, IPTF leaders, SFOR leaders and members of the international community attended the conference.

"The biggest thing I think that was achieved was getting seven of the most powerful police officers in Multinational Division (North) together in one building at one time to voice their concerns and issues in one forum," explained Lt. Col. Mike Dietz, provost marshal for SFOR.

The conference had three objectives – set short-term goals, arrange priorities and ensure better support for the three entities. Each of the seven local police officials had about 20 minutes to discuss their specific concerns or issues with the rest of the attendees.

"Doing this we can achieve much more," said Mane Djuric, Zvornik public security center chief. "One other good thing about conferences like this is you have everybody present – chiefs of police from the cantons, Republic of Srpska, as well as representatives from the international community and different organizations. And everybody can contribute."

According to Thomas LaPenter, chief of operations for IPTF, communication is a key part in working together. "There is such a disparity between links of communications across the inter-entity boundary line. Hopefully this is one way to break the communication barrier."

The next step will be to decipher the data received during the conference, according to Lt. Col. Dietz. "It's going to be important for me to develop a list of concerns, issues and things that they've given us today, and start tracking those and provide that information to the commanding general so he can best direct the resources to help them."

The conference offered a forum for all sides to convey their concerns and ideas to their professional peers, and begin to find solutions. That is why there are plans to continue similar conferences in the future.

"We'll probably have this every six months," said Lt. Col. Dietz. "If it proves to be more productive, maybe a little bit more often."

## Soldier on the Street

"How have you maintained your war-fighting skills during this deployment?"

**B**y classroom, hands-on and continuous training. We get out on our tanks twice a week."

**Sgt. Rex Laney**  
1-108 Armor  
Camp Comanche



**W**e do tons of training. My sergeants train us on CTT, with little quizzes and things like that."

**Spc. Sean Kelly**  
307th PsyOps  
Eagle Base

**I**went to the range and qualified. Knowing your 'threat-con' and being aware."

**Pfc. Leysha Williamson**  
Co. D, 1-58 Aviation  
Camp Comanche

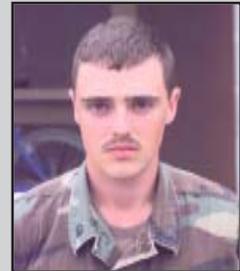


**M**y NCO's have been giving us classes on 'reconnaissance'."

**Spc. Eric Dubois**  
Troop B, 3-7 Cav.  
Camp McGovern

**W**e spend our time on guard duty and sometimes work on tanks."

**Spc. Russell Greene**  
HHC, 2-121  
Camp Comanche



**W**e went to Gunnery and qualified all of our new Bradley crews."

**Pvt. Phillip Meyers**  
Troop B, 3-7 Cav  
Camp McGovern