

March 14, 2003

TALON

Keystone Division prepares for handoff to 35th Division

Inside this issue:

TFME conducts MEDCAP in Vlasenica

Soldier makes personal sacrifice for 28th

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TALON

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Multinational Brigade (N)

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Word on the street...

“Famous last words from the soldiers of the Task Force Eagle Public Affairs Office...in the form of a movie quote.”



Maj. Shawn Mell
Public Affairs Officer
28th Inf. Div.

“Badges? We don’t need no stinking badges!”

“Blazing Saddles”



Sgt. 1st Class Kelly Luster
NCOIC, Talon Editor
354th MPAD

“Just because you are a character doesn’t mean that you have character.”

“Pulp Fiction”



Sgt. 1st Class Marty Collins
Broadcast Chief
354th MPAD

“Trust no one.”

“The X-Files”



Maj. John Dowling
Media Operations Chief
354th MPAD

“It’s simple really... you gotta get busy livin’ or get busy dyin’.”

“Shawshank Redemption”



Sgt. Ivan Russell
Webmaster
354th MPAD

“Dave, my mind is going. I can feel it.”

“2001: A Space Odyssey”



1st Lt. Kevin McNamara
Media Operations Officer
354th MPAD

“Momma always said, life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you’re gonna get.”

“Forrest Gump”



Capt. Glen Henderson
Information Operations
28th Inf. Div.

“It wasn’t my war... you asked me, I didn’t ask you.”

“Rambo”



Spc. Jessica Abner
Talon Assistant Editor
354th MPAD

“The question isn’t ‘what are we going to do? The question is what aren’t we going to do?’”

“Ferris Bueller’s Day Off”



Spc. Kirk “Shaggy” Wilson
Broadcast Journalist
354th MPAD

“Zoinks, Yo.”

“Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back”



Brig. Gen. John T. von Trott
Commander
Multinational Brigade (North)

Within a few days I will officially turn over the Multinational Brigade (North) mission to Brig. Gen. Ron Mason and his great SFOR XIII team. For many of us who have been a part of this undertaking from the very beginning, it will seem somewhat strange to return to “life without Bosnia.” We started preparation for this mission well over two years ago when the first recon visits were made. We have lived in a world filled with strange terms like “GFAP,” “ITP,” “IMPINs”, and “non-compliance.” We will go back to families, friends, jobs, and our normal day-to-day activities. A few may retire, while most will go on to new assignments and new missions within the Army and its reserve components. However, re-

CG says “farewell”

ardless of where we go from here, each of us will be indelibly marked by the SFOR experience. We will never be quite the same again. And that’s just fine.

There are not too many occasions in our lives when we have the opportunity to impact our world for the better. This has been one of them.

Each of you needs to be proud of what you have done here. You have conducted more than 15,000 patrols, driven more than one million miles (or 1.6M kilometers, if you prefer), flew more missions, and conducted more operations per capita than any of the preceding rotations. You have done this with a safety record that would be the envy of any commander, anywhere. There was not a single incident of accidental discharge of a firearm by a Task Force Eagle soldier. The number of disciplinary actions was so low as to be inconsequential, while the incidence of awards for superior performance was remarkably high.

I would never minimize those statistics, but as significant as they are, they only provide a measure of activity and not of impact. I believe it is far more important that in the course of this rotation you provided the kind of secure environment necessary for the Dayton process to work and for the people and institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina to continue the recovery

process.

Here are a few facts I think are far more significant than mere measurement of activities: During your rotation there was not a single incidence of serious ethnic violence, nor was there even one meaningful incident of DPRE obstructionism. Not once did we find ourselves faced with major non-compliance on the part of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. You successfully oversaw potentially contentious and emotional events at Potocari and Srebrenica. You provided overwatch for the first national elections held under Bosnian control. You “harvested” record quantities of arms and munitions and hosted the first major NATO Balkans reinforcement exercise. You supported a record number of orphanages, DPRE camps, and hospitals to alleviate much suffering.

By every conceivable measure, you have more than accomplished your mission and will leave Bosnia and Herzegovina a safer, less violent and volatile place.

It has been a tremendous honor to have commanded this rotation and to have known each of you. No matter where we go from here, what we do or with whom we serve, there will always be a special bond amongst us. We soldiered together in Bosnia for SFOR XII. Thank you and GodSpeed.



Command Sgt. Maj.
Horace Pysher
Multinational Brigade
(North)
Command Sergeant
Major

As we come to the end of our rotation I know you have heard this before and will continue to hear it until you are safely home — **Stay focused!!!** This has been an exceptional rotation for operational safety. Each of you are significant in this success.

