June 20, 2003

TALON

DANCON 100K road march

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Active Harvest rewards
Task Force Eagle IG

Task Force Eagle www.tfeagle.army.mil

TALON

Published in support of
Operation Joint Forge
June 20, 2003
Volume 10, No.13

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The ***Talon*** is produced in the interest of the servicemembers of Task Force Eagle. The ***Talon*** is an Army-funded magazine authorized for members of the U.S. Army overseas under the provisions of AR 360-1. Contents of the ***Talon*** are not necessarily the official views of, nor endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army or Task Force Eagle. The ***Talon*** is published weekly by the Task Force Eagle Public Affairs Office, Eagle Base, APO AE 09789. DSN Telephone 314-762-0190. Email story ideas, and photo to: **Donald.Johnson@email-tc3.5sigcmd.army.mil.** The Task Force Eagle web address is **www.tfeagle.army.mil**. Printed by PrintComTuzla. Circulation: 3,500.

Father watches graduation from Bosnia

Story and photo by
Sgt. 1st Class Ron Holbrook
Missouri Army National Guard

EXCELSIOR SPRINGS, Mo. – When he deployed to Bosnia, Master Sgt. Michael Yadon promised he would try to get home for his son's high school graduation one way or another.

On a recent Friday, it all came true thanks to modern technology of a video teleconference, arranged by the Missouri Army National Guard.

Yadon sat in a small room at Eagle Base, Bosnia at 2 a.m. to watch his oldest son, David, 18, walk across the stage to receive his diploma from Excelsior Springs Senior High School, near Kansas City.

The broadcast came as a complete surprise to his son. When his name was called, David, in his black cap and gown, walked past a large white screen and suddenly his father's face was on it.

The elder Yadon gave a thumbs up sign and then applauded as his son received his diploma. His father was able to watch the entire commencement program.

Yadon is a member of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 35th Infantry Division (Mech.), Fort Leavenworth, Kan., of the Kansas Army National Guard. He now serves with Stabilization Force 13 in Bosnia where he is the noncommissioned officer in charge of the intelligence section.

"It was really a once in a lifetime experience and I am so thankful to everyone who made it possible," the father said from Bosnia. He added he had just finished the Battle Staff NCO Course that was conducted entirely by VTC from Fort Bliss, Texas.

"So I have been impressed by the Army's leap forward in technology," he said.

"I couldn't believe it," said David, as he wiped away tears after the ceremony.

"It's pretty cool. If other kids have dads who are in the military, I'd wish they could do this, too. This is awesome."

Yadon had requested leave to attend the graduation, but when the request was turned down, the VTC request was made.

The Missouri Guard has brought together many families by video teleconference, but this was the first time the state Guard had broadcast live on this scale.

"It is like Christmas" with each of these video teleconferences, said Katie Roberson, a video operations scheduler with the Missouri Guard. "It is fun to bring these families together, just to talk to them and tell them how proud we are of them."

Staff Sgt. Rex Miller, the Guard's information technology coordinator for the Kansas City area, spent several hours at the high school to set up the remote equipment before the graduation.

"Video teleconferencing is more challenging to provide in rural areas," added Lt. Col. Thomas A. Smith, director of Information Management for the Missouri Guard.

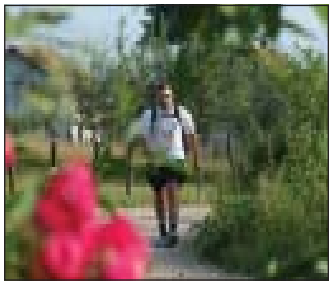
"But if you've ever witnessed a family-oriented video conference, this service is remarkably emotional and gratifying."

Missouri Army National Guard

Following the graduation ceremony in Excelsior Springs, Mo., the video teleconference brought tears of joy to David Yadon and his sister, Judy, 16.

"Education is a necessity, it helps to understand life."

– Jacques Roumain



About the cover: **Danish Lance Cpl. Henrik Lundum enjoys the scenery along the route of Task Force Eagle's first 100k road march.** ***by Master Sgt. D. Keith Johnson.***

See more DANCON 100K Road March photos at www.tfeagle.army.mil/tfetalon/PhotoGallery/PhotoTFEagle4.htm

Soldiers brave heat to compete in DANCON 100K

by Dunja Vujadinovic
Media Specialist

Eagle Base hosted its largest march in SFOR history last weekend — the Danish Contingent-sponsored 100K Challenge. More than 120 soldiers began the march which started at Pegasus Hall June 14. Thirty-six soldiers completed it.

