

TALON

Operation Joint Forge
Saturday, August 25, 2001

Task Force Eagle
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3-7 Cav Bradley Crews at Gunnery

Base Camps Enjoy Sand and Sun

Flag Football Season Starts at Camp Comanche

Remade in His Image

The story is told of a group of women who were in a Bible study group reading the book of Malachi. As they were studying chapter three, they came across this verse, "He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver" (Malachi 3:3).

The verse puzzled the women and they wondered what this statement meant about the character and nature of God. One of the women offered to find out about the process of refining silver and get back to the group at their next Bible study.

That week this woman called up a silversmith and made an appointment to watch him at work. She didn't mention anything about the reason for her interest in silver beyond her curiosity about the process of refining silver.

As she watched the silversmith, he held a piece of silver over the fire and let it heat up. He explained that in refining silver, one needed to hold the silver in the middle of the fire where the flames were hottest to burn away all the impurities. The woman thought about God holding us in such a hot spot – then she thought again about the verse, "He sits as a refiner and purifier of silver."

She asked the silversmith if it was true that he had to sit there in front of the fire the whole time the silver was being refined. The man answered yes, he not only had to sit there holding the silver, but he had to keep his eyes on the silver the entire time it was in the fire. If the silver was left even a moment too long in the flames, it would be destroyed.

The woman was silent for a moment. Then she asked the silversmith, "How do you know when the silver is fully refined?" He smiled at her and answered, "*Oh, that's easy - when I see my image in it.*"

God wants the very best for us and being *remade in his image* is his way of bringing to us the very best of life. So the next time you are feeling the heat, remember that God has his eye on you and will keep watching until he sees his image in you.

Thoughts for the Day

Sunday: "It is not the greatness of my faith, but my faith in the greatness of God that moves mountains." (Anonymous)

Monday: "Be quick to repent and quick to forgive and you'll never be far from God." (Ken Hagin)

Tuesday: "When the storms of life strike, it's what happens 'in' you that will determine what happens 'to' you." (Jerry Savelle)

Wednesday: "Faith is not believing God can, but that God *will!*" (Anonymous)

Thursday: "Whether we like it or not, asking is the rule of the kingdom." (Charles Spurgeon)

Friday: "Jesus taught his disciples not how to preach, only how to pray." (Andrew Murray)

Saturday: "Take your faith and change what tomorrow brings." (Charles Capps)

Chaplain (Maj.) Mike Durham
Eagle Base

TALON

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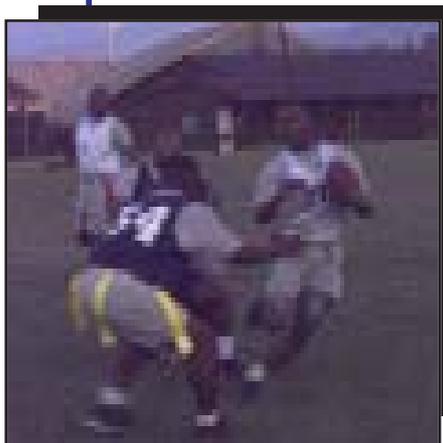
Spc. Wayne Scarpulla, a gunner from Troop B, 3/7th Cav. and Spc. Derek Entrekin, a gunner from Troop C, 3/7th sit atop a Bradley fighting vehicle. The Bradleys were taking part in the gunnery exercise in Hungary. (Photo by Spc. Daniel W. Lucas)



BEACH BONANZA!

8

Soldiers were rocking and relaxing during MWR's Summer Daze Beach Party. (Photo courtesy of Red Cross)



TIME TO TOSS THE OLD PIGSKIN...

10

Camp Comanche starts flag football season to build comraderie and unit pride. (Photo by Spc. Grant L. Calease)

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What Does Personal Courage Mean to You?

By Spc. Charles Lafferty
Camp McGovern

This essay was the winning submission in the Task Force Eagle Army Values Essay Contest, sponsored by the Equal Opportunity Office. Spc. Lafferty is with Troop A, 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry at Camp McGovern.

