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TALON



LRSD takes training in the Balkans to new heights

Inside this issue:

**International MEDCAP in Modrica
Soldiers' families adopt orphanage**

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TALON

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Word on the street...

“What is your New Year’s resolution?”



Sgt. Chris Heyman
A Troop, 1-104th Cav.

“To control my temper and not get thrown out of any more flag football championships.”



Spc. Eugene Scotti
A Troop, 1-104th Cav.

“Stay in shape and avoid vices like beer and cheesesteaks.”



Spc. Kenny Dockery
A Troop, 1-104th Cav.

“Get well and stay healthy in the new year.”

An optimist stays up until midnight to see the new year in.
A pessimist stays up to make sure the old year leaves.

~Bill Vaughan



Spc. Joseph Lambert
HHT, 1-104th Cav.

“To keep God in my life and recognize his blessings all through the year.”



Spc. Tom Hall
A Troop, 1-104th Cav.

“Save money and be more prosperous than my brother Tim.”



Spc. Tim Hall
A Troop, 1-104th Cav.

“Save money and be more prosperous than my brother Tom.”



About the covers: Front, Spc. Joe Jirovec, 104th Long Range Surveillance Det., goes through pre-jump inspection before boarding a UH-60 Black Hawk to make a required airborne jump. *Photo by Maj. John Dowling.* Multinational Division (North) soldiers ring in the New Year. *Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Kelly Luster.*



Airborne soldiers “chute” the breeze

Story and photos by Spc. Jessica Abner

Assistant Editor, 354th MPAD

BIJELJINA, Bosnia — The frigid temperatures did not deter the airborne soldiers from doing one of the things they do best — jumping. Why would someone want to jump out of a perfectly good aircraft? “It’s the rush, said Spc. Michael Palmquist, radio telephone operator, 104th Long Range Surveillance Detachment. “It’s something that is not very common, and at the same time, you can look back and say ‘I did this’.”

Farmland in Bijeljina was turned into a drop zone for the soldiers to land. With assistance from USAREUR and their parachutes, the airborne soldiers were able to jump.

“Our purpose in the training was to bring some chutes down from USAREUR to support everyone that does airborne operations in the theatre,” said Staff Sgt. Robert Rowland, floor supervisor, 5th Quartermaster. “We heard the National Guard had soldiers who were going to jump down here, so we decided to provide our support.”

Besides providing support, Rowland and cohort, Sgt. Todd Stephenson, jumpmaster, 5th Quartermaster, also took the opportunity to jump. “This is one of the perks of being in the parachute business,” said Rowland.

Safety is an essential part of the parachute business. Prior to the soldiers boarding the aircraft, they gear up with the necessary tools to ensure a safe landing. According to Rowland, the soldiers can rely on the parachutes doing what they are sup-



Spc. Chad Harrington’s reserve parachute is checked before jumping.

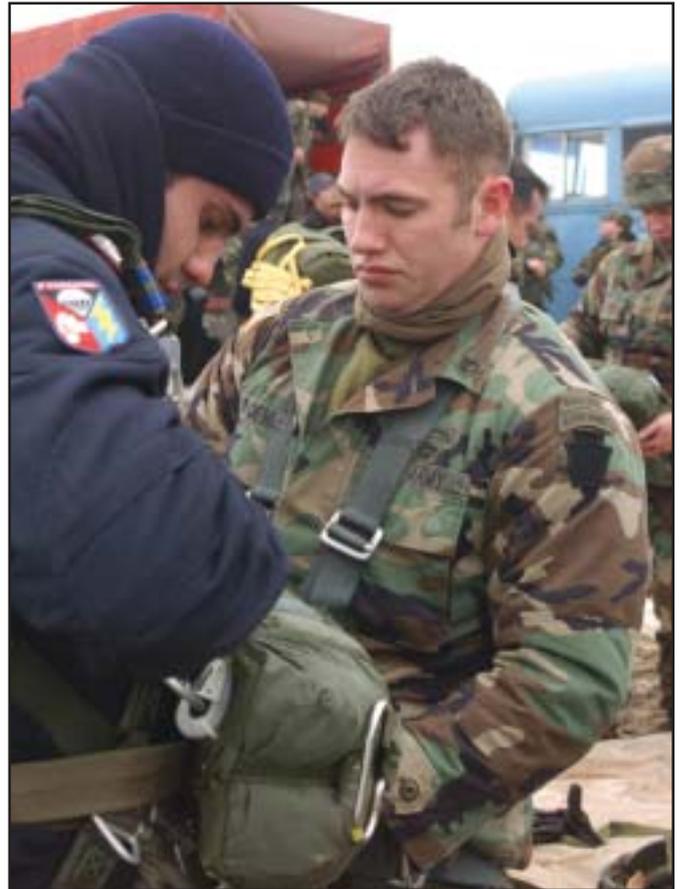
posed to do — open. “I am absolutely confident the parachute is going to open,” said Rowland. First, the packer packs the parachute. “It’s their military occupational skill (MOS), so that’s all they do,” said Rowland. The NCO watches the parachutes being packed. When they get to a certain step, they call out the rigger NCO and he or she checks to ensure the parachutes were packed correctly. Rowland said there are at least three sets of eyes, sometimes four or five that inspect the parachutes. “The rigger motto is ‘I will be sure always’,” said Rowland.

