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Inside This Issue

Soldiers learn local culture through arts
Retrans team makes connections

TALON

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CSM Speaks

Command Sgt. Maj. Michael F. Case

*"It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled, or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually **in the arena**..."* -Theodore Roosevelt

You have made a difference. Peacekeeping is not glamorous work. I traveled the wire on cold nights and sat shotgun on patrols driving the endless miles. The soldiers and NCOs I met exemplified professionalism and dedication despite the discomforts and extraordinary challenges. I am deeply proud of all of you.

Without the support of the logistics and administrative forces those soldiers in the combat arms' task forces—"the tip of the spear," would never get out the door. I saw first hand the excellent logistics and administration support that allowed the mission to keep going. I appreciate the late nights our maintenance teams logged keeping our aircraft and armor up and ready. Let us not forget the relentless work of the fine soldiers and civilians who attack the paperwork battle everyday.

Many of us worked with the officials, non-government agencies and military allies all working towards the common goal of a lasting, prosperous peace. We have been trusted with a tremendous responsibility and we must thank those in this country who have ensured our efforts are not wasted. We also found out that we are not only Peacekeepers, but we also provided a valuable resource on the war against terrorism.

I know you will leave the 25th in good shape. They are a top-notch division that will build on our many successes. They will also be asked to do more and to continue this demanding effort. I am confident they will excel while serving here.

Our time as Peacekeepers in Bosnia and Herzegovina draws to a close. For the last seven months you were asked to give up many things and you did it without question. We all have family back home; many of us have civilian jobs, school or are returning to active duty home station. As I prepare to return home, I have mixed feelings. I am excited to return home to my family and my life as a police officer. But I will miss working with the best soldiers I have ever served with. As you return home, make sure everyone understands your efforts and service in the Balkans. We come from the greatest country in the world, the United States of America. You have served the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, more importantly you have served our country with honor.

Chaplain's Corner

During the course of this deployment, we soldiers of SFOR have tackled many challenges and reaped many blessings. We have been fortunate to participate in a military mission that helps build, rather than destroy.

And, we have celebrated holidays without our loved ones. The sacrifices we make are significant.

While each holiday, for each faith, is unique and beautiful, Passover holds special significance for Jews. It is the story of how a people were initially accepted into a society, only later to be subjugated to a hard and punishing life under the control of taskmasters. It is also a story of a people's faith in G-d.

The Seder Meal is a time for family and friends to join together and retell the story of Passover. This story remains virtually unchanged over thousands of years. In Sarajevo there is a Haggadah, or Passover Story Book, that is 600 years old and is very similar to the Haggadah we use today.

We remember that times were once difficult, but with faith in G-d and his help, we prevailed to be free and share our lives with those we love.

Passover is the story of a people's inexhaustible quest for freedom. In the millennia that have passed since then, this tale of a struggle between Pharaoh, an absolute ruler who believed his powers to be godlike, and the G-d who intervened for a people striving to be free, endures as a universal fable of faith and freedom. After the coldness and harshness of the winter season, invariably the warm winds and sun of hope and springtime follow.

Sgt. 1st Class David Rapaport
Acting Rabbi for SFOR10

ON THE COVER: Sgt. Steve Wilson from C Company, 129th Signal Battalion verifies the connection from a hilltop above Srebrenica back to Eagle base after the Division Retransmission team set up the temporary retransmission site. Photo by Capt. Kristine Coan.

Land of the free, home of the brave

Master Sgt. Mike Welsh
Sgt. Cheri Priestino
382nd MPAD

The SFOR10 rotation has been defined by the events of Sept. 11. What should have been a routine peacekeeping duty took on a new intense operational tempo and every activity, every mission, took on new meaning as soldiers quietly served under the shadow of terrorism. The rotation has also been defined by patriotism and heroism, as ordinary citizens have stepped forward and accomplished extraordinary things.

The Flag

Spc Ritty Mahoney is a Squad Automatic Weapon gunner for A Company, 2nd Battalion, 22nd Regiment, 10th Mountain Division. A resident of New York City, he is an active duty infantryman serving in Bosnia and Herzegovina as part of SFOR10.

Like many soldiers, he has received packages and letters from home, including homemade cards from school-aged children proclaiming him a hero. And while he and his fellow soldiers would never call themselves heroes, they accomplish their mission daily in service to their country.

Recently, Mahoney received a special package from another group of heroes back home. Police officers, firefighters, and rescue workers signed an American flag, which was presented to Mahoney's wife by her co-workers on Wall Street in New York City.

"The flag was signed by a lot of different police and emergency service workers down at ground zero. My wife's co-workers thought it would be motivating to send this to me while I was over here in Bosnia"

The flag holds the names of American heroes working in a crater where the World Trade Center once stood. It is blanketed in a maze of signatures, each signature representing an emergency service worker. It is an inspirational gift, passed from one group of heroes to another.

Mahoney brought out the flag for the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Regiment awards ceremony held recently. The flag boldly stood out among the 10th Mountain Division men who were wearing their battle dress uniforms and slung M-4 rifles. It was a vivid reminder of the duty to country these men and so many other soldiers have sworn to perform.

