

OCTOBER 24, 2003

# TALON



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# TALON

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# Holiday deadlines

## Postal Holiday season starts Nov. 25

Story by Spc. Jeremiah Wickenhauser  
*135th MPAD*

As the holiday season gets closer, knowing when to send a card or package from Bosnia and Herzegovina so it arrives on time into a special someone's hands is only half the battle.

Spc. Joshua Fox of 494th Postal Company said the holiday season is the busiest time for the postal service.

"We here at the post office recommend that you ship your present or package off to your loved ones as soon as possible to ensure it gets there on time," he said

The postal holiday season begins about Nov. 25 and runs until Jan. 25. During this time, mail takes much longer to get on base as well, said Fox.

As usual, first class mail under 13 ounces will be free during the season, provided proper military identification or Department of Defense identification is shown.

Fellow soldiers may also mail from an APO address to another APO address or an FPO address for free, with

a 70-pound, 130-inch girth restriction.

The post office is open from 0900 to 1700 daily and has a variety of delivery options. Please bring all packages with a customs form already filled out to minimize waiting for others, said Fox.

As a reminder, you may not use postal mail to send :



- Currency or precious metals in their raw "unmanufactured" state.

- Mail addressed to "Any Soldier" or "Any Service Member."

- Obscene articles, prints, paintings, cards, films, videotapes and horror comics and matrices.

- Pornographic or sexual items, or non-authorized political materials.

- Firearms and ammunition of any type.

- Fruits, animals and living plants

- All alcoholic beverages and products that are related to its production.

◆ Twenty years ago yesterday, in the early morning hours, a truck loaded with explosives crashed through the security perimeter of the United States Marine Corps Barracks in Beirut, Lebanon. In the explosion that followed, 241 U.S. Military personnel were killed and 80 seriously wounded. Please take a moment to remember the friends and families who lost loved ones in this attack.



About the cover: A mushroom cloud forms over the Velicka-Ribnica Range last week after 1,500 pounds of UXO was destroyed. By Sgt. 1st Class Clinton Wood



# High profile visitors



Story by Major Jarrod Krull  
Task Force Eagle PAO

During the past several months, the senior leadership of the Army has been conducting an assessment with input from the Army's leaders and soldiers who are serving around the world. The assessment's primary focus is to help determine where the Army needs to be and where we stand on the current missions at hand.

This past week, that focus came here to Multinational Brigade (North) when the Chief of Staff of the Army, Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker and Sergeant Major of the Army Jack L. Tilley visited with soldiers and leaders here to determine not only the readiness and capabilities of the force, but to also develop a better understanding of what the actual concerns of soldiers are today.

During a town hall meeting attended by more than 200 soldiers, Tilley provided the audience with an open and candid venue to



Photos by Master Sgt. Tim Peterson, Task Force Eagle PA  
Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker reenlists Sgt. John Indrehus Monday at the Balkan Grille.

discuss soldier-level issues. Likewise, he provided soldiers the opportunity to ask tough questions on topics such as Guard and Reserve retirement, healthcare, pay and promotions and equivalent active duty training for members of the Guard and Reserve. To these questions, he returned responses that were from the gut.

"I'm not going to caveat anything – if it's wrong – I'm going to let someone know," said Tilley. "When I'm asked

to testify before Congress on these issues, I'm going to take what I learn here and let them know what reality is."

General Schoomaker mirrored the Army's senior enlisted soldier in that he took the time to meet soldiers and hear their concerns and even participated in one of the task force's daily patrols.

At the top of the list was the soldiers concern for matching their dedication to duty with the appropriate resources.

"The National Guard and Army Reserve are indispensable, full members of the team and resourcing them is a real concern in Washington because we rely more and more on the National Guard and Reserve," said Schoomaker.

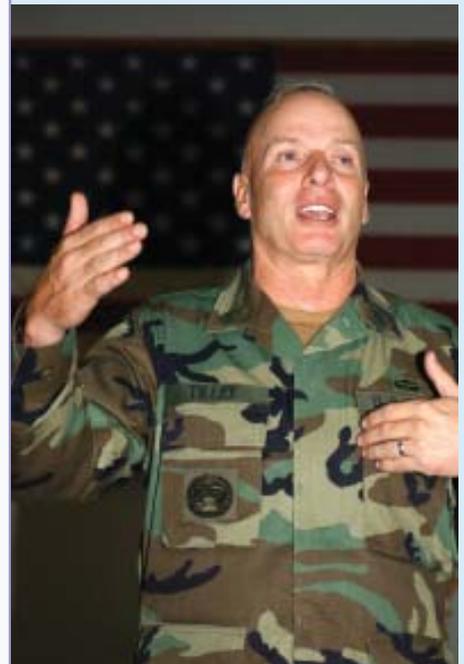
While this trip is just one of the pieces that will be used to help the Army solve the puzzle of balancing mission against resources, one thing for sure is that the Sergeant Major of the Army placed his faith in the abilities of our soldiers and left them with a goal for the future.

