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TALON

U.S. EOD/RMC weapons disposal

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On the Home Front

A cut above

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TALON

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CSM's Comments

NCOs enforce the standards

by **Command Sgt. Maj.
David S. Wright**

Our military recognized the need to have established standards for uniform, appearance, discipline and courtesy upon its organization in colonial times. It has improved and enhanced these standards over its many years of existence.

It has been the role of the noncommissioned officer to enforce established standards. The NCO accomplishes this in several ways. First of all, the NCO must know the standards to be enforced. These are found in regulations, field manuals and in policy set forth by commanders.

It is the role of the NCO to set the example by adhering to the standards. Then the NCO must ensure all soldiers, both officer and enlisted, understand and comply with the standards.

Why is this important? The basic military standards, the



Wright

first thing a soldier is taught upon entering military service, set the groundwork for development of a cohesive well trained unit.

Once basic standards are known, understood and complied with units may move on to the more difficult training at hand. But the basic military standards provide the framework upon which to build.

It is the charge and duty of the NCO to ensure that these standards are adhered to at all times. An on-the-spot correction of failure to meet the standards is the responsibility of all

of our soldiers.

On-the-spot corrections should be made without degrading the soldier. If the soldier fails to meet the standard either immediately or on a continuous basis, remedial training of the soldier is then justified during the soldier's off-duty time.

An example of an SFOR 13 standard is the wear of the reflective belt with the PFU or IPFU uniform. The reflective belt will be worn around the waist regardless of the PT uniform being worn. It will not be worn diagonally across the body.

Standards allow us to adapt to and execute warfighting tasks with relative ease. Each soldier is expected to know and accomplish specific tasks to be successful in combat.

I encourage you to become familiar with the standards of SFOR 13. You will have a much more enjoyable rotation in Bosnia by adhering to the standards.

Soldiers earn with savings program

by **2nd Lt. Chris Dunphy**
35th ID PAO

Stabilization Force 13 soldiers wanting to return home to a sizable nest egg, can do so by investing in the federally-sponsored Savings Deposit Program. The program is open to U.S. soldiers serving in the Balkans, who are receiving imminent-danger pay and combat-zone tax relief.

Stabilization Force 13 soldiers may sign up for the program after having served at least 30 consecutive days in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The program provides a guaranteed 10 percent return on all monies invested by a soldier up to \$10,000, according to 2nd Lt. Pamela Stephens, cash control officer for Eagle Base. She

said the return is compounded quarterly, and is applied to the average quarterly balance.

The interest stops accruing 90 days after eligibility for SDP stops. Unlike regular earnings, however, interest accrued in the SDP program is not exempt from taxes.

Soldiers can contribute by submitting cash or check — Unlike regular Army soldiers, reservists do not have the allotment option — in increments of at least \$5, to the Finance Office on Eagle Base.

The checks are exempt from the \$700 monthly check-cashing limit on Eagle Base, Stephens said, but the contribution cannot exceed the soldier's monthly take-home pay.

Once a contribution is made,

the soldier receives a receipt, or Cash Collection Voucher, which Stephens recommends the soldier files safely away.

"I also recommend soldiers making deposits attempt to do so by the 10th of each month," she said. "Deposits received at the cashier window after the 10th won't begin accruing interest until the first day of the following month."

Withdrawals can be made upon termination of a soldier's tour of duty, or can be refunded 90 days after completion of duty. Emergency-based refunds may also be made upon approval of the soldier's commander.

Contact the Eagle Base Finance Office for more information on signing up for the Savings Deposit Program.



About the cover: Staff Sgt. Chris Yonat (right), and 1st Lt. Roger G. Moss survey weapons collected by the RMC's recent Active Harvest.
by *Spc. Guy D. Choate*

"Leadership is the art of getting someone else to do something you want done because he wants to do it."

-- ***Dwight D. Eisenhower***

VA guarantee makes home-buying easier

by 2nd Lt. Chris Dunphy
35th ID PAO

National Guardsmen and reservists now have until Sept. 30, 2009, to apply for the Department of Veterans Affairs home-loan guarantee.

The object is to make this home-buying program a permanent objective for reserve-component soldiers, said Mike Cline, executive director for the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States.

The VA loan guarantee program for reservists was originally intended to expire in 1999. Since then, it has received three extensions: Two to 2003, and 2007, and then 2009. Though welcomed, Cline said the extension actually defeats the original purpose of the guarantee.