Each of us will return home

CSM Parting words...

changed by this experience. I have told many soldiers to prepare their story of what it was like to be a peacekeeper in the Balkans. You may have not thought about it, but many will ask. Relate the beauty of the country, and more importantly, the beauty of the people who appreciate your sacrifice to provide peace and stability. Tell of the damage and destruction you saw, but also tell of the rebuilding that is being done by soldiers such as yourselves. Tell of the support you and many back home gave to schools and orphanages so future leaders of this nation can learn and grow. Talk about the different operations you were on and the many times someone passed you on a curvy mountain road. Tell your friends how you endured the 30-kilometer DANCON March for a well-deserved medal and certificate of completion — but more importantly to prove to yourself you could do it.

When you get home take time to appreciate your local firefighters a little more. Who knows, maybe he or she saved a life with the Jaws of Life like our Brown and Root firefighters did for Spc. Crystal Young-Terrell. Thank the doctors and nurses who have cared for your loved ones like Task Force Med Eagle did the soldiers of MNB(N). I know Spc. Young-Terrell appreciates them as she travels her road to recovery.

I am extremely proud of all *your* accomplishments, but most impressed by your safety record — more patrols, more miles and fewer accidents. That in itself is amazing, but add to it Task Force Talon’s safety record, and it cannot be matched. It is proof that when standards are enforced and leaders are proactive, the mission can be accomplished without needless loss of personnel or equipment.

I know the operation guys might not have been happy

with that last paragraph because YOU have done very well operationally. But, if there had been one serious accident and or loss of life you could not have done enough to make up for it. Once again, this is a reflection on quality leadership. That leadership came from the junior noncommissioned officers. This was their rotation. They were given the opportunity and did not let anyone down. These soldiers are the leaders for the next deployment — the future first sergeants and sergeants major that will carry on the legacy of each of the organizations that comprised SFOR XII. Congratulations for a job well done!

Once again, stay focused so that each of you can go home to the real heroes of this deployment — your families. I want to thank each of them for their support to you so we can all remember and take great pride in the “Keystone” SFOR XII rotation. *Roll On!*

Family, friends, and 25 teeth

Story and photo by
Spc. Kirk Wilson

354th MPAD

FOB CONNER, Bosnia—During SFOR XII National Guard and Reserve soldiers all sacrificed different aspects of their civilian lives when duty called and they deployed overseas. Spc. George Mclaud, C Co., 1-109th Infantry, is an ordinary man who went through extraordinary lengths to deploy to Bosnia and serve his country.

During predeployment soldier readiness processing, a military doctor examining Mclaud informed him he was nondeployable due to a medical condition. The problem — his teeth.

The bad news didn't stop Mclaud from wanting to serve with his fellow comrades and he quickly took decisive action to ensure he would be available to serve his country in Bosnia.

"I just asked 'what can I do to make myself deployable?'" said Mclaud. The doctors told him that he would have to have his teeth extracted prior to the division's mobilization.

With the mobilization date rapidly approaching, Mclaud made the choice to gain deployable status by having a total of 25 teeth pulled — although there are no official documents, this is believed to be a 28th Inf. Div. record.

Mclaud faced another problem. While he was relinquishing his teeth, his fellow troops

were spending time training for the upcoming mission. Mclaud was three weeks behind and had to consolidate that training time into one week.

"I had to work to get here," said Mclaud. "I would go from one station to the next and try to get caught up with the mandatory stuff to try to be a driver in the headquarters platoon."

Mclaud had to wait at Fort Dix for his gums to heal and receive his dentures, which also put him behind deploying with the rest of his

unit. However, Mclaud was happy to wait and his persistence paid off.

"If things would've worked out with the squad I was originally supposed to come here

with, I wouldn't have spent all this time at Forward Operating Base Conner, and I wouldn't have made such tremendous friends here," said Mclaud, smiling with his new set of teeth. He made friendships that impacted his life and was shown compassion by his new friends, the type of caring he wanted to exhibit through himself.

Mclaud has a friend named Nukia — his Bosnian little brother — who works at the PX located at FOB Connor. The pair enjoyed many long discussions that helped pass the time during the Bosnian winter. Mclaud also made friends with



Spc. George Mclaud

Nan Burns, a former U.N. representative. Her giving nature, the way she cares for others, and how she tries to make other people's lives better, is something he hopes to emulate.

Mclaud is 42 years old and has served 23 years in the military, including four years on active duty and 19 years in the National Guard.

