

MARCH 26, 2004

TALON

A line of soldiers in camouflage uniforms is walking on a tarmac. In the background, a large military aircraft is visible, with its cargo door open. The soldiers are walking towards the camera, and the aircraft is positioned behind them. The scene is set outdoors on a clear day.

SFOR 15 arrives

Inside this issue:

**Supporting fellow Red Bulls
Cheating the night**

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TALON

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'Job well done'

MNB (N) Commander says Red Bulls demonstrated magnificent effort

By Brig Gen. Richard C. Nash

Red Bulls, our mission is almost complete as Stabilization Force 14 and I want to congratulate you all on a job well done!

I want to start by thanking everyone for their dedication, hard work and the many sacrifices shared by you and your family, friends and employers back home who have supported us all so well throughout the train up, mobilization and during our time here in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A truly magnificent effort!

When you first found out that you were going to serve in Bosnia as peacekeepers many of you probably couldn't even find this country on a map or remember the history behind the conflict that ultimately brought us together to maintain the stability that thousands of soldiers from numerous countries around the world have worked so hard to achieve. From your modest introduction to the responsibilities of a peacekeeping Soldier, you have evolved into a team that knows how to do the job - and you have all done it well.

Every one of you will remember your experience here in a different way. It could be the many miles logged on patrols and getting to know the people and places throughout the brigade's area of responsibility.

Those memories might include a professional friendship with soldiers from Italy, Poland, Portugal,

Slovenia, Turkey or one of the many other countries serving the SFOR mission. Outside of the performance of our daily duties, many of us will remember the humanitarian assistance projects that helped make life a little better for the people here – especially the children. The time that you donated to help children learn English, help repair a bridge or improve a road in their community will be acts of kindness that will last a lifetime in their memories of us.

You helped contribute to an important part of the SFOR history as less than 10 years ago, more than 60,000 soldiers were required to get to where we are at today. While these six months in country have passed quickly, your efforts here have helped set the stage for the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina – a future that now includes the reduction of NATO soldiers to 7,000 and furthering the peoples ability to stand on their own.

The next step in this journey lies with the 38th Infantry Division as they continue the efforts of the Red Bulls and all those peacekeepers before us. I know they will do a great job and I wish them the best during this time of transition.

Thank you for all your efforts. You should have no doubt that each of you has made a difference – you should be proud of your accomplishments. I am proud of you – Red Bulls!



About the cover: Sgt. 1st Class Steven Staley (left) and Maj. Jeffrey Casada were among the more than 90 SFOR 15 Soldiers arriving at Eagle Base last week. Photo by Sgt. Jeremiah Wickenhauser, 135th MPAD

SFOR 15 Soldiers ready for mission

Story by Spc. Michael Bennett
TFE PA

On Tuesday, March 16, the final element of Multinational Brigade (North's) Stabilization Force 15 arrived on Eagle Base to begin preparations for the transferral of authority to the 38th Infantry Division and its supporting units.

For the soldiers of SFOR 15, this marked the completion of more than two months of rigorous and extensive training leading up to this deployment to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

While at Camp Atterbury, in southern Indiana, Soldiers underwent familiarization classes on the politics, history, culture and challenges of the region as part of their Theater Specific Individual Readiness Training.

The leadership personnel of the new rotation also received classes involving the use of interpreters,

advanced negotiations skills and went further into detail on the country's political climate and traditions, during their Theater Specific Leadership Training.

These skills and more were put to the test during a series of field

exercises, culminating in the Mission Rehearsal Exercise that took place during the last part of February in Hohenfels, Germany.

The base at Hohenfels hosts the Combat Maneuver Training Center, which is supported by the Battle Command Training Program from Fort Leavenworth, Kan. The primary mission of these units is the coordination of this kind of training.

The exercise at the CMTC Camp Albertshof, outside Hohenfels, tested all of the division's skills by combining command scenarios with operations training for field Soldiers.

The exercise also provided Soldiers with a first opportunity to encounter the difficulties of a language barrier and



Photos by Capt. Steve Ogle, TFE PA

Soldiers of Ground Forces Team Dragoon move away from a Medivac helicopter as it prepares for liftoff.

utilizing an interpreter.

The scenarios included a training run of the harvest campaign using a mock village created specifically for pre-deployment training.

During this action, Soldiers conducted a house-by-house search for illegal weapons and explosives while utilizing their interpreters.

Other scenarios were introduced during this time, including a Soldier who simulated being struck by a civilian vehicle and needed emergency medical evacuation.