Originally intended as a recruiting tool, Cline said the problem of only extending the program is that a guardsman or reservist would still have to complete six years of service to receive the benefit. Therefore, only persons enlisting within the next year would benefit.

Cline said there's a great push in his organization and VA to permanently extend the program for reservists.

"VA wants to see the Guard and reserve stay in the program," he said. "One reason is that we pay 0.75 percent more on the funding fee (a VA-required charge for home purchases) for first-time home purchases than our active-duty counterparts."

Cline said this increase in revenue benefits the entire home-loan program. Currently the program generates \$2 million a year to VA.

"In addition, the default rate is two-thirds lower for reservists as compared to the active-duty soldier," he said.

Cline said he believes this is because homebuyers in the reserves tend to be older and more stabilized within a community.

VA guarantees loans for refinancing and purchasing homes, to include condominiums and manufactured homes. It guarantees part of the total

loan permitting the purchaser to obtain a mortgage with a competitive rate.

Another benefit that VA offers the purchaser is the option of not making a down payment on the home. "Many would be unable to purchase a home without it," Cline said.

Mortgage companies benefit with the VA guarantee, as well, since they're protected against loss up to the amount of the guarantee if the borrower fails to repay the loan.

The only fee that a buyer is required to pay is what's called the "funding fee." According to Ronnie Skaggs, assistant vice president for Armed Forces Bank at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., this fee varies from 2.75 percent of the loan amount for a first-time purchase to 0.5 percent of the loan when the owner refinances. This is a one-time cost that the veteran can either pay up front or finance into the loan, he said.

To be eligible for a VA loan a guardsman or reservist must have completed six years of service, have been discharged under other than dishonorable conditions, or be currently serving.

Soldiers activated for the Persian Gulf War for at least 90 days and soldiers who have been medically discharged for a service-connected disability are also eligible, he said.

The process for applying for a VA-guaranteed loan begins with the submission of VA form 26-1880, or "Request for Determination of Eligibility and Available Loan Guarantee Entitlement," to a local VA office. Along with this form the veteran will need to submit his or her discharge form, or a statement of service if still serving.

VA Form 26-1880 can be obtained from VA or most mortgage companies. On this form, the veteran lists all periods of military service. VA verifies the periods listed and then issues to the veteran a certificate of eligibility that officially confirms his eligibility status. The veteran is then able to approach a mortgage company to begin the process for qualifying to buy a home.

On the home front

News items of interest to Task Force Eagle members

Kentucky

Deadly curve to be straightened

BOWLING GREEN -- A deadly curve on U.S. 231 that has claimed many lives over the years will soon be realigned, after funding was recently allocated from Frankfort.

The Division of Environmental Analysis has approved construction on Hadley Hill, located north of Gasper River bridge on Morgantown Road.

Kenneth Cox, pre-construction engineer for Kentucky Department of Highways, said construction probably wouldn't begin until Spring

2004.

"We're trying to flatten the curve out a little bit, not a very major improvement," Cox said. "We're going to cut back into the hillside a bit to make the curve a little more straight."

-- courtesy Bowling Green

Daily News

2003 Girls' State Basketball Tournament Championship

- Sacred Heart 42, Lexington Catholic 40
Semifinals
- Lexington Catholic 58, Clinton County 36
- Sacred Heart 75, Christian County 61
Quarterfinals
- Lexington Catholic 57, Shelby Co. 43
- Clinton County 66, Betsy Layne 36
- Christian County 53, Jackson Co. 44
- Sacred Heart 55, Washington Co. 24

Kansas

Traffic snarled on I-70, I-635

KANSAS CITY -- Construction work along Interstates 70 and 635 have created major delays on two of the city's primary highway routes. But for local law enforcement, it's business as usual.

Kansas Department of Transportation's two-year, \$82 million reconstruction project has reduced traffic on sections of Interstates 70 and 635 to two lanes creating a series of delays, particularly during rush hour, along the major byways.

While Kansas City, Kan., Police and Kansas Highway Patrol traffic officers are aware

of the situation, patrol patterns for both remain the same.

Capt. Richard Hartzfeld, commander of the KCKPD Traffic Support Unit, said the biggest concern comes when motorists purposely venture onto lanes blocked by traffic cones in order to circumvent the delays.