Traditionally, the DANCON sponsors about three 30K marches each SFOR rotation. "(But) several of the Danish soldiers wanted (a longer one) so here it is," said Capt. Jimmy Bratved, DANCON's welfare officer.

The route of the march was split evenly between 50 kilometers occurring throughout the Bosnian countryside, and the last 50 within Eagle Base.

At one of the periodic stops along the route, the Danish Squadron's Lance Cpl. Henrik Lundum said what was spurring him on to complete the march.

"I have to make it. I have to finish it before midnight so that I can go to the Danish mess hall and have an ice cold beer," said Lundum, before ambling on under the almost unbearable heat to face another 75 kilometers of marching.

The first soldier to finish the first 50 kilometers was Sgt. Koen Van Veen, from Holland's Signal Squadron.

"I'm very tired. The heat is draining but (this) is doable," he said before trotting off to finish the second half of the 100K.

First to finish the 100 kilometers was Lance Cpl. Karen Brogger, Danish Squadron tank mechanic. Karen accomplished it in 12 hours and 2 minutes.

The march officially ended after 23 hours and 20 minutes when the last of the 36 soldiers crossed the finish line.

The heat is draining but (this) is doable."
– Sgt. Koen Van Veen

Photos by Master Sgt. D. Keith Johnson

Spc. James Desmarais smiles as he nears the 50 kilometer mark. Desmarais, from Longview, Wash., is a member of Task Force Medical Eagle.

Danish Lance Cpl. Tommy Jensen, left, and Danish Pfc. Thomas Bagger stay in the shade during the march.

by 2nd Lt. Chris Dunphy

Evaluated

Chief Warrant Officer Leo Blasi, Task Force Aviation, straps in during a maintenance inspection of his UH-60 Blackhawk as Chief Warrant Officer Michael Smith observes. Pilots, crewmen and aviation mechanics from Task Forces Aviation and Medical Eagle recently completed an Aviation Readiness and Safety Evaluation conducted by the Aviation Safety and Standardization Detachment. The detachment provides all aviation oversight and assistance within Europe, including combat capability evaluations of units within the Balkans, 60-90 days after their arrival.

by 2nd Lt. Chris Dunphy

IG checks out antiterrorism program

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

The former chief of staff of the Army, Gen. Eric K. Shinseki, signed a directive on August 24, 2001, that sent the Department of the Army Inspector General Agency, or DAIG, out to assess the Army's ability to comply with its own antiterrorism program.

Since that directive was signed, the DAIG's seven-man team from the Pentagon has been steadily working its way through each section of the Army. Thursday they had their very last inspection, which was here at Eagle Base.

Phase I of the inspections focused only on the active duty components and was finished by the end of fiscal 2002.

Based on the team's report, Shinseki concluded, "The Army's ability to prevent and respond to the terrorist threat is unsatisfactory … leaving the Army vulnerable to terrorist attacks."

Phase II assessed the National Guard and reserve component, which is the first such assessment of those components since 1983. The Phase II report is due to be out by September.

The inspection on Eagle Base consisted of sitting down with different members of Task Force Eagle and gathering information in sessions referred to as "sensing sessions."

The TFE antiterrorism program was discussed, as well as the commander's eight critical tasks that are outlined in Army Regulation 525-13 and how those tasks are being implemented.

The team met with the TFE commander and other section leaders who are considered integral in establishing antiterrorism plans.

They also interviewed some of the junior enlisted members on their thoughts regarding the base's ability to address the potential of a terrorist threat.

During their sensing session, those soldiers expressed their concerns about feelings of personal security outside the protective fences of Eagle Base. The soldiers did say they did not fear any terrorist action within Eagle Base because of the multinational force here.

"A lot of good things were brought up, which will only make things better for the soldiers," said Chief Warrant Officer James C. Draine, the DAIG's assistant inspector general.

Lt. Col. Thomas S. Young, an inspector general with the DAIG team, conducts a sensing session with the Security Plans and Operations Team for the Area Support Group.

The DAIG team gathered a lot of information and put it all down on paper while visiting Eagle Base, but one thing they didn't put on paper were names.

"The results that they are compiling are just to get a general finding or impression; their will be no names or specific units in their report," said Lt. Col. Mark T. Stevens, Task Force Eagle inspector general.

Before the team departed Eagle Base, they made suggestions to improve the TFE antiterrorism program, said Stevens. "They said that we are above the shot group," he said, "but there is still a better way to do things."