The Refugee

Perhaps no soldier serving with SFOR10 understands the tremendous privilege it is to call yourself an American more than Maj. Lapthe Flora, of the 29th Infantry Division (Light). Flora is a former Vietnamese refugee who came to the United States after fleeing the communist regime, surviving in the jungle and enduring life in a refugee camp.

"I had nothing, no clothes, no money, nothing except what I was wearing," said Flora, who is serving in the operations section with the 29th ID(L).

After enduring four years of uncertainty, Flora managed to get a sponsor and immigrate to the United States. Following in his adopted father's footsteps, he attended the Virginia Military Institute and joined the Virginia Army National Guard. When he told his father he was a lieutenant with the 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry, he was surprised to learn that his father was the battalion operations officer when the 116th landed at Normandy.

When the opportunity was presented for Flora to serve in Bosnia and Herzegovina with SFOR10, he proudly volunteered.

"I sort of felt like it was my chance to try to give something back to a country I appreciate so much. I can relate to the people here in Bosnia because I know what war is like and how it feels to be a refugee."

From a teenager in the jungles of Vietnam to a Major serving in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Flora has made an extraordinary journey to become a living reminder of the hope that is America.

The Citizen Soldiers

One of the more unique aspects of the SFOR10 rotation is the high numbers of National Guard and Reserve soldiers. Serving alongside active duty soldiers these citizen soldiers have brought new meaning to the phrase "Army of One," and no where was that more apparent than the 229th Engineers. Primarily made up of Virginia National Guardsmen, the 229th employed active duty army soldiers from Fort Drum as platoon leaders.

"I have loved working with the National Guard," explained 1st Lt. Mark Cobos. "A lot of people don't appreciate the National Guard, but these are volunteers. They wanted to come. They are true citizen soldiers – individuals who stepped up to the plate and hit home runs for their country."

Citizen soldiers have a long tradition that predates the Declaration of Independence. Before there was a United States of America, there were minutemen fighting to defend their homes and working together to strengthen their communities. Today's guardsmen carry on that tradition with homeland defense missions and overseas deployments.

The SFOR10 rotation is drawing to a close and soldiers are returning to their home units and their families. With the possibility of future deployments looming large and the all too fresh memory of the events of Sept. 11, soldiers and citizens alike will be training harder than ever to fulfill their next mission. According to Brig. Gen. Daniel E. Long, assistant division commander for Multinational Division (North), the soldiers of SFOR10 performed with commitment and professionalism, but the training must continue.

"It is clear that Guard and Reserve forces will continue to play a vital role in our nation's commitment to peace. Future deployments will depend on the readiness of all our forces."

Professional soldiers and proud citizens, the men and women of SFOR10 will be ready for the next mission.

Master Sgt. Mike Welsh

Members of 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 10th Mountain Division pose with an American flag signed by emergency workers at the World Trade Center site. The soldiers signed an American flag that flew over Bosnia and Herzegovina to send back to the workers - two symbols of American pride sent from one group of heroes to another.

News briefs

Review of weight reg

Joe Burlas
ARNEWS

While the Army is currently reviewing its rules governing the weight control program in Army Regulation 600-9, don't expect to see any changes before fiscal year 2003.

Last updated in 1986, the latest review was partly prompted by a Department of Defense directive for the armed services to get more standardized programs across each. Currently, weight control and physical fitness standards are developed and implemented independently by each service.

Another reason for the review is that the Army knows more about health issues and physical fitness based upon medical science than it did years ago.

The Army is still in the information-gathering stage of the review. The next step will be to field test proposals and practices.

Following the field test, recommendations for any changes will be staffed at both the Army headquarters and major military command levels — a process that could take up to a year — before any changes might be made.

Adoption reimbursement

Staff Sgt. Marcia Triggs
ARNEWS

During the 2000 Army Family Action Plan conference, soldiers stationed in foreign countries said that not being eligible for reimbursement discouraged them from adopting children while assigned abroad.

However, soldiers stationed overseas have always been eligible for reimbursement as long as they followed the Department of the Defense Adoption Reimbursement Policy.

"Soldiers in overseas areas had been denied reimbursement of adoption expenses because they failed to use a qualifying adoption agency," said a spokesperson for the Defense Finance and Accounting Service.

A qualifying adoption agency is a state or local government agency, a nonprofit, voluntary agency or any other source that is recognized by state or local law to place children for adoption.

Adopting parents who incur expenses for the adoption of a child under the age 18 may receive up to $2,000 per child, but not more than $5,000 for multiple adoptions in the same calendar year.

Mines cleared in Afghan

Spc. David Marck
ARNEWS

After more than 20 years of war, the Afghan countryside is littered with unexploded mortar rounds, bombs, rockets, land mines and thousands of rounds of ammunition.

The 710th Ordnance Company (Explosive Ordnance Disposal or EOD), out of Port Loma, Calif., is tasked with the job of clearing the sites.

"We start with a list of locations where somebody reported seeing something," said Sgt. 1st Class Tony Hammerquist, 710th operations noncommissioned officer. "We have to check all of the sightings, determine what's there, and then decide on the best way to take care of it."

The priority of caches to clear, according to Hammerquist, is any kind of shoulder-fired missile, grenades and mines — anything that can be easily redeployed against the troops.

Once it is decided that the cache is a threat and needs to be destroyed, the next step is deciding how to go about disposing of it.