When he joined the Guard, Mclaud served under Lt. Col. Barry A. Searle, who was a first lieutenant at the time. The two 109th soldiers share a lasting friendship to this day.

"I guess Lt. Col. Searle didn't think I'd go through with this. I kind of surprised him, along with everybody else," said Mclaud. "I've known that man for a long

time and it's been a pleasure working with him. Wherever we go next, if Lt. Col. Searle is willing to lead, I'm willing to follow."

Men and women in the military know the possibility of deployment is part of their commitment when they sign the dotted line. But for Mclaud, this deployment was about keeping the world safer for his nephew and repaying his father for the sacrifices he made for his children. Mclaud's nephew was born on Sept. 13, 2001, just two days after the 9-11 attacks.

"Instead of rejoicing in his birth, we were all just scared. Even his mother didn't know how she would raise her child in this chaotic world," said Mclaud. His father worked six days a week, sometimes for 16 hours to provide a better life for his family. "I just thought, my dad's a hero, what would he do for me?"

Mclaud wanted to payback his family by participating in the peacekeeping mission in Bosnia. Along the way, Mclaud has made many friends that he will stay in contact with upon redeployment. He misses his family, but the friends he made in Bosnia fill the void that has been created.

"I feel I made an impact on Bosnia, because it made an impact on me. I've got some memories that I'll take back and cherish for the rest of my life." Mclaud will walk away from this deployment with no regrets, and many new experiences to tell his nephew, and a new set of teeth.

"I just thought, my dad's a hero, what would he do for me?"



About the covers. Front, Spc. Leo Rober, A Troop, 1-104th Cav., stands ready in the hatch of his Humvee. The photo was taken at the SFOR XII mission rehearsal exercise. The mosaic is comprised of some of the more than 10,000 photos taken by the Task Force Eagle Public Affairs Office. *Photo illustration by Sgt. 1st Class Kelly Luster and Sgt. Ivan Russell.* Back, The soldiers and media specialists of the Task Force Eagle Public Affairs Office. Top: Capt. Glen Henderson, Rijad Bahic, Maj. Shawn Mell, Sgt. Ivan Russell, Maj. John Dowling, Spc. Kirk Wilson, Nedima Hadziibrisevic, and Aleksandar Ilic. Bottom: Sgt. 1st Class Kelly Luster, 1st Lt. Kevin McNamara, Spc. Jessica Abner, and Sgt. 1st Class Marty Collins.



MEDCAP in Vlasenica

by Spc. Guy D. Choate

343rd MPAD

VLASENICA, Bosnia — The six children who attend school in Vlasenica spent the afternoon chasing latex gloves that had been filled with air and tied to resemble balloons. As they ran through the halls of the school with the echo of their laughter close behind, they passed the lengthy line of people anxiously waiting their turn to be screened by Task Force Med Eagle's medical personnel.

The Medical Civil Action Project (MEDCAP), which has become more frequent in the past few months, is a project that places a multinational team of physicians, dentists, nurses, and other medical personnel into the local communities. Once the work commences, the medical personnel work alongside local doctors from throughout Multinational Brigade (North) to assist with medical screenings for those in need of medical assistance.

When the soldiers arrived at the school, they saw they were going to have two rooms to work in, rather than the three they had anticipated. However, they improvised, adapted and overcame the problem.

"We always have a plan, but we have to be flexible and be able to change the plan," said Lt. Col. Joseph B. Warren, Civil-Military Operations officer for Task Force Med Eagle. In a remote area, found only after navigating a maze of slushy roads, the soldiers found more than a handful of locals waiting for them with nagging ailments and hopeful eyes. Within a few

hours of setting up equipment, the register of patients listed 47 names in an area that has an estimated population of 58 people.

"Not only do they come here to be seen for physical purposes, but also this is a social event for a lot of the community," said Warren. "It gives them a chance to see all of their neighbors. Sometimes the patients want to stay here even after they are seen by the doctor."

Upon registering, patients filled out questionnaires that asked for his or her pertinent information — a list of current medications the patients are taking, if the patients smoke, has any allergies, or a family history of certain illnesses. After completing the questionnaires, the patients were screened for high blood pressure, diabetes, and sent to an appropriate physician or dentist.

Under the care of the proper medical personnel, the patients were diagnosed and treated, if possible, then given prescriptions for proper medications needed to combat their illnesses. Finally, the patient had to see one last soldier who assisted them in understanding their medical instructions. After receiving medical attention, the patients had everything needed to begin a healthy road to recovery.