What is personal courage? Hundreds of men, single file, stoically boarding a plane to a foreign land knowing full well that they will not see their families for months to come. Making a decision that you know in your heart to be right and standing by it, regardless of any pressures to change your mind or to go an easier route, even when you know you could get away with it.

Always finding and accentuating the good in a situation, no matter how undesirable it may be, and keeping a positive attitude during hard times for the benefit of everyone around you. All of these things, to me, demonstrate personal courage.

Every person, regardless of upbringing or surroundings, is born with the ability and potential to be the very best they can possibly be. It is in striving to reach those limits, and to achieve all that you can, that personal courage comes into play. When a setback occurs along the path to your goal, thus hindering your motivation, a successful person will dig down deep and discover within himself the drive necessary to conquer the obstacle. Being able to find the urge to go on and succeed is personal courage.

Many people serve in the armed forces, and the vast majority of them personify the value of personal courage everyday of their lives. Soldiering is not easy. It takes strong will, and the desire to be the best, to achieve anything worth being proud of in the army, and in life for that matter.

Aside of those few soldiers who are too weak to abide by the rules set out before us, and probably don't belong in the service anyway, we all show personal courage daily through actions such as pushing ourselves to the limit at (Physical Training), or by not being afraid to tactfully

speaking our minds when something is not as it should be.

Personal courage is not necessarily shown in climbing a mountain or wrestling a bear, so to speak.

It is shown more in a person's actions and his general personality. In other words, to me, personal courage is not necessarily directly associated with physical strength; in fact, it is more a measure of mental and spiritual strength.

Bravery in a time of crisis would obviously show personal courage. Men have died for standing their ground, both on the battlefield, and off. Men who faced insurmountable odds directly, and held few or no regrets for doing so are the embodiment of personal courage.

Our country was founded, and has always been defended by people whose embracement of that very value is the reason we make our homes in a free land. It would be morally wrong for any American to not constantly strive in showing that very level of personal courage, so as not to lessen the worth of the blood spilt by those before us. Personal courage is not only a good trait to possess; I feel that it's a responsibility.

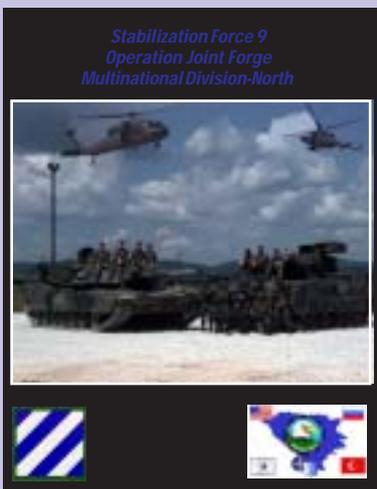
We have all been in situations where we know the general consensus to be wrong. Sometimes we can offer a solution, and other times, all we can do is speak up that what is being done is not right. Either way, we show personal courage by not being afraid of what our peers and superiors may think about us in disagreeing with the popular flow.

It's not always easy to stand your ground, but if you remain strong and set the example, that standard will be noticed and others will look to you for leadership.

I believe that having the utmost faith in yourself, and confidence in your actions is a way to earn people's respect. When you are looked up to, not because you bullied your way to the top, but because you made reliable decisions and defended your actions, then the respect shown to you has been earned.

If your values do not include personal courage, then respect can never truly be earned because respect is never honestly felt for someone who is infirm and unreliable. To me, personal courage is being brave enough to accept responsibility for your faults, and being mature enough to forgive others for theirs.

Personal courage is being yourself, without fear.



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There's No Place Like Home

In 1996, Lukavac, a town near Tuzla, was the site of the first group of displaced persons to return to their prewar homes.

Story by Spc. Daniel Lucas
Camp McGovern

Since then, Stabilization Force, along with local officials, have been providing a safe and secure environment, through presence patrols, to ensure the safety of the returnees. Four hundred people have returned to the area since then; more than 80 families are waiting for approval to receive money from the international community, funds necessary to rebuild their homes.