"If it's safe to move, we'll just pick it up and carry it to the location of a larger cache, so we can blow it up all together," Hammerquist said. "If it's too dangerous, we'll just blow it up in place."

Despite the standard weapons and munitions caches, the EOD teams also find other varieties of unexploded ordnance.

"Occasionally we'll run across a minefield," said Adkins. "We mark our tracks and the location on a map so that, hopefully, nobody else will go in there."

The rest, he said, is the job of the combat engineers. While EOD has the resources and expertise to take care of the caches and single explosives, it does not have the manpower to handle an entire minefield.

EOD also takes care of any ordnance that the United States may have placed in the area that hasn't been destroyed.

In the early stages of the war in Afghanistan, the U.S. Air Force released more than 200 soft-drink size canister explosives. Unfortunately, a small percentage did not explode and the duds must be cleaned up.

"They are too sensitive to move," Hammerquist said. "Just settling in the sand or a strong gust of wind can set them off."

In order to destroy them, an EOD team builds a fighting position on top of a vehicle, and a sharpshooter wearing body armor uses a .50-caliber sniper rifle to detonate the canisters.

"Our job is dangerous," Hammerquist said, "but it's what we do."

Promotions not stopped

Karen Roberts
ARNEWS

Operations Enduring Freedom and Noble Eagle have created unique personnel policy needs for the combined Army components.

Active-Army, National Guard, and Reserve soldiers need policies that merge into one centralized document.

For now, the policy is for soldiers from the Guard and Reserve who are activated for a year to remain under previous authorities with regard to promotions for E-5 and above, with the lower grades under active-duty rules.

Active-duty soldiers whose status was impacted by stop-loss can still be eligible for promotion consideration, as long as they don't have an approved retirement already in the system. The same is true for Guard and Reserve soldiers.

The number of yearly promotions is based on losses at each grade. One of the main reasons for promotions is to ensure that we maintain a ready Army with the proper grade structure.

"We want soldiers to have every opportunity for promotions," said Sgt. Maj. Gerald Purcell, active componet personnel policy integrator, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1.

"We are smoothing out the policy obstacles now we have to get more enlisted soldiers referred to selection boards," he explained.

Currently, "there are some Military Occupational Specialties where too few soldiers are being recommended for promotion and if they were just recommended and boarded, they would be promoted immediately," said Purcell.

Some of the MOSs in which there are deficiencies in the sergeant ranks have honest structural problems, but most should not be lacking.

Soldiers who aren't ready for promotion, but otherwise meet all of the requirements should be trained and made ready, said Purcell.

For more information about areas where there are sergeant shortages, or for personnel policy changes, visit the Total Army Personnel Command Website at http://www.perscom.army.mil.

Soldiers learn local culture through arts

Master Sgt. Jon S. Guttman
29th ID Historian

Master Sgt. Jon S. Guttman

The cultural-artistic troupe Bosna performs a traditional Bosnian folk dance during the Friendship and Cooperation Concert held in Tuzla March 16.

Music is a universal art form whose diverse styles do much to define national cultures — and be celebrated for that very diversity. As Duke Ellington famously put it, "If it sounds good, it is good."

The music of Bosnia and Herzegovina reflects the influences of numerous cultures throughout the Mediterranean Sea, acquired both by commerce and by conquest.

The greatest single influence is Turkish, yet Turkish soldiers on peacekeeping duties have noted that there is a fundamental element to Bosnian music that is unique to that country.

On the night of March 16, about 450 guests, including 150 soldiers of Stabilization Force 10, experienced Bosnian music in various forms in a Friendship and Cooperation Concert, held in the Bosnian Armed Forces' II Corps office and officers' club in Tuzla.

The first performance of the evening was by an ensemble from Tuzla called the Sloboda ("freedom") String Instrument Association. Playing tamburitzas and a variety of plucked stringed instruments, the group played Bosnian tunes, but also applied its style to foreign tunes, such as Johann Strauss the Elder's "Radetzky March" and the march from "Bridge Over the River Kwai"—both of which had the audience clapping in time.

From tamburitza, the concert turned to dance with the local cultural-artistic group Bosna, which performed folk dances in traditional dress. Between acts, three young couples did some swing dancing, with the athletic dexterity of high school gymnasts. There was a brief interlude of comic relief, courtesy of interpreter Mile Rupcic from a standup routine he had developed from stories from his great uncle in Chicago, Ill., called "Pete…And This Is America." The final performance of the evening came from internationally popular balladeer Ibrica Jusic and his electronically enhanced guitar.

Born in Dubrovnik and currently residing in the Croatian capital of Zagreb, Jusic is a Muslim who goes everywhere with his Collie dog Archie, and who says that his songs are always about love, "because that's the only human activity that makes us better people."

On the following day, Jusic and Archie made a second appearance at Minue Memorial Park on Eagle Base, where the soldiers of Multinational Division (North) were taking advantage of an exceptionally warm and sunny day to have an outdoor barbecue. Maj. Gen. H Steven Blum, commander of MND (N), had arranged to bring Jusic over, saying, "He graciously accepted an invitation to come to Eagle Base and play for the soldiers who could not come to the concert."

"I've heard his music," Blum remarked. "It captures the pain, the joy and the hope of this country and expresses it in a way that is universally understood through his music. Being a Croat and a Muslim, he represents the multi-ethnicity of this country."