--courtesy Kansas City Kansan

High School Baseball Rankings

- Class 6A** -- 1. Maize. 2. Blue Valley West. 3. Hutchinson. 4. Wichita Heights. 5. Manhattan. 6. Lawrence. 7. Olathe North. 8. Derby. 9. Olathe East. 10. Wichita Northwest.
- Class 5A** -- 1. Arkansas City. 2. Goddard. 3. Great Bend. 4. Bishop Carroll. 5. Valley Center. 6. Topeka Seaman. 7. Hays. 8. Shawnee Heights. 9. Salina South. 10. Blue Valley.

Nebraska

Lincoln lake project raises stink

LINCOLN -- The draining of Capitol Beach Lake is causing a big stink — in more ways than one.

Not only are some residents upset about the \$1.5 million project, but the lake's exposed, muddy bottom has created a rotten smell around the nearly 400-acre lake on Lincoln's west edge.

"I can understand why people object to these feedlots

and livestock operations," said Don George, who was working in his yard Thursday morning.

A stiff north wind blew the bad smell his way.

-- courtesy Journal-Star

High School Girls Basketball Rankings

1. Lincoln Southeast (21-4)
2. Lincoln East (18-5)
3. Millard West (21-3)
4. Norfolk (12-8)
5. Omaha Marian (18-5)
6. Lincoln Northeast (12-8)
7. Columbus (16-5)
8. Omaha Westside (18-5)
9. Papillion-La Vista (10-11)
10. Millard South (13-7)

EOD teams destroy Active H



area -- were cleared out and taken to a safe zone.

With a shock wave sent through their bodies and a puff of gray dust and smoke rising above the tops of the trees, the EOD received their cue to go survey the blast's results.

Right behind them was the RMC.

With small fires resulting from the blast, the RMC soldiers, armed with shovels, raced up the surrounding hill. EOD inspected the area to make sure that everything went as planned.

With a hole larger now than when they found it, weapons that are nowhere to be found, and all personnel going unharmed, the blast was deemed successful.

On every large operation or combined operation, a medic is brought along for the event,

despite the fact that all seven of the EOD personnel are qualified combat lifesavers.

"Safety is the most impor-

limited English and EOD speaking no Russian, communication was very limited, which can be very frustrating at times.

However, the language barrier was overcome to complete the mission. "It's neat to watch other countries work," said Moss, from Huntsville, Ala. "Everybody is unique and does things a little differently, but the results are the same."

A good working relationship has been established between the locals and SFOR when they use the range.

Bosnian law officials even brought some of the weapons they had collected to the range to be destroyed also.

When the trucks were unloaded and the day was winding down, the Russians invited their new American

friends to a late lunch before each of them headed back to their respective "homes away from home."

Although new friends were made, the most important result of the day's adventure was that more than 3,500 pounds of lethal weapons could harm no one now.

"It just gives me a good feeling every time

I destroy a weapon, and I know that some little Bosnian boy or girl is not going to be killed by it," said Moss, who has three children of his own.



Story and photos by
Spc. Guy D. Choate
343rd MPAD

BANOVICI, Bosnia and Herzegovina -- Three ... two ... one! The passengers in the vehicle duck their heads down as they detonate an explosion more than a quarter-mile away from the actual blast. Despite the distance, hills, and trees that are in between the vehicle and the blast, fragmentation can still be heard whizzing through the air.

This is every fireworks fanatic's dream.

The blast was one of two that the 221st Ordnance Company (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) and the Russian Military Contingent set off at Velika Ribinica Range in order to destroy approximately 3,500

pounds of weapons, ammunition, and explosives collected during the RMC's two-week Active Harvest.

Included among the weapons destroyed during the event were two 250-kilogram high explosive bombs, multiple types of grenades, tank mines, rifles, machine guns, rockets and mortars.

The weapons were unloaded from the RMC's trucks and stacked neatly into craters in the ground before they were laced with TNT and C-4 explosives.

Once the "shot" was prepared, all personnel -- to include the local loggers working in the

"It's neat to watch other countries work. Everybody is unique and does things a little differently, but the results are the same."

-- 1st Lt. Roger G. Moss

tant priority," said 1st Lt. Roger G. Moss, commander of the 221st, based in Camp Blanding, Fla.

With the RMC speaking

Harvest weapons, munitions



Photos clockwise starting at upper left: Russian Master Sgt. Talai Abadanov removes a belt of machine gun ammunition from an ammo box and places it in the pile; Russian and U.S. soldiers carefully stack the ordnance prior to placing TNT and C4; Rifles, bombs, grenades, ammunition, mines, a little bit of everything have been collected during Operation Active Harvest.