In a memorandum sent to all Army general officers, Shinseki said, "Our goal is clear – to protect soldiers, Department of the Army civilians, family members, facilities, and other material resources against the potential threat of terrorism during garrison and deployment conditions."

Task Force Eagle IG has plenty to offer

Story and photo by
Master Sgt. D. Keith Johnson
343rd MPAD

In addition to the Department of the Army Inspector General team, Task Force Eagle has its own IG section.

Lt. Col Mark T. Stevens from Manhattan, Kan., is the Task Force Eagle inspector general. He's also the entire section. He is the only person in the IG office.

The IG works for general-officer commanders. They are on the personal staff of the CG and answer directly to him. "We are primarily the eyes, ears, voice and conscience of the commander," said Stevens.

The IG has several functions. As the name indicates, inspections were the original function before other tasks were added.

One function most soldiers are aware of is the assistance IGs provide. They help soldiers get issues corrected that they can't get corrected through normal chain-of-command.

"We show people what right looks like, and help them get there."
– Lt. Col. Mark T. Stevens

IGs also do investigations, but only when directed by the commander. The investigations are administrative, not criminal. If it is determined criminal charges are warranted, then it goes back to the CG for disposition.

The IG corps' motto is *Be right. Move forward*. "IGs are fair, impartial and objective fact finders," said Stevens

"We are interested in facts and facts only," he said. "Anyone can make an allegation. But we only go on fact."

Teaching and training soldiers also falls under the IG office. IGs are supposed to "know what right looks like."

"We show people what right looks like, and help them get there," said Stevens

The Task Force Eagle Inspector General's office is located in Building 1018, next to the Balkan Grille. Stevens can be contacted at 762-2285.

Fox: Weapons collection 'win-win situation'

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

MNB (North) soldiers from the Slovenian Army load a crate of semi-automatic weapons onto a truck to transport them to Eagle Base.

Throughout the towns and villages of Bosnia and Herzegovina, people are recognizing they have no need for their weapons, and are turning them in to Stabilization Force 13. The police departments are no different.

In an agreement that goes back to just after the war here, local police departments are only allowed to have enough semi-automatic, long-barreled rifles for 10 percent of their police force.

The departments are also allowed to keep 200 rounds of ammunition for each weapon, as well as some extra rounds for training purposes.

With the recent consolidation of the equipment and personnel of many smaller police departments, the percentage of those long-barreled rifles on hand has increased considerably, which has created a storage problem in the consolidated departments.

In one such department in the Lukavac Municipality, the police chief recognized the storage problem as well as the excess number of rifles, and contacted the proper authorities at the European Union Police Mission and SFOR in order to turn the weapons over to them.

"It reflects very positively on the local police that they recognized they have more weapons than they need," said Don Kerr, EUPM liaison officer to Multinational Brigade (North).

At Lukavac, the local police, EUPM, and SFOR personnel inventoried the weapons, and then SFOR transported them to Eagle Base where They will determine the department's needs and destroy the excess weapons.

In two weeks, a total of 519 weapons and 31,000 rounds of ammunition were turned over from the police departments in Lukavac and Kalesija to the EUPM and SFOR, and that is just the beginning, according to Lt. Col. Craig Fox, provost marshal.

"The prime minister has agreed that this is a problem," said Fox.

"He gives his support by directing the canton commissioners to inventory and turn over weapons, and I think it is something that we are going to be working on throughout the rotation."

Although most of the weapons are being collected from police departments in the Fed eration, both the EUPM and SFOR agree that there will probably be plans to take similar actions in the Republic of Srpska as well.

"We're all working together to solve the problem, and it's a win-win situation for everyone," said Fox.

"The police departments are happy to get rid of the weapons, the EUPM is happy because the police departments are in compliance with the weapons policy, and SFOR is happy because there are fewer automatic rifles out there," he said.

Last good-byes

The final flight taking Russian Military Contingent soldiers back home left Eagle Base June 14. (Above, from left) Master Sgts. Jury Derbenev, Vladimir Tsarev and 1st Lt. Nikolay Figurovskiy exchange addresses before boarding. (Right) RMC Commander Col. Sergey Mikhailovich Shakurin (Front, right) conducts a final time check.