"Thank you again for all your hard work. You are making a difference here," said Tilley.

"As I near my impending retirement, I am reminded of a simple phrase, 'You can't take it with you.' Continue to strive to leave things better than you found them."



Sergeant Major of the Army Jack L. Tilley fielded questions and concerns during the junior enlisted breakfast at Balkan Grille Sunday.



Tilley addressed about 200 soldiers during the town hall meeting Sunday.

# FIRE IN THE

## 666th EOD assisted in de



Story and photos by  
Sgt. 1st Class Clinton Wood  
135th MPAD

**V**ELIKA-RIBNICA – Staff Sgt. James Hayes sitting in the driver’s seat of an up armored humvee yelled to Sgt. Harold Thompson standing outside the humvee with a radio in hand, “You ready Harold.”

Thompson replied, “You keeping the time.”

Hayes replied, “Yeah I’m keeping the time, we’ve got 30 seconds.”

Twenty seconds passed as all that is heard is the rushing water from a stream in the valley below the narrow road where the humvee is parked.

“Got about 10,” Hayes said.

“10 seconds, yeah go ahead,” repeated Thompson as he entered the humvee and slammed the heavy door shut.

“You good Harold,” Hayes said under his breath.

Thompson replied, “Yep.”  
“Fire in the hole,” Hayes said as he touched two fire buttons simultaneously on a remote firing device.

Thompson repeated, “Fire in the hole,” as he looked through the humvee’s windshield. The sky turned orange and the silence was shattered by a loud kaboom

as a mushroom cloud sprouted over the valley.

The soldiers, members of the 666th Explosive Ordnance Disposal

patrols as part of active and passive harvest programs.

The detachment’s commanding officer, Capt. William Dickinson, said 40 to 50 tons of UXO is destroyed weekly at this range. The VR Range is the only range in the Multinational Brigade (North) area where SFOR can destroy up to 1,500 pounds of explosives at a time.



Staff Sgt. James Hayes holds one of many mortar rounds that were later destroyed

Detachment from Jacksonville, Ala., had just destroyed more than 1,500 pounds of unexploded ordnance (UXO) on the Velicka-Ribnica Range. All in a day’s work for this Stabilization Force 14 11-member detachment.

“We don’t get to do these large-scale demolitions to often, so it’s pretty nice,” said Hayes of being in control of the explosion. Hayes, an Alabama policeman has been a member of the detachment since 1994.

This was the second detonation of UXO collected from weapons storage sites near Camp Dobojo and from U.S., Polish and Turkish

The UXO arrives at this range in five to seven metal shipping containers about half the size of a semi trailer.

Dickinson said SFOR is tasked with this mission because armed forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina can’t destroy ordnance from their WSS as part of their ongoing forces reduction at a quick enough pace.



Task Force South soldiers, soldiers from two engineer units, the 147th Finance Battalion, and Task Force Med Eagle medics, also assisted the 666th EOD.

The day started with the mercury climbing above the

freezing point as the group started unloading the UXO in sometimes knee-deep mud from the containers. By day’s end, there were three large piles to be detonated.

The ordnance included small arms ammunition, homemade grenades, mortar rounds and 122 mm armor-piercing projectiles.

Some of the ordnance included land mines that could be cut into three pieces. Staff Sgt. Stewart Houston said cutting into these mines is like cutting into a heavy cake mix.



# THE HOLE

## Demolition of ordnance



A Polish soldier carefully places UXO at one of the three sites. The mines in the foreground are able to be cut into three pieces

Spc. Erik Grieve of Task Force South said handling the UXO did not bother him. "You have to make sure you

don't drop it," he said. "I'm waiting for the explosion at the end."

Hayes said most of it was made in Yugoslavia and meant to be sold to other countries (one box had Baghdad, Iraq, stenciled on it).

The ordnance was placed where

*"At the end of the day when you see the big mushroom cloud, the whole sky turns orange and the earth shakes."*

*- Staff Sgt. James Hayes*

the bigger weapons would set off the smaller weapons. Plastic C-4 explosives were then placed on top of the ordnance to destroy the larger rounds.