Right: Soldiers from Task Force South help unload food in the village of Slatina March 26. The food donation was a joint effort between the 416th Civil Affairs Battalion of Eagle Base, and the Austrian organization, Bauern Helfen Bauern (Farmers Helping Farmers). More than three tons of food was provided to several villages that day.



By Staff Sgt. Thomas Brady



by Sgt. 1st Class Ronald Covington

Left: Soldiers from Multinational Brigade (North) Tactical Psychological Team and the Danish Tank Squadron teamed up to deliver more than 100 notebooks, folders and other school supplies to students of Miladije School, March 17.

The supplies, which were embossed with the word Mir, the Serbo-Croatian word for peace, were delivered to the students in the hope of creating feelings of tolerance within the ethnically diverse surroundings of Miladije.

“This is a great way to show the local area that we (the military) are united,” said 1st Lt. Mikkel Thogerson, platoon leader for the DANSQN, shown here delivering one of the gifts to a student of Miladije.

“The students are the future and we can change the story for their future, and make a positive impact on the children of Bosnia.”



by Spc. Guy D. Choate

Right: Loved ones wept as the remains of nearly 600 Bosniacs who were killed in 1995 were buried at the Potocari Memorial Centre near Srebrenica. Officials expected a crowd of around 10,000, but buses full of mourners continued to file into the parking lots long after the 10,000 mark was hit. Local officials and SFOR 13 soldiers provided the necessary security for the event.

35th medical officer 'a cut above'

by Spc. Guy D. Choate
343rd MPAD

All across the country, as America's sons and daughters are being deployed overseas, America's mothers and fathers are there to support them. Capt. Cristal Horsch's parents are no exception.

"My parents are 80, and they have just come alive with this deployment," said Horsch. Like many other Americans, Horsch's parents proudly display an American flag in their window. And on their wrists, you will find two watches. The first watch is set on Wellington, Kan., time, but the second is set to Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina, time so they know what time of the day it is for their daughter.

Horsch, a resident of Fort Scott, Kan., deployed to Eagle Base as a field surgeon with the 35th Infantry Division (Mechanized) last month.

This is Horsch's first tour overseas. In 1993, she was commissioned in the Army Reserve as a nurse. Three years later, she graduated from the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha as a physician's assistant.

When she transferred from the Army Nurse Corps to the Medical Specialist Corps, she had to trade in her captain's bars for a second lieutenant's gold bar. It has taken time for her to regain her rank, but

she said the chance to serve as a PA was well worth it.

"It's hard to be a 49-year-old captain, but I've had a lot of cool things happen that wouldn't have happened otherwise," said Horsch.

The slot she is filling for Stabilization Force 13 is as the medical operations planner for the division surgeon's office.

Part of that job consists of her spending four hours per month in the air as a medical observer. She observes SFOR 13 pilots and ensures they are always fit for duty.

"I think the most fun part of my job during this rotation is going to be aviation medicine," said Horsch.

Another job requirement of Horsch's is that she must assess all of the medical facilities in Bosnia's Multinational Brigade (North). Every summer SFOR rotation is required to make an assessment of the medical facilities to gauge their personnel, capabilities, and availabilities.



by Master Sgt. D. Keith Johnson

Capt. Cristal Horsch checks out Maj. Eddie Brown after minor surgery at the battalion aid station.

Horsch was also asked by the command chaplain to train as an extraordinary minister of the Eucharist for SFOR 13. EMEs conduct religious services that cater to Catholicism. This makes up for the shortage of Catholic priests in the area. The division has two EMEs, and each task force is equipped with an EME as well, according to Horsch.

When not serving the military, Horsch gladly finds time to spend with her large – and still growing – family. She and her Vietnam-veteran husband "Doc" have five daughters and a 16-year-old son who are all very supportive of her and her military career. She is also the proud grandmother of three, with another on the way.

Two of her daughters have already somewhat followed in her footsteps by becoming registered nurses, and another is in nursing school. Horsch said she encouraged her children to join the military when they complained of overwhelming student loans. One of her daughters has since taken her advice and joined the U.S. Marine Corps.

When not serving the military or her family, Horsch works in the primary care division of the Veterans Affairs Hospital in Topeka, Kan., a work relationship Horsch appreciates for their support of her deployment.

Upon asking her employer if there would be a problem if she deployed, the VA replied, "We wouldn't be the VA if we didn't allow you to go." Job security is a big issue when it comes to deploying America's citizen-soldiers.

All in all, Horsch expects a good rotation, and just wants to represent the Guard and her family well and make them proud.