The major focus areas for returnees are the villages Krtova and Smoluca, located in the valleys near Lukavac.

"There have been a lot of returns in the Adreno Valley and the Smoluchee Valley,"

said 2nd Lt. Noyal Brasfield, leader of 4th Platoon, Company D, 3rd Battalion, 153rd Infantry Regiment. "The communities have welcomed all the returnees so far and will welcome future returnees." Much of the land in that area was agricultural, and hadn't seen as much of the war as other areas, he said.

Company D's commander said the returns have been going well, without any serious problems arising.

"There have been a steady amount of returns since April," said Maj. Brett Stewart. "Mostly, the returnees have been coming from the Doboje area." Doboje is one of the main towns in the Nordic-Polish Battle Group sector. "The only problem that we have been having is that the Muslim returnees say that they haven't been getting the same attention [in donations and publicity] as the Serbian returnees do."

Maj. Stewart said this is because there has been a focus on returnees coming back to an area with a different ethnic majority, such as Serbs returning to a mostly Muslim area.

In the village of Milino Selo, for example, there have been 25 homes rebuilt, with another 25 waiting for approval and funds.

"There has been a delay in processing the families that want to return, because there are so many of them," said Brig. Gen. Robley Rigdon, assistant division commander, Multinational Division (North). "Those are the types of problems that we like to have, where so many people

want to return to their homes."

Brig. Gen. Rigdon said there are two proposed projects waiting to be approved for the village. The first is to rebuild the school and community center, now being used as a livestock pen; the other is to rebuild the area's water system.

"There have already been two bridges rebuilt in the area," said Brig. Gen. Rigdon. "They were built to provide easier access to the area of operations for our soldiers working in that area. But it worked out to the people's advantage to have those bridges for them as well."

Obrad Gostic, a Serb, is coming back to his home after living in Doboje. He said more people want to return.

"All of the families would like to come back here," said Mr. Gostic. "The future returning families have to wait until there have been enough donations so that they have the money to come back; otherwise, they would love to."

Lukavac's chief of police, Begit Saset, said the returns have gone smoothly.

"Our biggest success in this area is that there wasn't one incident involving returnees," said Mr. Saset. Even though he believes the Lukavac police force could handle the job that the SFOR patrols do, everything is easier with the SFOR soldiers around, he said.

That's what the SFOR troops are here for, said Brig. Gen. Rigdon. "SFOR provides a safe and secure environment," he said.

Continued on page 12

Dragon Base: The Stuff of Fairy Tales

Story by Spc. Daniel Lucas
Camp McGovern

In fairy tales, dragons were always beasts residing in caves or abandoned castles. Forward Operating Base Morgan, also called Dragon Base, is not only a place that exists with all the splendors of these stories, minus the castle, but is the home of soldiers from Company D, 1st Battalion, 153rd Infantry. This is the story of FOB Morgan and the Delta Dragons.

Soldiers from Co D were moved to FOB Morgan as part of a force-restructuring program. So instead of travelling almost two hours simply to enter their area of operation, which includes Samac, Orasje and weapon storage site 29A, they are now 20 minutes away from the heart of it.

"Since the beginning, we have been able to build everything including living quarters, guard towers and the motor pool, to above the standard," said 1st Lt. Ricky Pettigrew, mayor of Dragon Base. "It is a mini-base camp that will set the standard for future base camps." He said during the planning and building of FOB Morgan, all the pros and cons of other base camps were taken into account.

For example, the motor pool was made larger so vehicles and crews could perform maintenance without being crowded. All towers and buildings that have been added were built to pass inspections — such as the dining facility inspection and the

Base Camp Assessment Team inspection — instead of needing additional construction.

The recreation center, Post Exchange, and dining and laundry facilities are also placed closer to living quarters. The quarters themselves have indoor bathrooms and showers, unlike the other base camps, so soldiers don't have to brave the weather during the winter months.