Although the airborne soldiers get a rush from jumping, they are required to jump every six months to maintain their airborne status. “The joint airborne training between the Americans and the Italians was a proficiency jump here in Bosnia for jumpmasters to maintain proficiency,” said Stephenson. According to Capt. Mark Stabile, commander, 104th LRSD, the jump was a complete success. “All of the paratroopers, Italian and American, landed safely on the drop zone and the pilots were able to certify additional crews,” said Stabile.

According to Rowland, joint training is something that has been going on since we’ve had an Army in Europe. “I think it helps partnership for peace and we get out here and have a good time,” said Rowland. “We realize they are doing the same training as us.”

Stabile also said the joint training is good for relations. “All the soldiers were ecstatic! These are our brother paratroopers and nothing builds camaraderie and rapport like jumping from an aircraft together,” said Stabile.

According to Palmquist, the joint airborne jump was a unique opportunity. “This is the first time I ever got to jump with foreign nationals, so it’s a big experience and at the same time an opportunity for us to exchange our wings,” said Palmquist. Like the other airborne soldiers, he enjoyed the jump as well. “I’ve jumped



Staff Sgt. Mike Shoemaker and his Italian counterpart help each other suit up for the jump.

out of five aircraft before this, but this was probably my best jump so far — just push off and you’re done,” he said.

Spc. Tim Flynn, security force, 104th LRSD, said “I’m excited about jumping, this is what I wanted to do when I joined the Army. I couldn’t think of anyone better to serve with than the people in the airborne corps.” He added was glad to have the opportunity to jump with the Carabinieri.

According to Stephenson, one of the best aspects of being airborne is “We get paid to do this and it’s a lot of fun. It’s a great day to be airborne!”



Soldiers board the Black Hawk that will release them over the drop zone in Bijeljina.

SFOR knocks down cultural walls with the hammer of health care

by Sgt. Thomas Farley Jr.

Cavalry Scout, 104th Cav

MODRICA, Bosnia and Herzegovina — In Gornja Medida there's an elderly woman, a farmer's wife, who fell down a flight of stairs last summer and was seriously injured. Six months later, she is still gritting her teeth in pain as she moves about her little home. Medical help is only a few miles away in Gradacac, but she says she cannot go there because she is a Serb and must find a way to get to a medical facility, perhaps in Brcko, where she can be seen by a doctor she feels she can trust. "But I have no way to get Brcko," she says. "So I endure."

For Bosnia to have any kind of hope for the future, its people must find a way to bring down such self-imposed barriers to the pursuit of happiness.

On the day of the Winter Solstice, Dec. 21 — the "shortest day of the year" — Task Force Med Eagle demonstrated a cooperative process that could serve as a perfect example of barrier busting, and help the citizens of Bosnia move a long way down the path toward modern civilization.

That was the day medical assets of the U.S., Turkish, Dutch, Danish, British and Canadian SFOR contingents collaborated with doctors from the VRS Army (Army of the Republika Srpska) and local physicians and nurses in Modrica to provide basic

health care to some of the people who need attention most, regardless of their cultural roots.