Photos by 2nd Lt. Chris Dunphy

Harvest raffle tickets spur citizens' concerns

by Nedima Hadziibrisevic
Media Specialist

A joint harvest effort between local media, businesses, civil officials and Stabilization Force 13 culminated in a rich reward of weapons turned in by Bosnian citizens to U.S. soldiers. The May 19-June 17 operation, called Harvest Rewards, provided each citizen throughout Task Force North's area of responsibility the opportunity to anonymously turn in any illegal or unwanted weapons.

"The local media, merchants and police have made this entire program a success," said Capt. Robert Ford, Task Force North spokesman. "It gave me a glimpse of how effective this community can become when they all work toward the same goal."

Each person who turned in a piece of munition was provided a raffle ticket and the chance to win one of several daily prizes – to include, among other items, free dinners, a 35 mm camera, or a free month at a private fitness center – or the grand prize, a brand new Volkswagen Polo.

"Everything began with an initiative in Camp McGovern, (in a) gathering of all the media in northern Bosnia, including ten television and radio stations," said Nada Koturic, Radio Orasje editor. "We got together and agreed on how we'd conduct this operation."

The media outlets decided to encourage and reward civic participation in Operation Harvest by handing out raffle tickets. They used their resources to advertise the rewards program to the local communities.

Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Ronald D. Covington

Sgt. Corey Stewart and Staff Sgt. Greg Luetkenhaus, Task Force North, offer a raffle ticket to Slobodan Djuran for turning in more than 140 shotgun shells during the soldiers' Harvest operation in Brcko June 12.

Sgt. Corey Ryman (left) carefully passes a hand grenade to Sgt. Jason Nunes during Task Force North's recent Harvest Rewards operation. The grenade had just been turned over to the soldiers during one of their door-to-door visits.

The media stations received funding for the daily prizes through local businesses and received needed financial support for the grand prize from the mayor of each municipality including Srebrenik, Modrica, Odzak, Orasje, Samac, Srebrenik and the Brcko District. The local auto dealership Brcko-Gas provided financial assistance in purchasing the Volkswagen.

Neda Kozomara, marketing chief at Radio Brcko, said she was pleased with the participation of the local merchants who provided the daily prizes. "People responded to the operation without any objections," she added.

The operation consisted of stationary checkpoints and door-to-door operations, where police officers accompanied with Task Force North soldiers asked citizens if they have any weapons they would like to turn in. Soldiers issued a set amount of tickets to each person, 18 years or older, who turned in weapons or ammunition. Although tickets were not given for UXO and mines, residents did not hesitate to get rid of them.

"We had a great response by citizens. The large number of weapons and unexploded ordinance collected (has) never been better," said Djordje Popovic, Brcko police station commander. He said the significance of the harvest is far-reaching, both in its impact on the environment and in its removing of weapons from the citizens' homes and out of the reach of children.

"It is not necessary to say what kind of importance it has for us who are responsible for maintaining law and order," said Popovic.

Lt. Col. Timothy Kadavy, Task Force North commander, also said the operation was a complete success in more than one way.

"We exceeded all expectations, nearly doubling all of my initial goals for weapons, small round ammunition and hand grenades, (and) by the way the Bosnian people have come together to make this harvest operation work," he said.

Approximately 21, 657 raffle tickets were handed out during Task Force North's Harvest Rewards operation. Following is a final tally of the items collected:
432 weapons; 2, 921 hand grenades; 214, 685 small arms rounds; 66 light anti-tank rockets; 13 anti-tank mines; 83 anti-personal mines; 206 rifle grenades; 9 light anti-tank rounds; 5, 285 grams TNT; 10, 100 grams gun powder; 10 mortar and artillery rounds; 2,201 various sizes of rounds and 13 other types of grenades.

A sampling of some of the ammunition collected during Task Force North's Harvest Rewards operation.

On the home front

News items of interest to Task Force Eagle members

Idaho

U of I grad can be deported

BOISE – An immigration judge ruled June 4 that a University of Idaho graduate student suspected of terrorist links lied to gain entry to the United States and that the federal government may deport him. However, Saudi Arabian national Sami Omar Al-Hussayen will remain in the Canyon County Jail pending an appeal and as 11 separate criminal counts against him move toward trial.

Al-Hussayen invoked his Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination and refused to answer questions about whether he lied about his previous employment on his application for admission in 2002.

– Idaho Statesman

Illinois

'Party patrol' looks for trouble

EVANSTON – With the next weekend considered prime time for Northwestern University students to kick back and unwind from finals and graduation, campus police promise their "party patrol" will be looking for troublemakers.