"Around September of last year, the last rotation started organizing FOB Morgan for a platoon-size element," said Sgt. 1st Class Timothy Roachell, head of security from Co. D. "We have doubled the number of towers and the size of the base camp has increased by 75 percent, (since the arrival of Co. D in June)." He planned for all contingencies, such as further expansion and visits from dignitaries, safety is assured.

According to 1st Lt. Pettigrew, everything is the same at FOB Morgan as it is at Camp McGovern. "It's basically a mini-McGovern," said 1st Lt. Pettigrew.

"I think the two-man rooms are better for morale," said Sgt. Andre Chattry from 1st platoon, Co. D. "It gives the soldiers a sense of privacy that is uncommon in the Army." He added that since finance and post office personnel make regular trips from Camp McGovern to FOB Morgan (because there is no post office and finance department located at FOB Morgan), the base camp has everything going for it.

Continued on page 12

3-7 Cavalry Gunners Qualify in

Story and photos by Daniel Lucas
Camp McGovern

A Bradley crew sits in wait in an open field, dotted with small hills. Perspiration and dirt cover their strained faces as they wait for their targets to appear. At the commander's signal, the Bradley pulls forward and opens fire at its



(Above) Fully loaded, a Bradley prepares to go to one of its qualification exercises. (Below) Lifting its main gun to the sky, a Bradley prepares to fire.



target. After the target has been fired upon, the Bradley pulls back behind the line while graders in the tower judge the crew's ability to engage and destroy 10 sets of targets. This is the gunnery exercise conducted by 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry in Tabor Falva, Hungary which is a yearly qualification for Bradley crews.

This year, instead of firing on the range at Fort Stewart, Ga., they qualified in Hungary.

"We do this to setup all the crews for success when they go back to Fort Stewart," said Sgt. 1st Class Don Whitmire, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 121st Infantry from Camp Comanche and an evaluator for the duration of the firing exercise.

For troops to be certified, meaning they completed the exercise to standard, they had to pull qualified personnel from other units to grade and rate them. To make the gunnery valid they can't grade themselves.

"Here they complete Table Six, which is basic firing skills; Table Seven, which includes defensive and offensive engagements, and Table Eight, which has everything,"



(Above) Bradleys line up as they prepare to begin

said 1st Lt. Sean McManus, Bradley Fighting Vehicle commander, 3-7 Cav.

A table is a set of targets or engagements that take a crew from the very basic tasks a Bradley crew must learn, such as loading and learning how to fire the weapons, to using all the skills learned to qualify on the eighth table.

Table Eight consists of 10 engagements, seven during the day and three at night. Each engagement tests a Bradley crew's ability to use the manual, auxiliary and primary sights to effectively engage and destroy targets within a certain time frame. There are two different types of sights: electronic and manual.

The electronic sights use computer assistance to gauge distance, move the gun and aim it. The manual and auxiliary sights use a series of guidelines and manual movements to aim the gun.

"The scoring system is a very simple one," said Staff Sgt. Joseph C. Manley, grader from Company B, 2-121.

"The crew gets a 'T' if they did everything correct according to the Field Manual, a 'P' if they killed the target but made some small error, and a 'U' if the crew made an error that could have caused a fatality," he said.

The grading was also very specific. A video of the tank firing is taken from the tower, which is reviewed after the crew has finished. Spotters on the range and in the tower also watch the crew engage.

If there is any question in the observers' minds as to whether the target was killed or not, the benefit of the doubt goes to the crew.

So what is the prize for doing well? It takes seven 'T's' to qualify, eight 'T's' to qualify 'superior', nine 'T's' to earn a 'distinguished' rating and 10 'T's' for a perfect score. This is the score every crew works to earn.

To qualify, the gunner has to use most of the weapons on the Bradley, which can be more



n Hungary



testing on a gunnery exercise qualification table.

difficult than it sounds.