According to Lt. Col. Joseph Warren, senior nursing officer, TFME, using military medical assets to achieve political results is by no means a novel concept. In fact, it harkens back to U.S. interdiction in Southeast Asia.

"This kind of medical operation was initially conceived during the Vietnam War to assist the South Vietnamese military, whose medical assets were very thin," Warren said. "Before long the activity developed into a program to provide medical care to local civilians, and it was very effective, an immediate success."

The MEDCAP — Medical Civil Action Project — is now a standard feature of America's military involvement in world affairs. Within the circle of command, it's called MEDRETE — Medical Readiness Training Exercise — and it is a major civil-military operations project which pays dividends by enhancing the military's medical capabilities in the new world order of coalition conflict.

"Here in Bosnia, we have medical personnel from many nations — Dutch, Turks, Danes, Swedes, etc., — with many different specialties," Warren said. "Sooner or later we are going to be partners again in a major conflict, so we need to train together now, to learn from each other, to practice working together efficiently."

Working together toward a common goal is the missing ingredient in the Bosnian political stew, according to Maj. Ron Whetstone, senior medical officer, 104th Cav. "People are not like automobiles," he said. "An Audi may be different than a Chevrolet in some meaningful ways, but a human being has all the same parts, in all the same places, performing all the same functions as every other human in the world. You don't need a Serb medical specialist to help a person with a respiratory infection merely because the patient identifies himself as being of Serb extraction."

Hopefully, Whetstone's message was not lost on the 122 individuals who showed up at the Sutjeska School in Modrica with a wide variety of medical conditions and complaints. The majority of the patients who presented themselves are classified as "returnees" — refugees displaced by the ethnic warfare of the early '90s, who have come to Modrica to begin again. Identifying as Bosniacs and Croats, most were middle-aged or older and all were destitute. The first person they had to deal with, at

the registration desk, initiating the chain of events that could lead to healing, was an officer in the uniform of the VRS.

"Frankly, you could see the shock on many faces," said Maj. Whetstone, "but it was a hurdle they have to learn to clear, and on this day, they did."

From the registration desk, depending on the nature of the complaint, the patient could be sent for examination by a Danish specialist in internal medicine, a Turkish dentist, an American clinician administering electrocardiograms, or any of a broad spectrum of other medical specialties.

The pharmacists were particularly busy, and according to Whetstone, were required to observe strict limits in parceling out prescribed medications. "To some it may seem that our resources are limitless, and since we have so much, why not be extra generous with things like medications — 'Oh, hey! Look what fell off the truck. Here ya' go, a year's supply.' — but that can lead to all kinds of abuse and may, at the



by Capt. Clyde Brown

An elderly man speaks with a medic at the MEDCAP in Modrica.



Capt. Sloan Lanctot, dentist, and Staff Sgt. man's teeth during the recent MEDCAP here

TALON

end of the day, be medically counterproductive.”

A MEDCAP is not a permanent solution. MEDCAP personnel direct their walk-in patients to continue the process with follow-up visits to local health clinics and private physicians. “We can give someone a diagnosis, 30 days of meds, and medical data sheets that can jump-start long term treatment routines and follow-up strategies,” says Warren.

“It would be irresponsible of us to try to do more,” said “Doc” Whetstone. “The last thing we need is for our prescription medications to find their way into the black market, so we have to avoid even the appearance of impropriety. And aside from the legal pitfalls, we need to convince the people here that our efforts are only the first step in a continuing process called wellness. The next step is to establish a relationship with local medical practitioners. And in the long run, people need to learn how to practice a healthy lifestyle.”

The citizens of Bosnia and their counterparts in Bavaria and Brooklyn, create many of their own health problems.

“Bad habits like smoking, drinking, lousy diet, lack of exercise – the whole gamut of self-inflicted illness – is as evident here as in any typical industrialized

culture,” said Whetstone.

“We can’t make them change, but we can try to help them understand how much a healthy lifestyle can help.”