The detonating cord was connected to

remote receivers placed in wooden boxes several feet from the piles. Electric blasting caps were connected to the receivers.

The fire signal from Hayes' firing device in the humvee was transmitted to the remote receiver, which then detonated the blasting caps, C-4 and the ordnance.

As Hayes said, "At the end of the day when you see the big mushroom cloud, the whole sky turns orange and the earth shakes that's always good. Seeing the trees bend over from about a click out, that's pretty nice."

Even nicer is the fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina becomes a safer place with the touch of Hayes fingers.



Above: Several strips of C-4 plastic explosives were put on top of the ordnance to blow up the larger rounds. Center: The remote firing device has two fire buttons on it that have to be pressed at the same time. Below: Staff Sgt. James Hayes sat in an up armored humvee a few kilometers away from the detonation site to destroy the ordnance.



Video captured by Sgt. Kent Westberg, 135th MPAD

# Rewarding finale

## CA battalion ends mission by hosting bowling party

By Nedima Hadziibrisevic  
Media specialist  
Task Force Eagle PA

As one of their last efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina before redeploying home, soldiers of the 416th Civil Affairs Battalion in support of Task Force Bearcat, facilitated in providing three hours of fun and sports for Stabilization Force soldiers and Tuzla Canton Red Cross Mine Awareness Program volunteers at a bowling alley at the Tuzla Sports Center.

The regional director for the mine awareness program initiated the opportunity. He expressed his intent to organize an event involving SFOR to reward 90 of his young volunteers for their extraordinary work.

Staff Sgt. Kristi Shults, one of the team's non-commissioned officers in charge, said the volunteers work with SFOR.

"During Active Harvest they let their communities know what to do with ordnance and how to let SFOR know about weapons," she said. "They also dedicated time to school and community programs about mine awareness."

The battalion coordinated with the Tuzla municipality public affairs office and bowling alley director to donate time at the facility. The municipality closed the alley for the task force soldiers and 13 volunteers along with six of their

teachers and the chaplain's office provided pizzas and sodas. Also, Psychological Operation soldiers handed out balls and school supplies to Tuzla Canton students.

For 1st Lt. Richard Brummond, a SFOR 14 task force civil affairs team leader, this was an occasion to obtain his first impressions of the country and its people.

"It's an amazing opportunity to work with different cultures and backgrounds," he said. "That is what I am looking the most forward to."

The gathering was one of the many successful projects the battalion coordinated during their seven-month deployment.

Their work ranged from coordinating with municipal officials for returns, Red Cross offices and other nations within SFOR, to facilitating meetings between displaced persons and

refugees representatives and infrastructures directors in resolving some of the water and electricity issues.

The battalion's team leader, Maj. Maggie Flavin, said her battalion's role in Bosnia was to provide a liaison with the Bosnian people.

"We provide a bridge between the command here and the nongovernmental and international organizations, municipality officials and local people," she said.

Another important segment of the civil affairs mission in Bosnia consists of delivering clothing, shoes, toys and other supplies to the Red Cross offices and displaced persons centers received from U.S. organizations and the chaplain's office.



Staff Sgt. Robert Kloos offers bowling tips to volunteers of the mine awareness program during a party at Tuzla Sports Center.

Shults said throughout her rotation, about three shipping containers of donations were coordinated, sorted and distributed throughout the whole area.

The civil affairs mission is another aspect of how SFOR helps this country and its people move forward.



Photos by 1st Lt. Richard Brummond, Task Force Bearcat

Task Force Bearcat soldiers Spc. Thomas Sauvageau (left), Staff Sgt. Robert Kloos, 2nd Lt. Daniel Cunningham and Spc. Matthew Schaefer wait to bowl at the Tuzla Sports Center.

Right: Sgt. James Minier knocked out 27 push ups with Washington Redskins cheerleader Hyun on his back during the variety show Monday night. Below: Haven sings Shania Twain's, "That don't impress me much," to Sgt. Justin Knopf of Task Force Bearcat.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Clinton Wood, 135th MPAD



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Clinton Wood, 135th MPAD

## Cheerleaders visit the Balkans

Story by  
Sgt. 1st Class  
Clinton Wood  
135th MPAD

Ann Marie, a Washington Redskins cheerleader for the past five years, first exposure to the military was soon after the war in Kosovo in 1999.