“The main weapon is a 25 mm machine gun and it is an area weapon, (a weapon that will hit within a certain area of what the gunner is aiming at instead of exactly)” said Staff Sgt. Johnson, Bradley commander from Troop C, 3-7 Cav.

“So the fact that these gunners can go out and hit these targets with precision shows how well that they have been trained.”

The 7.62 mm coaxial machine gun is also used to test the crew’s ability to engage soldiers moving on the ground.

The infantry targets are the first to be engaged and killed before firing at any other targets at gunnery.

“Soldiers on foot are nearly silent and the most deadly enemy a tank has,” said Spc. Derek Entrekin, Bradley gunner from Troop C, 3-7 Cav.

The other weapons a Bradley employs include a 7.62 mm coaxial machine gun and a TOW (tube-launched, optically sighted, wire-guided) missile launcher.

The missile launcher wasn’t used during the exercise because there were no main battle tanks or bunkers for the Bradley crews to shoot.

After the crew has fired, there is an after-action review, during which each crew and the graders go through the video to point out strengths and weaknesses.

This after-action review assists the troops in learning what was done right and what needed to be improved upon. So, when the crews go through gunnery again at Fort Stewart in November, troopers know how to correct any deficiencies.

“A lot of the crews out here are new, but you can tell the crews are capitalizing on their strengths and improving on their weaknesses by placing a lot of the more experienced crew members with inexperienced crews, said Staff Sgt. Manley.

Staff Sgt. Manley continued, “The longer a crew is together, the more proficient they get. But even after this short time at the gunnery, you can definitely see a big improvement.”



(Above) Staff Sgt. Joseph Heggs, 3-7 Cavalry, links together 25 mm rounds to be loaded into his Bradley. (Left) A Bradley rolls down the road after an exercise.





Soldiers slipped off their combat boots and slid into soft beach sand Aug. 11. Eagle Base and Camps McGovern and Comanche each got a taste of summer – and watermelon – during the festivities. Numerous competitions were held including: limbo, sand-castle building, volleyball, badminton, balloon toss and of course watermelon eating! The SFOR 9 Cool Breeze celebration originated with Casey Malloy, Morale, Welfare and Recreation chief. Assistance and support from AAFES and the Red Cross made the 'fun in the sun' event a success.



Fun in

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Expect the unexpected, unless you don't

2 n the Sun



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CAUTION!
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Clockwise from top: (1) Chief of Staff Col. Thomas Torrance prepares to take a cool dip in the 'hot seat'. (photo courtesy of Red Cross) (2) Eagle Base Command Sgt. Maj. Marvin Glass stays in the shallow end of the pool during the summer festivities. (photo by Staff Sgt. Lisa Dunphy) (3) Sgt. Pete Moulton, with HHT, 3-7 Cav. wears more than a big smile after placing second in the volleyball tournament. (photo by Spc. Daniel Lucas) (4) (From left) Spc. Butch Ellington, with Co. C, 1-121, Senior Airman Alia Naffouj-Ward, AFN, along with Sgt. Robin Manning, 223rd MP Co. and Spc. Shaun Tice, Co. B, 28th CSH show off a little skin – and ink – during the 'biggest tattoo' contest. (photo courtesy of MWR) (5) Sgt. 1st Class Allen Johnson, with 1-121, 'calls 'em as he sees 'em' during the volleyball games. The 223rd MP Co. team won the tournament. (photo by Staff Sgt. Lisa Dunphy) (6) Pfc. Jovenac Leonard with 103rd MI Battalion, doesn't worry about chewing during the watermelon-eating contest. Pfc. Leonard placed third in the event. (photo courtesy of MWR)

Football 'Hikes' Up Comraderie

Story and photos by
Spc. Grant Calease
Camp Comanche

Fall brings with it many things. The leaves change colors, a new school year begins...and strange noises fill the air. They are hikes, huts and grunts and they mean only one thing – football season is here.