MEDCAP is not just for the desperately ill. “Today, we saw a 45-year-old man who had never been examined by a physician in his life,” Whetstone says. “And we saw an 85-year-old who was in such good shape, with just some minor adjustments in lifestyle, he should be able to enjoy a high quality of life for many years to come.”

At the MEDCAP in Modrica, some 65 doctors, nurses, lab technicians, cooks, truck drivers — even Apache Troop cavalry scouts in a security role — collaborated for a day to do some good for a community in need. Organizing such a complex operation is a task that falls to the practitioners of the quiet military profession called Civil Affairs.

“A MEDCAP is a tool the ground commander can use to influence to success of the mission in his AOR (area of responsibility),” explains Capt. O’bun Duffy, Civil Affairs Team Leader at Camp McGovern for Task Force Saber.

Certainly, the medical efforts are the centerpiece, but with it all we are delivering the SFOR message – and, in fact, there may be no other way to hit so many of impor-



by Capt. Clyde Brown

The hallways of Sutjeska School in Modrica were filled with people in need of medical attention.

tant peacekeeping message points with a single event.”

“With so many nations participating, the SFOR presence is strongly supported,” he said. “All three cultural groups were supported here by an international group in which the local Serb community participated actively. So, inter-ethnic cooperation was emphasized. And it all happened in Modrica, which has upwards of 1,100 Bosniac returnees and is an area the ground commander has targeted for emphasis. No matter where returnees are re-settled, SFOR will support them.”

The effort required the collaboration of a range of individuals who need to learn how to work together toward common goals, Duffy said. “We brought together Dr. Petar Blagojevic, who is head of the Modrica health clinic, Dusan Bogdanovic, who is principal of the school, Anto Suberic and Ahmet Hadzidedic, who are representatives for the local Croat and Bosniac returnee communities, and of course, key representatives of the MedEagle staff. We got them all together, but it was their own enthusiasm and dedication that generated the collaborative success.”

According to Major Whetstone, the Nordic-Polish contingent has an expression that captures the essence of what is needed here in Bosnia.

“They say: ‘One Mission – One Team.’ and while I think they are referring specifically to the medical situation, I see unselfish collaboration as the shorthand expression of the solution to the Balkan problem overall.”



by Capt. Clyde Brown

Alma Hernandez-Soto, dental hygienist, Task Force Med Eagle, work on a local patient in Modrica.

Soldiers' families help BiH children

Story and photos by
Sgt. 1st Class Kelly Luster

Editor, 354th MPAD

TUZLA, Bosnia and Herzegovina — For so many, the month of December brings visions of great and decadent meals with all the trimmings. Children well up with anticipation of Saint Nicholas' arrival and their Christmas wishes being fulfilled. Some even try to stay awake to catch a glimpse of the jolly old elf, or his sleigh and reindeer.

There are others, however, whose thoughts are of one day leaving the orphanage they call home. They have simple thoughts of a new pair of shoes or a jacket to call their own. Their innocent eyes light up when the group of camouflage Santas makes a special visit.

Although the site of soldiers visiting the Vojo Peri orphanage in Tuzla is not a new occurrence, this visit is a little different than previous visits. This time the soldiers have five-ton truck packed from front to rear and bottom to top with donations for the orphanage. In addition, the soldiers are also sharing their bus with several more packages enroute to the children.

More than 150 children ranging in age from infant to adult call the orphanage home. About one third are infants. Most will call Vojo Peri home until they are adults.

It all started with a few e-mails home by soldiers. "I sent a copy of an e-mail that was sent to me about the orphanage to my wife," said Capt. Lonnie Miller, battle captain, HHC, 28th Inf. Div. "She took it from there."

According to Melanie Miller, when she told



A child at the orphanage receives his present.



Spc. Greg Hutchins and Sgt. Kim Harden help unload the five-ton truck that was packed with donations for the Vojo Peri Orphanage in Tuzla.

the parishioners of her church, Christian Missionary Alliance, Mahafey, Pa., about the dire need, her church embraced the idea of helping the children of Vojo Peri. "We wanted to do something that would help the children and bring smiles to their little faces," said Melanie. She said her church borrowed an idea in which shoeboxes are filled with donated items for each child. In this case, those donating knew the child's name, age, gender, and location.