This also gave the aviation Soldiers of Task Force Raptor an opportunity to test their skills, which by the end of the training were sharp enough to allow them to react in less than the expected time for emergency response.

The high point of the training was a focused operation to confiscate contraband and weapons from a secured location while maintaining operational security until the last possible moment, when the vehicles rolled into the town.

The exercise went according to plan, and the soldiers of MNB (N) SFOR15 proved themselves more than up to the challenge of assuming responsibility for peacekeeping operations in Bosnia.



Task Force Raptor Sgt. John Graves renders aid to a mock casualty during training at Hohenfels, Germany.



Soldiers put on their gear and prepare to deploy to Kosovo.

Supporting fellow Red Bulls

Co. B Soldiers link up with MNB (E) Soldiers in Kosovo

By Maj Jarrod Krull
TFE PAO

On Wednesday, March 18, in response to the return to violence and tragic loss of life in Kosovo, Supreme Allied Commander Europe, Gen. James L. Jones, in concert with NATO Headquarters, endorsed the deployment of NATO reserve forces to Kosovo.

Elements of this force included American, British and Italian troops, who deployed from locations both within the Balkans and the United Kingdom.

Jones' endorsement would prove a significant historical event for the Red Bull Division as Company B, 2nd Battalion, 136th Infantry Regiment deployed the same day on short notice from Eagle Base to Kosovo where they linked up with the 825 Red Bulls of Multinational Brigade East who are serving as part of the Kosovo

Stabilization Force. Deploying from Eagle Base via C-130 aircraft, Company B was given the mission to provide additional, contingent peacekeeping forces as part of the total Over The Horizon Force.

The OTH concept provides for the deployment of reserve forces from outside a specific theater to support those troops already in theater responding to a threat to security.

Co. B's deployment marked the first time that OTH forces have been deployed outside of training exercises and also the first time since World War II that separate elements of the 34th Infantry Division operationally deployed in support of one another in contingency operations.

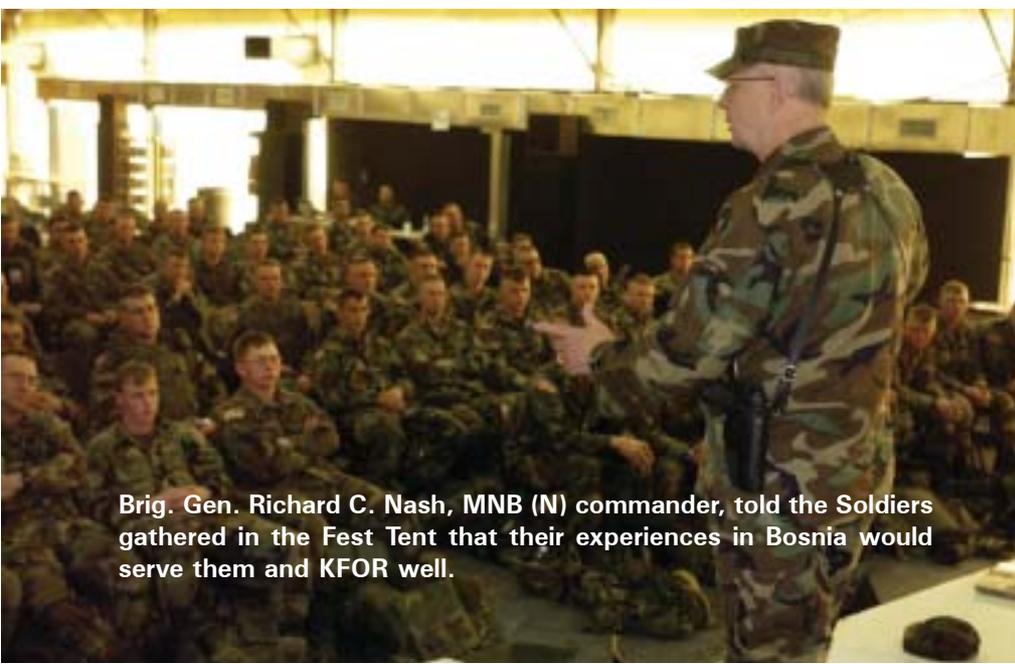
SFOR also deployed 60 Carabinieri from Sarajevo and approximately 100 United Kingdom Soldiers from the Gurkha Battalion based in Banja Luka.



Inset: A C-130 lifts off from Eagle Base en route to Kosovo.

Above: Co. B, 2nd Bn., 136th Inf., Soldiers formed two rows to board the C-130s.