Amid the serious business of maintaining a safe and secure environment throughout the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the weekend of March 16-17 gave the troops on Eagle Base a taste of local culture and a reinforced sense of purpose — as well as a pleasant musical interlude.

Master Sgt. Jon S. Guttman

The Sloboda (freedom) String Instrument Association opened the Friendship and Cooperation Concert in Tuzla, March 16.

Retrans team makes connections

Capt. Kristine Coan
Media Operations Center

"OMAHA THREE ZERO, OMAHA THREE ZERO, THIS IS OMAHA ZERO SEVEN, RADIO CHECK OVER"

Sgt. Steven Wilson, a communications expert from the Maryland Army National Guard, clicks the mike, speaks confidently and awaits the return transmission.

Before that, his team had received orders for its mission, conducted a map recon, driven for hours, found the designated location, erected one or more OE (Operational Equipment)-254 Antennas, and loaded the SINCGARS (Single Channel Ground Airborne Radio System) with the required data.

Over the past six months, this 29th Infantry Division (Light) 6-soldier Retransmission (retrans) Team has driven more than 25,000 miles through rugged terrain and contentious areas in northern Bosnia and Herzegovina providing communications, or comms, for patrols and other missions, as well as testing and recording data to minimize radio dead space.

The team has "performed over 40 missions, including two real world missions," explains 1st Lt. Daniel Dulin, a planner for the Division Signal staff.

Dulin planned the mission for the Division retrans teams in the Visoko airfield raid in September 2001, and the Han Pijesak weapons cache seizure in October.

In the planning aspect, the Signal branch is somewhat unique under the current SFOR mission. Many commanders and soldiers equate Signal to automation. This is simply not the case. With the change from SFOR9 to SFOR10 six months ago, the automation responsibility switched from the G-6 (Division Signal) to the DOIM (Director of Information Management) under the ASG (Area Support Group). However, the management of the retrans teams is still an important G-6 function.

Tactical FM (Frequency Modulation) radio and satellite comms play a key part in day-to-day operations for Task Force Eagle. Actually, the maneuver task forces within Multinational Division (North) have separate retrans teams assigned to them and perform similar missions.

Task Force Rifles has the responsibility for a permanent signal site on what is known as Hill Top 1326, located within MND(N). This site is located on a strategic high point in this area of operations, but "does not provide complete coverage in this mountainous terrain, with all the valleys, hills and dips," explains Staff Sgt John McCaffrey, the noncommissioned officer in charge (NCOIC) of the Division Retrans teams coming from C Company, 129th Signal Battalion of the Maryland Army National Guard. Because the permanently installed equipment leaves a number of "dead spots," the temporary retrans sites are needed.

This past week, a retrans team led by

Capt. Kristine Coan

Spc. Alan Tuck, of the Virginia Army National Guard, adjusts the Spitfire tactical satellite as he prepares to test communications from a hilltop above Srebrenica.

Sgt. Steve Wilson, of C Company 129th Retransmission section makes the final co stood upright. The soldiers installed the OE to test communications throughout the eas

McCaffrey traveled to a hilltop above the town of Srebrenica to set up FM and TACSAT (Tactical Satellite) communications to test for dead space.

The four soldier team worked swiftly, the troops slipping into their roles as soon as they hit the ground.

Pfc. Eddie Phelps and Spc. Alan Tuck, both of the Virginia Army National Guard, teamed up immediately. Phelps managed the set up of the OE-254 antennae while Tuck took charge of engaging, the Spitfire, the common name for the Tactical Satellite. The entire signal site was 100% operational in about 30 minutes.

"The goal is to connect the radio with the Spitfire for extended coverage," explained Tuck.

After the signal site is set up, other retrans soldiers, such as Spc. Alonzo Parker of B Company, 129th Signal Battalion, spent time driving from checkpoint to checkpoint, testing comms.

"We normally plot the checkpoints on the map before we depart," said Parker, conveying the importance of plotting the data on the map. "One checkpoint may have good comms and then 5 miles down the road, it could be dead."

Collecting data to find out where the comms will work and will not work is essential to activities that SFOR supports with multinational troops, such as the annual Srebrenica Observance.

In fact, this team has recently connected the Nordic-Polish Battle Group (NPBG) equipment located in Doboj to the American equipment at Eagle Base, through various retrans sites, acting as a daisy chain.

In the same manner, the team achieved success in Ugljevik, testing the Russian radio compatibility, but they also found a different type of success.

Russian sponsors hosted a traditional Russian dinner for the team during which, Dulin said they "toasted to America, expressing concern for nine-eleven."

Back on the hilltop above Srebrenica, the radio squawks.

"I READ YOU LIMA CHARLIE, OUT."

Loud and clear, Wilson's transmission was heard - mission complete.

Capt. Kristine Coan

Pfc. Eddie Phelps and Spc. Alan Tuck, both of the Virginia Army National Guard, prepare to raise the OE-254 antenna on a hilltop above Srebrenica. The two soldiers are part of Division Retransmission team. Working swiftly, the four man team is able to set up a temporary retransmission site in about 30 minutes. Their recent mission was designed to test communications throughout the eastern part of the Republika Srpska.

Capt. Kristine Coan

Signal Battalion assigned to the Division nnection on the OE-254 antenna before it is E-254 antenna on a hilltop above Srebrenica stern part of the Republika Srpska.