The MEDCAP is not capable of assisting patients who are in need of surgical procedures or those suffering from extensive cancers. If the medical team anticipates a patient's need for such procedures, they are referred to a local doctor.

"Our job is to help support the local medical infrastructure. We're not trying to replace the local doctors or dentists who



by Spc. Guy D. Choate

Spc. Charity Summers, Task Force Med Eagle, analyzes samples given by patients during the MEDCAP.

are here, just assist them," said Warren.

The Finnish Civil Military Cooperation (CIMIC) teams and U.S. Army Civil Affairs teams, who work closely with local communities, or provide information regarding potential MEDCAP locations. After organizing the MEDCAP, the soldiers met with the director of the local public health center in Vlasenica to address specific medical needs of the community, according to Warren.

After discussing the village's needs, the teams were eager to help the patients. "They are very appreciative to what we are doing here. It's a pity my time here is so short," said Pascal Vermeulen, a Dutch nurse who was here on an exchange program from a hospital in Sipovo, Bosnia.

Anouk Bos, a medic who also works through the exchange program said, "I like seeing the happy faces. They are very appreciative and sometimes give us chocolate." The laugh accompanying her words reveals her secret — it's not about the free chocolate, but for what the chocolate represents, a genuine gift of thanks.

Not only is the MEDCAP good for the locals' health, it also makes the soldiers feel good knowing they provided treatment to those who genuinely need it. Although the MEDCAP consisted of soldiers from different militaries, backgrounds, and ethnicities, they have one common goal — "We're here to take care of people," said Warren with the satisfied confidence of a man who is proud of what his troops accomplished.



by Spc. Guy D. Choate

Major Louis Gevirtzmen and Col. David Smith, Task Force Med Eagle, work together to ease the pain of a local who needs dental assistance.



by Sgt. 1st Class Ronald D. Covington

Brig. Gen. John T. von Trott, commander, Multinational Brigade (North), dedicated a building on Eagle Base in memory of World War II U.S. Army Tech. Sgt. Francis Clark. Clark was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions during battle in Luxembourg and Germany. Clark was a National Guard soldier assigned to Co. K, 109th Inf., 28th Inf. Div. Von Trott praised Clark and his actions during battle, and noted the pride he had in dedicating a building to a fellow 28th Inf. Div. soldier. "Every unit wants to leave a little bit of itself behind ... a piece of its history and heritage here on Eagle Base," said von Trott before he, Command Sgt. Maj. Horace Pysher, Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Bodo, and Lt. Col. Barry Searle, cut the ceremonial ribbon officially opening the new facility.

A Note To A Wounded Friend

*You still lay in pieces friend,
and to this I ask you why?
If your glue is lost than find it again
so no one will have to die!*

*Will a child grow for vengeance sake,
and as a victim of your past?
What feud is worth a better tomorrow?
Let it go if you hope to last.*

*Rest, wounded brother,
heal these infections that haunt
your
withered soul.
Fight the fever that spawns
revenge,
and leaves life as black as coal!*

*I'll leave you soon,
but in my heart some part of you
will
always stay.
And pray, I will, that you can live
in peace,
long last my final day.*

*by Staff Sgt. Douglas Bennett
Avionics, E Co., 1-183rd Avn.*

Col. Jerry Beck, former deputy commander, Multinational Brigade (North), was promoted to Brigadier General recently and will command multinational forces in Kosovo in the coming months.

During the ceremony, Brig. Gen. Beck was officially "pinned" by members of his family and Maj. Gen. Walter Pudlowski, commander, 28th Inf. Div., Pennsylvania National Guard. (Photos courtesy of the Beck family)



Task Force Talon migrates home

by Aleksandar Ilic

*Media Specialist, Task Force Eagle
Public Affairs Office*

RIJEKA, Croatia — Spring is just around corner. It is the time of a year when birds fly to their original habitat — a place they call home. After winter months spent in warmer areas, birds move north. That is the case for most birds, but in the case of Stabilization Forces, the birds go west. After months of flying, it is time to put these birds to bed for a while. The rest begins with a three-week-long cruise back to the United States.

Bosnia and Herzegovina only has nine miles of coastline that is devoid of a port. So the logical solution for the redeployment of Black Hawk and Apache helicopters is the Croatian port of Rijeka. Aircraft Task Force Rijeka 9, a small task force comprised of support elements from Germany, starts the process of returning the birds to their homes.