Right: The Soldiers were packed into this C-130 tightly.



Brig. Gen. Richard C. Nash, MNB (N) commander, told the Soldiers gathered in the Fest Tent that their experiences in Bosnia would serve them and KFOR well.

KFOR background



Kosovo lies in southern Serbia and has a mixed population of which the majority are ethnic Albanians. Until 1989, the region enjoyed a high degree of autonomy within the former Yugoslavia, until Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic altered the status of the region, removing its autonomy and bringing it under the direct control of Belgrade. Kosovar Albanians strenuously opposed the move and open conflict resulted between Serbian military and police forces and Kosovar Albanian forces that tolled more than 1,500 Kosovar Albanian deaths and forced 400,000 people from their homes.

In early March 1999, a Kosovar Albanian delegation signed a proposed peace agreement, but talks broke up without a signature from the Serbian delegation.

Immediately afterwards, Serbian military and police forces stepped up the intensity of their operations against the ethnic Albanians, moving extra troops and modern tanks into the region.

Beginning March 23, 1999, NATO

intervened with Operation Allied Force to restore stability in the region by driving out Serbian forces through a 78-day air campaign. After the withdrawal of Serbian forces, KFOR entered Kosovo under the authority of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 in June 1999.

Since that time, KFOR has had the mandate to establish and maintain a secure environment in Kosovo, including public safety and order.

Last week's swift deployment of SFOR troops to support KFOR, demonstrates NATO's commitment to peace in the Balkans and exercised its capability to rapidly respond to crisis situations with fewer international soldiers in theater.

At the time of this report, the security situation was making vast improvements and Co. B remained in Kosovo in support of Multinational Brigade East.



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Top left: An AH-64 Apache helicopter sits on the airfield.

Top right: NVGs are mounted to the aircrew member's helmet.

Bottom left: Crew chief Sgt. Rogelio Rayos, TF Renegade, stands up to get a better view during a night mission.

Background: 1st Lt. Joseph Casey, TF Renegade, adjusts his night vision goggles before a mission

Aircrew coordination important when flying with NVGs

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

Lights from small fires and houses were the only things that flickered in the night as this TF Renegade UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter made a forward landing somewhere in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Seconds later, the radio silence was broken when crew chief Sgt. Rogelio Rayos told the pilots, "Sir, the cloud is at the tail, now it's at the cargo area, at the crew chief and under the bubble."

This task, where Rayos was assuring the pilots that their helicopter did not become enveloped by a snow cloud as it made a forward landing, can be performed both day and night. But at night is when communication between the crew members wearing night vision goggles counts.

"This task requires a high level of coordination between the crew -- especially at night," said pilot Chief Warrant Officer Mike Guthrie.

The crew chief becomes a third set of eyes for the two Black Hawk pilots because binocular helmet-mounted NVGs allow no depth perception and a only monocular field of view.

"You can only see where you are actually looking," 1st Lt. Joseph Casey, an instructor pilot, said. "We really have to rely on other crew members. I can look to my right but beyond that I can't flat out see at all."

Rayos, who has more than 30 hours of flying with NVGs, is able to stand up and look outside the crew chief's window via a retractable seat belt harness.

He said it is still difficult to judge the distances wearing NVGs despite his maneuverability. Rayos does have assistance since each helicopter crew has at least one crew chief. They sit on either the left side or right side behind the cockpit.

Pilots must stay current with

NVGs every 45 days. They fly one hour with an instructor pilot at night. They are tested on both base maneuvers like hovering and turns, and mission tasks, including sling loads, fast rope insertions and extractions.

Casey, who has 2,000 total hours of flying Black Hawks, noted that

Renegade pilots are some of most qualified NVG pilots he has served with.

"I can safely say that for any mission we need to perform, this unit

probably performs better than any other I've ever been in," he said.

He said the pilots extensive experience in both flying Black Hawks and other aircraft is the reason for his confidence.

Having a crew chief like Rayos also helps.

"They (the pilots) rely on me to make sure that the aircraft clears everything and make sure we don't hit anything," said Rayos. "I love flying. Flying is good."

"You can only see where you are actually looking."

– 1st Lt. Joseph Casey

Hanging out at Camp Clark

By **Nedima Hadziibrisevic**
TF Eagle PA Media Specialist

OLOVO, BiH—About 15 kilometers south of this town, an area where frontlines were situated during the war, is Camp Clark, named after Medal of Honor recipient Corporal William A. Clark, Company H, 2nd Minnesota Infantry. This camp is the new home of the 1st platoon, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 136th Infantry.