Capt. Kristine Coan

Spc. Alan Tuck points the Spitfire tactical sattelite toward the sky to pick up a connection with various satellites in space during a recent Division Retransmission team mission.

Son of 'Men of Honor' serves SFOR

Spc. Worley B. Smith
382nd MPAD

"Like father, like son" is a familiar yet often overused phrase. In this age of individualism and expression of self-thought, the idea of being measured in relation to a parental figure rather than by one's self sometimes seems to offend people. This doesn't seem to be the case, though, with Chief Warrant Officer Phillip M. Brashear.

Hollywood made the name Brashear a household word after the release of the 2000 movie "Men of Honor," starring Cuba Gooding Jr. and Robert De Niro. But long before the rest of the world knew of the accomplishments of Carl Brashear, he had already made a name for himself and secured a place of prestige within the Navy, and even before then established himself as a Man of Honor in the eyes of his family. This was especially true for his son, Phillip.

Growing up in the Brashear household, Phillip's relationship with his father went through stages. According to Brashear, "As a young child, we had a father/ son relationship…I feared my dad, but the older I got the closer our relation grew, to the point that now we're the best of friends."

According to Brashear, the movie only scratched the surface of who his father was and the challenges he went through: "When I think of my dad, I remember seeing a man who came home every day driven. He was obviously frustrated but he never took that frustration out on us [his family]. He used that frustration as therapy to work out and better himself."

Brashear said that even after his father had his leg amputated, he never saw himself as handicapped or underprivileged.

"I had the greatest role model in the world," Phillip said.

Spc. Worley B. Smith

Chief Warrant Officer Phillip M. Brashear serves with pride.

Brashear has made quite a name for himself in the military, much like his father. He started his military career in the Navy as a crew chief aboard an H-53 Sea Dragon. After 10 years in the Navy, Brashear said he started looking into becoming a pilot.

"I always had dreams of becoming a Navy flight officer, but I was already 27 years old and didn't have my degree yet," he said. "Time was running out."

It was about that time, he said, that he met Col. Jim Holden, State Aviation Officer for the Virginia National Guard.

According to Brashear, "Col. Holden told me that if I transferred to the Army National Guard, he would send me to flight school. The rest is history."

It's a wonder that Brashear even enlisted in the military at all. He said that as teenager, he rebelled against anything that had to do with the armed forces, but as he grew older, he started to rethink his actions. He said that he always had a fascination with the sky. He explained that his father use to tell him stories of diving and the work that he did.

"I have always had a love of the water and swimming just like my father, but I have apprehensions about being in confined places," he said. "Flying is a joint effort while diving is a singular effort."

Chief Warrant Officer Phillip Brashear is a Black Hawk pilot with B Company, 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation, of the Virginia National Guard based in Sandston.

When asked about his thoughts of being on deployment in the Balkans, he had some real candid comments: "It's no secret that at first I didn't want to come. I have a new 19 month old son and two daughters – ages 13 and 15. After the events of September 11, this deployment hit me like a punch to the gut. It gave me a real world outlook on everything. Now that I'm here, I realize that this is where I belong and I see that we [SFOR] really has a purpose and I see that we're really making a difference.

Brashear added a comical anecdote about a recent conversation he had with his father: "My dad often ends our conversations by reminding me to keep safe, keep my head down and fly low." Brashear candidly chuckled as he remarked that was the way the Army teaches pilots to fly, anyway.

As Brashear reflected on the past six months he has spent in the Balkans, he recalled some of the personal goals he has accomplished: "I managed to lose 20 pounds while I have been here."

Brashear has kept himself in excellent physical shape by working out on a regular basis: "I believe if you keep your mind and body healthy there is nothing you can't do. Brashear, who even at 40 still manages to max his Army Physical Fitness Test in the 17 to 21 year old age bracket, demonstrated by an impressive 12:06 two mile run time.

Master Chief Boatswain's Mate, U.S. Navy (Retired) Carl Brashear

Another contributing factor to the enjoyable experience Brashear says he has had here are the numerous Morale Welfare and Recreation activities. Brashear stongly recommends every soldier take advantage of every MWR opportunity that is available to them.

Brashear eagerly looks forward to redeploying back to the states after his rotation is over.

He said he realizes that the United States he will return to is far different from the one he left a little more than six months ago: "After being deployed over here, I have a greater appreciation for the simple pleasures we all [Americans] take for granted."

Like father like son, the apple doesn't fall far from the tree, a chip off the old block - whichever colloquialism you choose to use, they all hold true when talking about Chief Warrant Officer Phillip M. Brashear.

The lessons he has learned from his father, the experiences he has had in his own military career, along with the opportunity he has had to be a peacekeeper in the Balkans, will make for great stories to share with his own son in the future.

While a Hollywood movie helped to make his father a celebrity to the world and solidify the catch-phrase Man of Honor by creating a movie of his life, Chief Brashear has achieved celebrity status with the soldiers he serves with and has established hiself as a Man of Honor simply by being himself.

DLA team relocates to Eagle Base

Steven Abney
Defense Logistics Agency

The Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) Contingency Support Team in Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina, has moved from Camp Comanche to Eagle Base as part of a consolidation of U.S. forces in the area.