The Camp Comanche football league began its Stabilization Force 9 flag football season in early August. The teams are made up of units from the three task forces stationed at Camp Comanche.

"It's a very popular sport. It's a great stress reliever and it provides camaraderie," said Candy Guzman, Morale, Welfare and Recreation's lead coordinator at Camp Comanche.

"The point of the league is to provide quality entertainment for the troops. This lets them do something and gives them unit pride," said Bill Kirk, the MWR programmer at Camp Comanche.

Eleven teams play in the league, which features games on weeknights as well as Saturday and Sunday afternoons.

The field has goal posts, yard markers, painted yard lines and an electric scoreboard, all courtesy of MWR. Lights

(Below) First Sgt. John Smiley, Co. A, 148th LTF goes up for a catch with Staff Sgt. Junior Hazlewood, Co. B, 148th LTF right on his tail.



Co. A, 148th LTF quarterback Sgt. 1st Class Edward Johnson (holding the ball) tries to elude pressure coming from soldiers of Co. B, 148th LTF during the game between the two units.

ring the field so games can be played even after the sun goes down.

"It's great to get to know the people and then see them active in something they really enjoy," said Mrs. Guzman.

The soldiers play for a variety of reasons, one of which is to bring the unit together as a team. The concepts of harmony and esprit de corps are why Warrant Officer Jimmy Polk plays, he said. "It really pumps the morale all the way up. It takes

you away. I feel like I'm back home when I'm out there playing," said Warrant Officer Polk, who plays tailback for Co. B, 148th Logistics Task Force.

"You build cohesion with the soldiers as well as senior non-commissioned officers and officers," said Staff Sgt. Tim Flair, who also plays for Co. B. "Playing any sport brings all the ranks together. There are no officers, sergeants or privates when we play. It's all one team," he added.

In a recent game between Co. A and Co. B, 148th LTF, bragging rights were on the line as well as a win.

Spc. Corey Johnson, quarterback for Co. B not only works with Sgt. 1st Class Edward Johnson, the quarterback for Co. A, but he is his uncle.

After a hard-fought game Co. B battled

back from a 14-point deficit and won on the final play, 18-14. "It felt good to beat him. Tomorrow I'm going to be doing some talking," said Spc. Johnson, following the game.

**"It really pumps
the morale all the
way up."**

*Warrant Officer Jimmy Polk,
Co. B, 148th Logistics Task Force*

Some of the troops who come out to play in the league have many years of experience playing football.

Spc. Laronn Scott, who plays linebacker for Co. A, 148th LTF played college football at Mt. Sacc University in California before joining the Army.

"This is different, not only because of no contact but this game here is based more on speed and fundamentals, not as much on strength."

Spc. Johnson played quarterback on a flag football team for three years as an active-duty soldier while stationed in Germany.

MWR tries to organize the flag football league once per rotation, said Mrs. Guzman. "This group has been more receptive than some in the past," she said. "We have more people who come and watch as well as play.

"We also have a great group of referees. They are all volunteers and they take a lot of 'incoming' from the players and fans, but without them there would be no league," added Mrs. Guzman.

In the first weekend in September, following the regular season, the qualifying teams will participate in a championship tournament to crown a Camp Comanche flag football champion.

Guard Force: Second Shift

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

Story and photos by Spc. T.S. Jarmusz
Eagle Base

Second shift on ranger patrol; it began at 2:45 p.m. by conducting primary maintenance checks and services on our Humvee. I was assigned to patrol with Sgt. Bill Dunn, a guard force soldier with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Platoon, 1st Battalion, 121st Infantry. When we finished our PMCS, we stopped by the pedestrian gate to inventory supplies before heading out.

A ranger patrol monitors designated sectors on a base camp. They look for breeches in the fence line, wire movements or cuts and unexploded ordnance along the perimeter, Sgt. Dunn said.

They inspect 'lobster cages' which are steel structures covering culverts. These cages prevent individuals from climbing through the water drainage pipes and entering the base. They also inspect unmanned observation posts and assist other guard force soldiers with any problems they may have.