In preparation for shipping, the aircraft were flown to port. Task Force Talon and DynCorp maintenance crews were at the site. There were a total of 22 helicopters that supported operations throughout Multinational Brigade (North) during SFOR XII. The aircraft were located at Eagle Base and Camp Butmir in Sarajevo.

On a clear, sunny day, against the backdrop of blue skies, one by one, the aircraft landed. Within an hour 13 helicopters landed at the port and were positioned a safe distance one from another.

After a few Black Hawks were towed closer to the hanger and crew chiefs accomplished the initial inspection, aviation maintenance crews armed with tools invaded the aircraft.

“What we do is we fold the blades, bring them to the wash rack and wash them,” said Sgt. 1st Class Philip Imbarrato, NCOIC for port operations, 1-142nd Avn. “Customs checks them (helicopters) for cleanliness and then we take them to hangars and cocoon or shrink-wrap them. That keeps moisture and salt from the sea water out of the aircraft.”

In a different area of the hangar, a similar scene is unfolding around the Apaches. Mechanics of 1-183rd Avn. work carefully as they have a little friendly competition with another crew. Blades are being folded swiftly and precisely by well-trained crews.

“They were handpicked,” said Staff Sgt. Jody Caldwell, maintenance section ser-

geant. “We never had any problems during our deployment. There is no way anything could have been done without these E-4’s and E-5’s. The deployment was a real good experience for my guys and me. We had a lot of soldiers who gained years of experience because of all the maintenance we did on them. We worked on them around the clock, almost 24 hours a day. We had a day crew and a night crew, seven days a week.”

Helicopter crews had to take all their gear out in order for the aircraft to go through customs. Apache pilots left only log books and keys. Black Hawks were practically stripped down. Two of the nine UH-60 Black Hawks were MEDEVAC helicopters.



by Rijad Bahic

Sgt. James Engle and Sgt. Stan Dake are busy folding main rotor blades on an AH-64 Apache helicopter.

They also played an important role in the TF Med Eagle’s success story.

“As a part of medical company I’ve done quite a few missions of saving lives,” said Sgt. Mathew Stohrer, medic, 1159th Medical Co.

“That was very rewarding. I was a part of MEDEVAC involved in Olovo traffic accident.” Referring to a car accident where Spc. Crystal Young-Terrell was seriously hurt last November.

“That mission went very smoothly. It was a good experience for the crew. She is doing well and she is back in the States for recovery.”

After being washed and inspected by customs agents, the birds were ready to be cocooned. Soon they were turned into great white snowballs.

“Soldiers fold blades and antennas so we don’t burn them because they are high dollar items. We start with shrink-wrapping process,” said Tom Ammonds DynCorp port operation supervisor. “The most important thing is to cover everything.

Saltwater will eat this away in a matter of days.”

DynCorp specialists were putting special foam and paper cups on all openings of the helicopter. After they made sure the foam and cups were firmly taped, they put two large pieces of plastic around helicopters. They connected upper and lower sheets of plastic and made sure it is as tight as possible. Using gas torches, they heated the shrink-wrapping and sealed the aircraft. The entire process seemed very demanding, and required lot of time to be finished.

“Whole maintenance crews from Eagle Base are here,” said Ammonds “We have 15 people down here and 8 on Eagle Base. We left them a little short, but they are handling it pretty good. We can usually wrap 8 aircraft a day with this many people.”

All 13 aircraft that arrived Wednesday will be ready to be placed on a ship by Thursday morning, according to Ammonds.

The man in the middle that everybody was looking for was CW4 Jamie Martin, port operations OIC, 1-183rd Avn., Idaho National Guard. He was shouting orders to several people at a time and he was getting replies from as many. At one point he was standing on a concrete block, looking like the conductor of this hard-working orchestra.

“We came here March 2nd and we’ll depart here on the morning of the 9th back to Eagle Base,” Martin said.

“All 22 aircraft will be prepped for redeployment. The ship will arrive in New York in three weeks where the aircraft will be reassembled and flown to their respective locations,” said Martin

The mission in Bosnia, according to Martin, was as close to perfect as it gets. “We had zero recovery missions. That’s considered a perfect deployment,” said Martin.

“What we did is we tried to show Bosnians what a free country can do,” said CW2 Kevin Sears, A Co., 1-183rd Avn. Sears is the father of four children with a fifth child due in April.

“We have pilots that are all volunteers. We volunteered to serve our country and spent time away from our families to help other people enjoy some of the freedoms we enjoy and the same peaceful lifestyle.”

While these birds migrate back to their homes back in the United States, what was accomplished here by the soldiers who fly them will not soon be forgotten.