"We were able to move in two and half days with no break in service to our customers," said Master Chief Petty Officer Robert Johnson. "We moved ourselves and had two people at one location and three at the other in the order to maintain customer support," he said. "Some customers moved to Eagle Base, while others are in the process. We were one of the first, if not the first tenant command, to make the move."

"Everyone is bugging out of Comanche," said Don Reed, a parts expeditor with the team. "Our customers will be at Eagle Base within two weeks."

Johnson, who will leave the DCST soon to go to Defense Logistics Agency headquaters, noted that the team is right across the street from the Finnish Post Exchange.

"It's great landmark. Everyone knows where the Finnish PX is," he said. "I was just there and bought one of the white sailor sweaters for 70 euros. As the only Navy person on the team, I had to get that."

Not only is the team's location good for customers, it's convenient for the team. "You can walk from the office to your room, to chow, to the medical facility or to the air terminal," Johnson said.

Reed says that the experience in Bosnia enhances his career.

"I had been an item manager and worked in the Emergency Supply Operations Center in Columbus, Ohio," Reed said, "and now I'm a cataloger with Defense Logistics Information Service at the Battle Creek, Michigan. With this experience, I know the whole range."

"The DCST has four core competencies," said Air Force Lt. Col. Eric Earnest, forward commander of the DLA Contingency Support Team Bosnia (DCST-B).

One competency is expediting priority two and five requisitions for DLA-assigned national stock numbers.

"We expedite about 300 requisitions per month," said Earnest. That enables Task Force Eagle to maintain its vehicles and helicopters at a high readiness level.

Another major function is collection and disposal of scrap metal and hazardous waste.

"On a monthly basis, we process over 390,181 pounds of hazardous waste/ material, and 9,160 pounds of scrap metal," Earnest said.

Spc. Vincent Oliver

Linda Lamphear, the contracting officers representative for hazardous waste talks with Navy Master Chief Robert Johnson, the operation manager for the Defense Logistics Agency Contingency Support Team .

Contractor employees in Taszar, Hungary, manage a facility for property disposal. The team at Eagle Base oversees the collection of that waste.

"We're also responsible for petroleum products," Earnest said. "The U.S. is the role specialist nation for gas and oil, which means we support all the NATO forces in Bosnia. The DLA fuel operations that handles that is at Split, Croatia, and we have three people assigned there."

Finally, the DCST monitors the DLA material arriving in theater, much of which is Class 1 (food and beverages). He explained that operational rations stocks are held and can distributed from the Defense Distribution Depot Europe at Germersheim. However, other subsistence support for Task Force Eagle is typically provided by Subsistence Prime Vendors contracted by DLA to support the region.

"From Oct. 1 to Feb. 1, the average monthly value of shipments has been $2.6 million," Earnest said.

Since its creation in 1961, the Defense Logistics Agency has grown to become a worldwide logistics combat support operation. From its headquarters in Ft. Belvoir, Va., just outside Washington, D.C., DLA oversees a staff of more than 28,000 civilian and military employees who work in all 50 states and 27 foreign countries.

DLA supplies almost every consumable item that the United States' military services need to operate, from food for the Dining Facilities supporting Task Force Eagle to Fuel for critical weapons systems.

In short, if Eagle Forces can eat it, wear it, drive it, fly it, shoot it, or burn it, chances are that DLA helps to provide it. In fact, more than 80 percent of the items currently maintained in the Task Force Eagle Supply Support Activity (SSA) are DLA-managed items.

As the Warfighters' Logistics Combat Support Agency, DLA prides itself on providing quality food, fuel, clothing, medicines, spare parts, supplies, and services, where they're needed, when they are needed, and at the best value costs possible.

Prior to March 1, the DLA Contingency Support Team Forward was based out of Camp Comanche. The team's presence in the theater permits DLA to quickly and effectively respond to the logistical needs of its military customers.

Controllers provide safe gateway

Staff Sgt. Shanda DeAnda
401st Expeditionary Air Base Group

The mission of the 401st Expeditionary Air Base Group is to operate the primary airfield in the U.S. sector of Bosnia and Herzegovina in support of Task Force Eagle's NATO peacekeeping mission for Multinational Division (North) Operation Joint Forge.

The airfield operations flight air traffic controllers, through their hard work, professionalism, dedication and genuine love for the job, play a critical role in accomplishing that mission.

"Besides flying the planes and dropping the bombs, this is the best position to have," said Tech. Sgt. Renedo Onelio III, an approach controller with more than 18 years of experience at six different installations in three countries, including the United States, Germany and Honduras.

"I am on the downhill slope of my military career and I am trying to pass on as much of the knowledge I've gained through experience as possible."

Second only to Sarajevo, Tuzla Air Base has the busiest airport in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the air traffic controllers (ATC) take their mission of providing NATO forces a gateway through Balkan skies seriously.

Every minute of every day, the ATC team is ready to respond when needed, to ensure the safe passage of aircraft taking off or landing here.

The team, which is more than 50 percent smaller than a year ago, helps provide safe passage for the aerial transport of everything that keeps MND(N) running.

All aircraft, including medical evacuation, cargo, foreign military, jets, helicopters and commercial air liners, rely on the guidance of the 401st Expeditionary Air Base Group members in the tower, working both tower and approach control, to complete their mission.