"Sometimes we'll get called out if one of the towers' spots activity along the wire. We also assist the commander of the relief in keeping the observation posts supplied with food and water," said Spc. Charles Bryson, a guard force soldier with 1-121st.

Sgt. Dunn and I were to patrol the area along perimeter road that extends from the East Gate to the airfield, commonly referred to as the 'North side'. Being that we could observe the shops and playground just outside the fence, it was rumored to be the 'livelier' of the two sides.

I later found out that this was a really subdued definition of 'livelier'. "Nothing has changed since we've been here, and that's what your looking for, nothing," said Sgt. Dunn. "If you see something out of the ordinary, then you know there might be trouble," he said.

After about three passes, I knew we were going to get a little dusty, but at least it wasn't too hot outside. The Humvees lack air conditioning, and on a warm day, all you can do is unzip the window and hope for a breeze.

Sgt. Dunn and I managed to pass most of the time talking. At first, it was about our jobs, and life on Eagle Base. By the time early evening rolled around, I had concluded that Sgt. Dunn was a modern-day renaissance man.

He is a pilot, a musician, an avid reader and traveler, so there was no shortage of subjects to talk about.

Sgt. Dunn works for the 178th Military Police Company, Georgia National Guard out of Covington, Ga. He was a police officer in the civilian sector before he started a business as a civilian contractor and fifth wheel, (tractor trailer) rebuilder.

He told me he had been playing guitar since he was five years old, and had since learned to play a banjo, dulcimer, bass, violin, harp and even the drums. Sgt. Dunn learned to play guitar from his father, while his mother made him take classical violin lessons.

Trying not to act too impressed, I asked, "Can you play the long solo in the middle of 'Free Bird'?" "That's one of the first songs I learned to play," he said. "The band I'm with covers a lot of country and southern rock."

As the day progressed, I realized that this would be a good opportunity to observe the local wildlife. After all, the very job

description calls for observing our surroundings.

There was a flock of Magpies perched along the concertina wire by the East gate. Later we saw a suspicious bunch of Bosnian 'devil birds' just past the pedestrian gate.

"I enjoy the scenery," said Spc. Bryson. "You get to see a side of the Bosnian culture, how their houses, gardening styles and modes of transportation differ from ours."

"It's more interesting to get out and see the perimeter, instead of staying in one place the whole time," Spc. Bryson added.

After scanning the same sector for a few hours I asked, "So what's the most challenging part of this job?"

"Driving for four hours straight and riding for four hours more," Sgt. Dunn said. "We average about 40 to 45 miles per shift," he said.

Forty-five dusty miles, I thought to myself. Driving slowly back and forth over a three-mile stretch. This was going to be a long night.

"What's the most rewarding aspect?" I asked quickly. "The most rewarding aspect is knowing that we are providing the soldiers and local nationals inside the wire with a safe place to work," Sgt. Dunn said.

Spc. Bryson also thought being a guard force soldier was not without its rewards. "You're in a hot truck for eight hours making sure the people here are protected," he said. "It's important we have a guard force here. It makes me feel like I'm doing some good."

Dinner came around 5:30 p.m. and was a welcome break to the monotony. We ate with the folks at the East Gate and talked sports before hitting the road. Just after the magenta sunset, more wildlife came out of hiding. Sgt. Dunn and I saw a few jackrabbits scurrying about, but we never did see the elusive hedgehogs rumored to roam the perimeter.

Within the hour, the stars started to peek from behind the clouds. Fatigue began to set in, and I thought of being at home in my nice comfortable bed. "So when do you guys sleep?" I asked.

"Some guys go right to bed, I try and stay up for a while," Sgt. Dunn said.

Sgt. Dunn told me that working from 2:45 until midnight wasn't always easy. "Second shift can be difficult because it's when most of the extra-curricular activities are taking place. The movies, sporting events, concerts all run while we are at work," he said.