Armed with a list of potential off-campus hot spots—and an expanded patrol area that extends more than half a mile beyond the university boundaries—two officers in a car will try to make sure the fun does not get too raucous.

Under an agreement approved last month with Evanston officials and after a seven-month test run, NU's police can focus on a residential area west of campus long considered a hotbed for unruly parties. The officers also are allowed to patrol near some downtown bars popular with students.

– Chicago Tribune

Pennsylvania

Tracks plan to add slots

HARRISBURG – A new gambling proposal taking shape in the state capitol would force Pennsylvania race tracks to pay significant up-front fees for the right to install thousands of slot machines on their premises. But the amounts now under discussion – something in the $100 million range for each of the state's eight active tracks, plus two new licensees – fall way short of the potential market value, which means the politically connected track owners would still get a windfall. One expert has told lawmakers that the slot franchises could be worth as much as $2 billion.

"It would still represent a significant giveaway to a group of very wealthy individuals," said Matthew Brouillette, president of the Commonwealth Foundation, a free-market think-tank based in Harrisburg. Critical details of the new legislation still are being negotiated between state Senate Democrats, led by Robert Mellow and Vincent Fumo, and two of Gov. Rendell's top aides.

– Philadelphia Daily News

Sweet offerings

by Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Murphy

Spc. Tim Williams, Task Force North, offers tootsie rolls to a child while out on patrol in Srebrenik.

Play ball

by Capt. Bryan Tolar

Sgt. Jonathan Anderson, Task Force South, plays ball with a little girl named Dena while out on patrol in her hometown of Olovo. Dena often plays with the soldiers when they're in town.

News You Can Use

Dennis and son
by Sgt. Dennis Anderson

USO announces Father's Day photo/ poetry contest winners

Photos
1st - Sgt. Dennis Anderson
2nd - Warrant Officer Veronica Ferrer
3rd - Capt. Brian Tolar

Poetry
1st - Spc. Richard Tuszkiewicz
2nd - Spc. Jim Desmarais
3rd - Capt. Mike Wallace

To the man I call my Father

by Spc. Richard Tuszkiewicz

there were times I felt I was in the way
there were times I thought
that you did not want me to stay
But then you sat beside me
and totally blew me away
you told me you loved me
and I did not know what to say
I n time we grew together
and you were my best friend
time made no difference to you
whether it was the beginning or the end
you made me a promise
that you would never leave
and at that time
I just did not believe
But then you showed me
the difference between right and wrong
you came along and made me strong
together we became the perfect pair
this love between us
I now know we both share
you were always there
through the good and the bad
and always knew
if I were happy or sad
having known you
has brought change to my life
I am so happy that my mother is
your wife
the person that I will become
is not set in stone
but knowing that I have you as my father
lets me know
that I will never have to go though it alone
I love you father with all my heart
and it only grows stronger
knowing that you share these same
feelings there in your heart.

Soldier support —— Begin award, NCOER, OER preparation now

Due dates for submission of awards, NCOERs and OERs for Task Force Eagle-deployed soldiers is as follows:

Awards
MSM to G-1 NLT July 1
ARCOM to G-1 NLT Aug. 1
AAM to G-1 NLT Aug. 1

NCOERs/OERs
HHC NCOERs to G-1 NLT Sept. 1 with end date of Sept. 30.

HHC OERs to G-1 NLT Sept. 1 with end date of Sept. 30.

Suspense dates of NCOERs and OERs for units other than those supported by HHC NLT Aug. 8.

Submission of these recommendations or reports after these dates may result in not being able to clear Eagle Base for departure to demobilization station or not getting an award.

Extended Finance hours ——

The Eagle Base Finance Cage is open until 8 p.m. on Wednesdays to assist with FMPP check cashing and currency conversions.

Hostile Fire Pay and Family Separation Allowance II were paid at traditional rates of $150 and $50 on June 13 LES for M-day soldiers. The back pay for these entitlements will appear on a future off-cycle LES according to DFAS.

Take home a flag flown over Eagle Base White House

Bring home a very unique keepsake from your SFOR 13 tour – your own privately purchased U.S. flag flown over the Eagle Base White House. The recipient will also receive a certificate verifying the day the flag was flown over Eagle Base and signed by the commanding general. Contact Master Sgt. Eli Valenzuela via e-mail for information.

"Do you see what I see?"

by Air Force Capt. Kevin Hynes

Sgt. Russell Furrow, Task Force North, shares a photo with children while visiting a school in Tinja.