"(Seeing the U.S. Armed Services members) was a huge awakening," she said. "I was impressed. The kind of personality that makes a person go in the Army I have the utmost respect for."

She and 12 other fellow cheerleaders also impressed an estimated 500 Eagle Base soldiers and civilians Monday at Peacekeepers Hall.

This elite squad, the 12th Armed Forces Variety Show, performed for almost two hours doing typical cheerleader moves like high kicks and cheers plus ballet dances. They even had some lucky or bold audience members on stage for assorted antics.

This group is part of 40 cheerleaders on the squad that is selected in a separate audition after squad tryouts every April.

The Redskin cheerleaders are the oldest active cheerleading organization in the NFL – formed Sept. 30, 1962.

For Ann Marie, it was her fifth Balkans trip. She said that she enjoys this tour because the mature audience appreciates the squad's talent more.

She said in all

of her tours with the DOD, she continues to be impressed with men and women in the military.

"That's what gets me," she said.

Melanie Treanor, the squad's marketing and events coordinator, making her second trip to the Balkans said she enjoys interacting with all of the soldiers, both male and female.

"We're their cheerleaders," she said. "I have a real appreciation for them as well."



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Clinton Wood, 135th MPAD

Above: Spc. Chandler Raab made a point of letting the cheerleaders know he was willing to volunteer. Right: The cheerleaders made a scheduled visit to patients and staff at Task Force Med Eagle hours before the show.



Photo by Spc. Jeremiah Wickenhauser, 135th MPAD



Photo by Sgt. Brian Taylor, TF Iron

Charles McGovern and his family recently visited Task Force Iron at Camp McGovern. The camp is honor of his brother, 1st Lt. Robert McGovern, a recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor for valorous action against enemy forces during the Korean War.

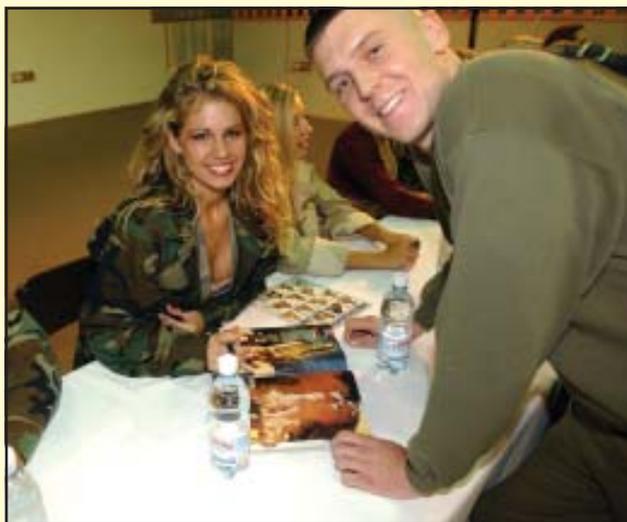


Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Clinton Wood, 135th MPAD

Marine Cpl. Craig Bull smiles as Washington Redskins cheerleader Christy prepared to sign her photo.

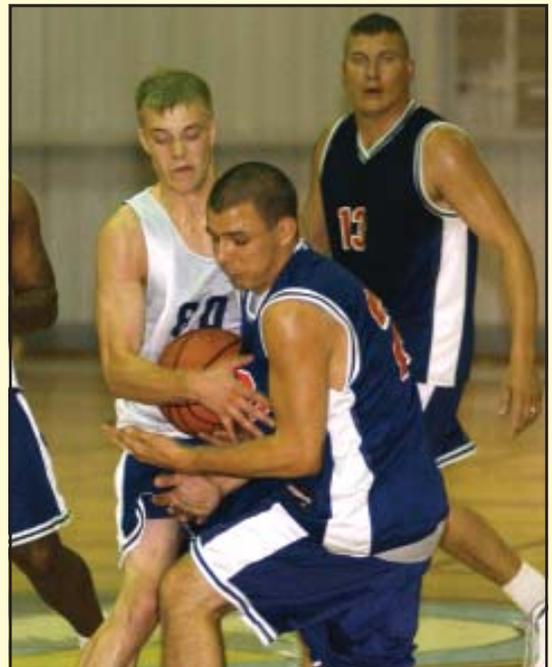


Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Clinton Wood, 135th MPAD

Camp Butmir Royals' Mike Schafer of Company G, 147th ATS, steals the ball away from Trevor Leal of Camp McGovern as Leal's teammate Brad Gangstad watches in the Battle of the Camps basketball tournament semifinals Sunday at Peacekeepers Hall.