"The only chance we get to participate in these is on our day off," Sgt. Dunn added.



Sgt. Bill Dunn, 1st Battalion, 121st Infantry inspects a "lobster cage" blocking potential trespassers from entering Eagle Base through a culvert.

"It's important we have a guard force here. It makes me feel like I'm doing some good."

*Spc. Charles Bryson,
guard force soldier,
1st Battalion, 121st Infantry*

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HOME

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"This is what leads to successful returns."

One of the American infantrymen who patrol the Lukavac area said the troops get a warm reception whenever they're around.

"Everywhere we go, the children wave," said Spc. Brian Hull of 4th Platoon, Company D. "If you keep the kids happy, you will keep the parents happy."

Denis Basic, a Bosnian Serb who is Maj. Stewart's interpreter, said he and the SFOR soldiers are received well in the area.

"The returnees love us here," Mr. Basic said. "None of the officials show up in the towns as much as SFOR soldiers do. It's great when you know that someone cares and shows it."

DRAGON

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"I think that this is a good base camp," said Sgt. 1st Class Keith D. Jones, platoon sergeant for 1st Platoon, Co. D. "Especially if you saw it before (and how much better it is now). When they were building this place, they thought about the separate areas, such as the MWR center and the gym, to make them more easily accessible from the rooms."

A lot of the Humvee crews' time is spent at Dragon Base in the motor pool performing maintenance on their vehicles for the next day's mission. Performing maintenance has been made easier because the motor pool "just out our backdoor."

"(FOB Morgan) is the hottest thing in Bosnia," said Capt. Todd Spafford, commander of Co. D. "We get two VIP's a week coming out here; we even have three guest rooms with refrigerators and fruit baskets. This place is probably the best hidden five-star motel the Army has. The base camp has the small-town feeling of everybody knowing everyone else, he said.

He said when his soldiers first got to FOB Morgan, they were apprehensive about life there. But once used to the FOB, his soldiers didn't want to leave.

"Life here is good," said Capt. Spafford.

FORCE

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We made a few more passes and before I knew it, midnight came. Looking back, the time seemed to pass much more quickly than I thought it would. Still, I was glad my shift was over, and was looking forward to stripping off my dusty BDU's and jumping in the shower.

As we headed back towards the pedestrian gate, Sgt. Dunn said, "We covered 42 miles tonight. It's been a pretty good night."

I, of course, mistook this to mean that the quitting time was near. However, the shift wasn't over just yet. Our Humvee was sorely in need of a washing, so we drove down to the wash rack to take care of business.

As the water bounced off the plastic windows, the little beads reflecting in the light mesmerized me. I thought about all the events that transpired that day.

Even though it was approaching 12:30 a.m., I didn't mind. I admired the fact Sgt. Dunn stayed late to make sure the job was done right. I met some dedicated soldiers that night. Doing the job right seems to be a value possessed by most of the guard force soldiers.

"I am proud of the job the guard force soldiers are doing. I wouldn't hesitate to come back here and do it again," said Spc. Bryson.

Soldier on the Street

"What does personal courage mean to you?"

Honorably doing a job tasked. Following rules. Taking care of your fellow soldiers. That's what it means."

Spc. James Baugh
HHC, 3rd ID, JMC
Eagle Base



It means knowing, even through the most difficult moments, you are able to do what you have to."

Spc. Drew Roberts,
Co. B, 148th LTF
Camp McGovern

Having the fortitude to accomplish a mission no matter what the task might be."

Spc. Ryan Jone
Co. D, 2-3 Aviation
Camp Comanche



Personal courage is leaving your family behind to go help another country."

Staff Sgt. Cyndi Giambo
HHC, 3rd ID
Eagle Base

Personal courage means that you have confidence in what you do, because without that, you can't do anything."

Ed Winters
MWR Rec. Manager
Camp McGovern



Having the strength to go against the grain and to take the road less traveled."

Spc. Martha Verastegui
HHC, 2-121
Camp Comanche