"The love for children never seen was so obvious on the faces and in the hearts of these people (parishioners)," said Melanie. She said every child's name was adopted within one week. "Families took money from their own Christmas budgets to provide for the children."

In addition to items to fill each box, a local business donated large shipping cartons and others gave money to help with shipping costs.

In similar fashion, Master Sgt. Joseph Krones, operations NCO, TFME, told his family about the situation of the children of Vojo Peri.

"It all started when I sent pictures of the orphanage home," said Krones. "I am amazed at just how much was collected."

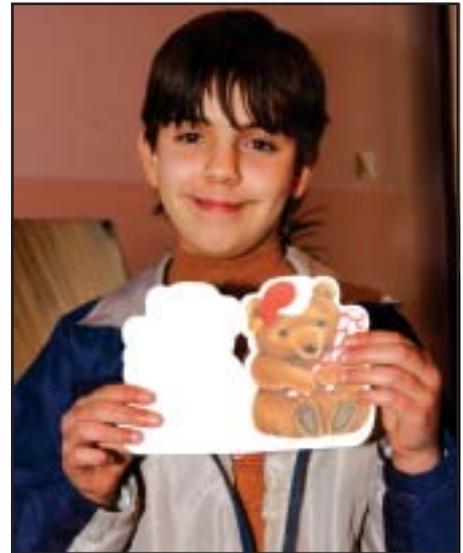
The Bloomington Junior High School Kiwanis Builders Club and 8H Community Services group also sponsored other drives. According to Donna Witte, Builder's Club adviser, students collected enough items to fill 42 boxes. In addition, more than \$1061 was donated to cover shipping costs. Money left over went to 14 cases of diapers.

More than 40 boxes were received from the First United Methodist Church in Normal, Ill. The church sponsored a drive that

collected everything from coats and toys to stuffed animals.

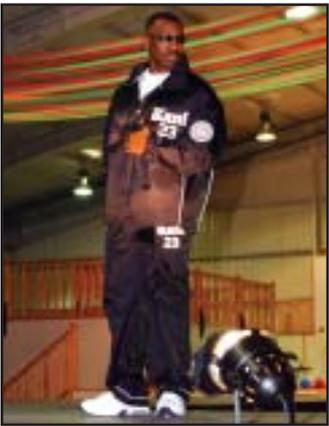
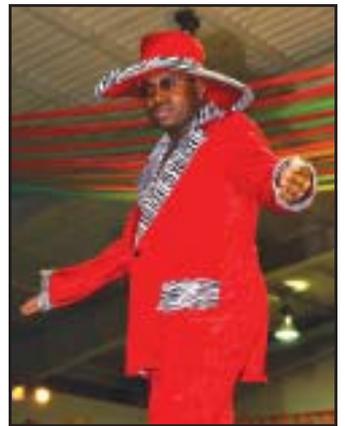
"When you see something like this... people giving to kids they don't even know, it really make you feel good. This started out small and has grown. There was so much donated that were looking for others in need here," Krones said.

During the soldiers' visit to the orphanage, Jasmin Imamovic, mayor of Tuzla, stopped by to see the children. He thanked the soldiers for the contributions to the orphanage. He said although the children live at the orphanage, they are not without family. "These are our children. These are the children of Tuzla. Thank you all for what you have done for them."



A young girl holds up the card written specifically to her from a family in Pennsylvania.

Fashion Show '02



MWR Fashion Show '02 featuring soldiers of MND (N) was a great success. From top left clockwise, Spc. Shauna Pulley, CW3 Eddie DeGuisto, Spc. Tiffany Allen, Spc. Michael Russ, Staff Sgt. Alma Hernandez-Soto, Spc. Keith Dawson, Sgt. Jamie Allen and Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Lary, Sgt. 1st Class JoAnn Tresco and Command Sgt. Maj.



Horace Pysher, CW2 Brenda Jones and Nasi Ben-Yisreal, Sgt. Theresa Carson and Maj. Shawn Jones, Spc. Juana Lopez, and Alfred Liggett. Center, Staff Sgt. Renae Szemkus and Staff Sgt. Leslie Cooper escorted by Ed Winters. *Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Kelly Luster.*