Spike



by 2nd Lt. Chris Dunphy

Lt. Col. Mark Stevens blocks his opponent's shot during afternoon activities at SFOR 13's first barbecue of their tour March 30.

An introduction to the PAO staff

by Maj. James Billings
343rd MPAD

Last week, we told you about the Talon staff. This week, we want to let you know about the others who work to tell the story of Task Force Eagle in the public affairs office.

Leading the operation is **Maj. Jeff Coverdale**, public affairs officer for the 35th Infantry Division



Coverdale

(Mechanized) and Task Force Eagle. With more than 25 years of military service, Coverdale has served 10 years as a public affairs officer both on active duty and in the National Guard. He received his commission through ROTC at New Mexico Military Institute in Roswell. In his civilian life, Coverdale is an educator and coach for Unified School District 475 Geary County Schools in Junction City, Kan.

Maj. Kirk Slaughter is our deputy PAO and media operations chief. Although he is new to the public affairs field, he has been a member of the Nebraska Army National Guard since 1986, most of it with the 1st Squadron, 167th Cavalry Regiment.



Slaughter

Normally, Slaughter is an investigator with the drug division of the Nebraska State Police. He lives in David City, Neb., with his wife, Kimrena, and their children, Allison, Derek and Max. Child number four is due in May!

Our information operations officer is **Capt. Deborrah**

McCoy, my second-in-command at the 343rd MPAD.

Deborrah works hard with the Task Force Eagle info ops team to make sure we all speak with one voice and one message. Information operations is fairly uncharted territory in the Army and Deborrah is one of the trailblazers. She served 12 years as a combat medic before receiving her commission through the Arkansas Army National Guard Officer Candidate School program in 1993. She joined the 343rd in 1999. McCoy resides in Lake Village, Ark., and has two children: Brian, 14, and Saysha, 6. As a civilian, she works as a respiratory therapist for National Park Medical Center in Hot Springs, Ark.



McCoy

We also have two talented broadcasters in the 343rd who tell the Task Force Eagle story using video and audio. Look for their reports on AFN, as well as stations back in the States.

Sgt. 1st Class Brian Stribling has been an Army broadcaster since 1997, although he first joined the Army in 1976. His video camera has captured two presidents and taken him to assignments in Central America, Europe and all over the United States. Married for 18 years, Brian and Julie live in Russellville, Ark., with their two daughters, Sarah, 17, and Bonnie, 12. Brian has worked in the cable-television business for Cox Communica-



Stribling

tions for the last seven years.

Our second broadcaster is

Spc. John Graves of Arkadelphia, Ark. He joined the Army Reserve two years ago and is a student at Henderson State University, majoring in mass media with a focus on broadcasting. John is also a member of Kappa Kappa Psi and Henderson State University's Showband of Arkansas. He is single with no children.



Graves

We are also blessed with some fine civilian media specialists, without whom our job here would be impossible.

Nedima Hadziibrisevic has worked for the Task Force Eagle public affairs office for almost seven years. She was born in Tuzla and has a brother and sister. She is a sophomore at Tuzla University, where she studies economics. Nedima spent her senior year of high school in Covington, Ky., where she also graduated.



Hadziibrisevic

Aleksandar Ilic has been working for Task Force Eagle since January 1996. He came to the PAO in the spring of 1997. A part-time journalism student at Tuzla University, he is married to Ljiljana, who works as a translator with the Task Force Eagle provost marshal's office



Ilic

here on Eagle Base.

Dunja Vujadinovic joined our team this week. She gained her first journalistic experience working for the European Press Agency, covering northeast Bosnia and eastern Slavonia. She also has worked for several non-governmental organizations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Dunja lives in Tuzla with her husband and 5-year old son, Igor.

Finally, we bid a fond farewell to **Rijad Bahic**, who is leaving this week to return to his economic studies at Tuzla University. Rijad has worked for the PAO since the I F O R D a y s . Born in Tuzla in 1975, he graduated from Mesa Selimovic High School in 1994. During the war in Bosnia, he served in the military. From 1994 to 1996, he worked as a cameraman and journalist at the local television station. We thank Rijad for his years of service in the cause of telling the Task Force Eagle story, enduring a new set of bosses every six months. We wish him every success in his future endeavors.

Telling the Task Force Eagle story is an important job, one we take very seriously – but also enjoy. It's important that everyone – our soldiers, our families, the average American and the average Bosnian – understand why we are here and the progress we are making. Help us tell your story. Let us hear from you.

Bahic



Bahic