The accomplishment of the mission is peppered with challenges unique to this region and this location.

"One of the biggest challenges here is working through language and cultural barriers to accomplish the mission," said Tech. Sgt. James Williams, a tower controller with 10 years of experience. "But the challenge is continuously met and overcome and the value of lessons learned through that interaction is priceless."

"I love this job," said Staff Sgt. Matt Lau, an air traffic controller with more than five years experience at several towers, including Tinker Air Force Base, Kunsan Air Base and Sheppard AFB.

"Working here is the only place I have ever worked with the Army. Besides getting the opportunity to get experience controlling helicopters instead of just fixed wing aircraft, all of the landings are actual. By not having aircraft making practice approaches, the air traffic is reduced by about half of what I am accustomed to in the states."

"Although air traffic isn't as busy as many of the tower folks are accustomed to, the consolidation of Comanche's flying operations may change that somewhat," said Williams. "As the consolidation of Camp Comanche continues, we do anticipate an increase in air traffic, but the impact will be minimal."

"This deployment has been a valuable experience and I've had the opportunity to be a part of the closure of an entire GCA (ground control approach) section and work in the only IFR (instrument flight rules) approach tower in the Air Force," said Tech. Sgt. Richard Scafe, an approach controller.

Staff Sgt. Shanda DeAnda

Air Force Staff Sgt. Aaron Botts helps to keep the skies over Tuzla safe and secure. Botts, a tower controller with three years of experience says being a tower controller "is the best job in the Air Force."

"Although working without the radar took some getting used to, especially with coordination that was required in the beginning, we don't have to worry about as many aircraft doing too many different things. Instead of doing more with less, we actually are doing less with less here. It has also been great to actually move to the tower, where we now work side-by-side with air tower controllers, which really helps to reduce confusion and speed up the coordination of missions."

"Working here isn't too different from working this position at my home station [Whiteman Air Force Base, Mont.]," said Williams. "The best thing is probably having the GCA [now non-radar approach controller] person in the tower with us."

Air traffic control works closely with several other agencies on a regular basis, including security forces, airfield/base operations and the command post.

Security forces rely on the tower as another set of eyes to help keep an eye out for anything suspicious. Their vantage point above the tree line makes them a valuable asset in maintaining the safety and security of this installation, as well as providing the earliest possible notification in the event of an assault against the installation.

In turn, airfield management helps the tower by keeping the runway clear of any hazardous conditions, as well as keeping the tower abreast of any hazardous conditions on a regular basis to help them better execute their duties. In the event of an emergency, the tower also works closely with the fire department and the hospital.

"The most important part of our job is to be able to make decisions and live with them," said Master Sgt. Thomas Brown, tower controller.

"This is the best job in the Air Force and as a cross-trainee I have no doubt that I made the best choice," said Staff Sgt. Aaron Botts, tower controller with three years of experience.

"Since I have been here I have learned so much from people who have been in this career field for a while. I am also gaining the experience of working with helicopters in addition to fixed wing aircraft."

The 25th Infantry Division

In 1872, Maj. Gen. John M. Schofield stepped ashore to evaluate the military potential of Oahu's seaports. He found two excellent harbors in the middle of the Pacific. Schofield was able to convince Congress that Hawaii was vital to the defense of the United States.

On Aug. 12, 1898 Hawaii was annexed as a U.S. territory, and four days later 1,300 troops landed near Diamond Head to set up the first military base.

On Oct. 1, 1941, the Hawaiian Division was inactivated. The 27th and the 35th Infantry Regiments, the 298th Infantry Regiment of the Hawaiian Guard, plus a field artillery brigade, formed the core of the new 25th Infantry Division.

Those units operated in peace for only 10 weeks before the Japanese launched their surprise attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7 . Immediately following the attack, the 25th's troops were dispatched to their defensive positions.

After receiving the call to combat the 25th Infantry Division began its deployment to the South Pacific. The speed with which the division executed its mission earned it the informal nickname of "Tropic Lightning."

The next combat action for the 25th took place in the Solomon Islands where they defeated Japanese Forces on Arundel and Kolombangara Islands, and participated in the capture of Vella La Vella.

Following the Solomon campaign, the Division headed for New Zealand for a period of rest. Soon the Division received orders to land at Luzon in the Philippine Islands, on Jan. 11, 1945.

Once in country, divisional units quickly pushed through Balete Pass. By the time the 25th captured Balete Pass, it had suffered more combat deaths than any other U.S. Division in the Philippines. The 25th, however, accounted for more than 6,000 Japanese killed and set the record for combat endurance in the Pacific Theater of Operations. The record was recognized with the Philippine Presidential Unit Citation, as well as six other unit citations. Six division soldiers were awarded Medals of Honor during World War II.

During late 1943, the Division's shoulder patch, a lightning bolt superimposed on a taro leaf, was formally adopted. The "lightning" epithet was adopted because of the speed with which the Division conducted its operation on Guadalcanal. Lightning was subsequently changed to Tropic Lightning; because the division had spent its entire existence in the tropics. The taro leaf is reminiscent of the birth of the 25th from elements of the Hawaiian Division, and suggestive of the pacific region where the 25th Division was established and where it had fought so well. The colors of red and gold were those of the late Hawaiian monarchy.