Prior to moving to the camp, the element was stationed at Forward Operating Base Connor patrolling the Vlasenica and Han Pijesak municipalities. However, their area of responsibility changed to Kladanj and Olovo after relocating to Camp Clark.

Platoon leader 1st Lt. Ryan Bliley has met the mayors, both the police chiefs, and the civil protection agency



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

Sgt. Scott Winter, Co. C, 2nd Bn., 136th Inf., shoots some pool as fellow Soldier Staff Sgt. Tim Port gets a haircut in the MWR room at Camp Clark.

in the new AOR. “They are happy to have us here and they like the idea that there is a (Stabilization Force) camp so close to them now,” he said.

Smaller than FOB Connor, Camp Clark was a big change for the Soldiers.

“It is a lot smaller and there are less places to walk,” said Spc. Brian

Ophus. “We are all from Bemidji (Minn.). It is kind of nice being here with all the same guys.”

When they first moved to the camp, the Soldiers experienced some difficulties such as lack of Internet and phone lines. Yet in time, living conditions improved. Today, the Soldiers have almost all the facilities as any other base including a TV and game room, barber shop, gym, mobile PX, Internet café and others that make their deployment easier.

“We play pool and lift weights a lot,” Ophus said. “We have a small weight room but we make do with what we have.”

One thing that the camp’s unique for and the Soldiers are particularly proud of is the fastest laundry service of any other installation.

“Our laundry turn around is three hours,” emphasized Bliley.

Classical music comes to Eagle Base

By **Nedima Hadziibrisevic**
TF Eagle PA Media Specialist

Rarely do Soldiers deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina have an opportunity to relax and listen to Schubert, Brahms, Mozart and other classical music icons performed by local music students.

Recently, Eagle Base Soldiers enjoyed a concert presented by the Tuzla Elementary Music School, as a token of appreciation for a monetary donation provided to them by the 34th Infantry Division “Red Bull” Band from Rosemount, Minn. The donation, about \$2,000, was coordinated through the Task Force Eagle G5 office and presented to the school by Brig. Gen. Jon Trost, of the Minnesota Army National Guard and Terri Popp, a Minnesota Orchestra board member, during a visit to Bosnia Dec. 22.

Lt. Col. Susan Rasmussen, assistant chief of staff, G5, was directly involved in coordination of

the donation and arranging the show.

“They (the 34th Inf. Div. band) wanted to support our efforts in Bosnia so they asked us to identify a music school the band members could raise money to donate to.” she said.

Tuzla Music school faces constant financial difficulties. School director Suncica Kuzmic was amazed with the donation, since usually she needs to ask for them. However, this time the donation just came to her.

“I think we will spend it for purchasing instrument parts, for violin wires, and

probably as assistance to the teachers because we always have serious financial problems,” she said.

About 45 students participated in the concert, which opened with the grand choir routine

followed with performances by soloists on various music instruments. Nothing but cheers and applause could be heard from the service members after each recital.

“These kids are very talented and it is really good to see that they have a program like this,” said Spc. Tanya Gaylord, Hq., and Hq., Co., 34th Inf. Div.

A fellow Soldier from the same unit, Sgt. William Chaffee, had nothing but compliments for the students. “I thought that the kids did a great job,” said Chaffee.



The Tuzla Music School choir performs for Soldiers on Eagle Base.

Photo by Master Sgt. Edwin Holt, 135th MPAD

 **In our sights** 



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

Two TF Renegade AH-64 Apache helicopters fly over the coast of Croatia en route to Krk Croatia Saturday. Flying the helicopter in the front is Chief Warrant Officer George Clarabut and Capt. Scott Nicholas. Flying in the other aircraft is Chief Warrant Officer Jeff Fellin and Capt. Mike Liesmann.



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

Master Sgt. Norman L. Fountain, SFOR 14 TF Med Eagle's first sergeant, cases his unit's guidon during SFOR14/15 TF Med Eagle's Initial Operating Capabilities Ceremony at Peacekeepers Hall Monday.



Photo by Master Sgt. Edwin Holt, 135th MPAD

Sgt. Ana Doody and Spc. Michael Finlay, 15th PSE., shop in one of the AAFES "We Go" trucks. The trucks go to bases without AAFES stores.

SFOR 15 MNB (N) Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Severe (left), Commander Brig. Gen. Timothy Wright and Chief of Staff Col. Michael Nevin pose near the Eagle Base Distinguished Visitors' Lounge.



Photo by Spc. Michael Bennett, TFE