In a break from tradition, the Department of the Army officially approved the use of the nickname Tropic Lightning. Authorization for the 25th Division to use the nickname marked the first time that a divisional unit had been given that kind of permission by the Department of the Army.

On June 25, 1950, the North Korean People's Army crossed the 38th Parallel on that day in an unprovoked attack on the Republic of South Korea. The Tropic Lightning Division moved from its base in Japan to Korea.

The division successfully completed its first mission by blocking the approaches to the port city Pusan. For this action, the Tropic Lightning received its first Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation. The 25th Division then participated in the successful drive into North Korea in October 1950. In a sudden and unexpected reversal, however, an overwhelming number of Chinese Communist troops crossed the Yalu and pushed back United Nations forces. The Division was forced to carry out a systematic withdrawal and ordered to take up defensive positions. Eventually, these lines failed. However, after a series of short withdrawals a permanent battle line was established south of Osan.

A new offensive was launched and successfully completed with the recapture of Inchon and Kimpo Air Base. This was the first of several successful assaults on the Chinese/North Korean forces. The Division next participated in Operation Ripper, during which it drove the enemy across the Han River. Success continued with Operations Dauntless, Detonate and Piledriver in the spring of 1951.

Fourteen Tropic Lightning soldiers were awarded Medals of Honor during the Korean Conflict, making the Tropic Lightning Division the most decorated division of that War.

The division remained in Korea until 1954 finally returning home after a 12-year absence. Once home, the division established and conducted intensive training programs in jungle warfare techniques and the study of Asian languages, thus becoming the only trained counter-guerrilla unit in the U.S. Army.

Then the U.S. Military Assistance Command in Vietnam requested aid from the 25th Division. In response, by mid 1965, 2,200 men of the Tropic Lightning Division were involved in Vietnam.

The division was again asked to contribute combat forces in December of that year. The Division deployed 4,000 infantrymen and 9,000 tons of equipment from Hawaii to the Northwest sector of South Vietnam in 25 days. Operation Blue Light, as it was known, was the largest and longest airlift of personnel and cargo into a combat zone in military history before Operation Desert Shield. By mid-January, the deployment operation was complete.

The 25th Division was heavily engaged from April 1966 until 1969 throughout Southeast Asia. During that period, Tropic Lightning soldiers fought in some of the toughest battles of the war. During the Tet offensives, Tropic Lightning soldiers were instrumental in defending the besieged city of Saigon. During the war in Vietnam, 22 Medals of Honor were awarded to Tropic Lightning soldiers - more than any other division in the war.

In 1985, the 25th Division began its reorganization from a conventional infantry division to a light infantry division.

In January 1991 three platoons were deployed to Saudi Arabia in support of the Gulf War. These Tropic Lightning soldiers were scheduled to be replacement squads in the ground campaign; however, after observing their outstanding performance in desert warfare training, the Assistant Commander of Third U.S. Army asked for them to become the security force for the Army's Forward Headquarters. In that role, the platoons attacked Kuwait City, where they secured the headquarters area and conducted mop-up operations in the city and its adjacent mine fields.

In January 1995 more than 3,700 soldiers from the 25th Division deployed to Haiti to participate in the peacekeeping mission Operation Uphold Democracy.

In 1995, the division underwent another reorganization and reduction as a part of the Army's downsizing. Today the "Tropic Lightning" Division is composed of three infantry brigades, an Aviation Brigade, Division Artillery, a Division Support Command and a complement of separate battalions. All this leads to the division's motto - earned more than 50 years ago but very much applicable today - "Ready to Strike! Anytime. Anywhere."

Spc. Michelle Lunato

Two soldiers get ready to rumble during "Who's your Daddy" Sumo wrestling, Sunday at Triggers on Eagle Base. The shakedown is run monthly by Morale, Welfare, and Recreation.

Know the medals you've earned

Army Commendation Medal

The Army Commendation Medal is awarded to any member of the Armed Forces of the United States other than General Officers who distinguished himself by heroism, meritorious achievement or meritorious service. Award may be made to a member of the Armed Forces who distinguishes himself by meritorious service which has been of mutual benefit to a friendly nation and the United States.

Army Achievment Medal

The Army Achievement Medal is awarded to any member of the armed forces of the United States, or to any member of the armed forces of a friendly foreign nation, who while serving in any capacity with the Army in a non-combat area on or after 1 August 1981, distinguished himself by meritorious service or achievement of a lesser degree than required for award of the Army Commendation Medal.

Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal

The Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal may be awarded to members of the Armed Forces who participate as members of U.S. military units in a U.S. military operation in which service members participate in significant numbers, and encountering foreign armed opposition, or are otherwise placed in such a position that hostile action by foreign armed forces was imminent, even though it does not materialize.

Armed Forces Reserve Medal

The Armed Forces Reserve Medal is awarded for mobilization to members who were called to active duty and served under Title 10, United States Code (USC) (Defense Department). The "M" device is worn to indicate mobilization. Subsequent mobilizations are denoted by the wear of a number to indicate the number of times mobilized. No hourglass is worn unless authorized.

NATO Medal

Authorized by the Secretary General of NATO for specific NATO operations. The acceptance of the NATO Medal has been approved for US Military personnel who serve under NATO Command or operational control in direct support of NATO operations in the former Republic of Yugoslavia, or as designated by Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR), from July 1992 through a future date to be determined.