

November 12, 2004

TALON



Goodbye To Bosnia

Inside this issue:

A Look at the Important Events from
15 Rotations of SFOR

Published in support of
Operation Joint Forge
November 12, 2004
Volume 15, No. 11

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The *Talon* is produced in the interest of the service members of Multinational Task Force (North). 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 every three weeks by the Task Force Eagle Public Affairs Office, Eagle Base, APO AE 09789. DSN Telephone 314-762-5235. Email story ideas, and photo to: aaron.jenkins@email-tc3.5sigcmd.army.mil. The Task Force Eagle web address is www.tfeagle.army.mil. Printed by PrintComTuzla. Circulation: 1,750.

Doing More With Less A Look Back For The Final *Talon*, Ever.

Commentary by Cpt. Aaron Jenkins
TFE Public Affairs

This is the final *Talon* ever. It has been with great pride that the SFOR 15 *Talon* staff has produced 11 editions for you. We have written and edited 70 stories, published countless photographs and told endless tales of life at Eagle Base and the surrounding Bosnian countryside.

Additionally, we held 32 press conferences and produced over 80 hometown news releases. Many of our stories were printed in the *Informer*, *National Guard Magazine*, *NGX Magazine* and countless local papers.

As the editor, I have enjoyed working with our Public Affairs Office staff, Maj. Jon Thurlow, Maj. Markus Novosel, Spc. Mike Bennett, Spc. Jeff Riggs, and our Media Specialists Aleksandar Ilic, Nedima Hadziibrisevic, and Nenad Restic. We have put out a product that I hope everyone enjoyed and kept all the family members well informed about what life was like for us in Bosnia.

Bennett was our wordsmith and layout guru. He, in particular with Ogle, put in some crazy hours putting an End Of Rotation Book together for everyone's enjoyment.

We looked for and found a person to do video for us, Riggs. He took the time to learn a new skill and put forth the effort that it took to produce a video that he and all of us are proud of, in addition to covering all the other little things that came up.

Novosel was our Special Projects Officer and language specialist that helped keep us sane at times.

Thurlow was the driving force behind the office. He steered us

straight and when we needed it, he would give us a much needed, "Come to JT speech," to get us going.

The media specialists gave us a continuity that allowed us to hit the ground running and we never looked back. We really appreciate Alex, Nedima and Nenad.

We had the smallest Public Affairs Office ever and still produced the products and information services that our bigger predecessors did. I never even mentioned that of the entire staff, only two have had formal public affairs training.

We did what every section has done on this deployment; we did more with less. No obstacle was too great; no task was too difficult for PAO. We learned that working as a team made the job a lot easier than doing it alone. There truly is no 'I' in team.

I thank you all for putting up with my silly jokes and constant ranting. Thanks to all the family members who sent in cards and letters of support to our staff. We all thank you for your loyal support. We are sure you will enjoy both your yearbook and video. I hope you have also enjoyed reading the *Talon*. And as always, "Cyclone's Sir, proud to serve!"



The staff (from Left): Maj. Thurlow, Spc. Bennett, Capt. Ogle, Aleksandar Ilic, Nenad Ristic, Nedima Hadziibrisevic, Maj. Novosel, Capt. Jenkins and Spc. Riggs.



The first group of American Soldiers from SFOR 15 went home on Oct. 31, 2004. The rest of the Soldiers will rotate home over the rest of November and early December.

Photo by 1st Sgt. Michael Mattingly
Task Force Scorpion Sergeant Major

While We Were Away....

Story by Sgt. Les Newport
Camp Atterbury Public Affairs

Camp Atterbury, Indiana - The operation tempo at Camp Atterbury hasn't slowed in the last six months.

In fact, the Department of the Army decided to pause winter deployments at Fort Drum and Fort McCoy due to the winter climate that hampers training missions.

Camp Atterbury and the training support battalion have taken on the additional deployment processing and training missions.



Sgt. Benjamin King and Staff Sgt. Wayne McWhorter flank the Camp Atterbury welcome sign at the main gate. The two Soldiers have been activated in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and will be among the first to welcome the 38th Infantry back to Camp Atterbury.

Camp Shelby, Mississippi was activated and modeled on the Camp Atterbury process to support further Army Reserve and National Guard units.

That all adds up to a very full and busy training center.

Lt. Col. Lawrence Muncie, Deputy Commander, is optimistic that the camp can continue the 5-6 day demobilization process for returning Soldiers.

"The camp has in excess of 4,000 Soldier in the training process right now," said Muncie, "so returning Soldiers need to be patient, and we'll work together to get them home in a timely manner."

By the end of 2004, Camp Atterbury

will have deployed over 20,000 Army Reserve and National Guard Soldiers since the camp was activated in February of 2003.

In addition to the Stabilization Force and KFOR missions last summer, Camp Atterbury trained and deployed the 76th Infantry Brigade to Afghanistan on a mission to train the Afghanistan National Army.

Currently, the 98th ID is at Atterbury preparing to deploy to Iraq to train the Iraq Army and National Guard.

Several dozen support units have deployed, or will deploy from here by the end of the year.

The plan is for Camp Atterbury to remain activated until the last of the units deployed from here return from active duty.

Although the camp has seen many improvements in services credited to federal activation, none of the new infrastructure is the result of the active status.

Present policy permits only temporary improvements funded by Department of the Army in support of the training and deployment mission.

However, the camp has seen significant construction and facility improvements as part of a planned development

strategy.

The Department of Defense designated Camp Atterbury as a Joint Maneuver Training Center in April, recognizing the camp's capability to support a range of training missions for all branches of the armed forces, as well as civilian personnel.

The Joint Simulation Training and Exercise Center is scheduled to open in the March.

The center will provide a virtual training environment for a broad spectrum of military and civilian entities from around the country.

The camp has also seen improvements to the Troop Medical Clinic. Col. Sara J. Flanigan is excited

that the facility will double in size.

"We're expanding, doubling, new laboratory, new x-ray machine, digital radiology, examination rooms, and a big pharmacy," said Flanigan. "It's part of the strategic growth plan for the camp."

The Indiana Military Academy has begun an expansion that will include four new classroom that can be opened into one large classroom that will accommodate more than 100 students according to Maj. Sara Hall, IMA Training Officer.

"We'll have 4772 new sq feet of classrooms," said Hall. "This new space will be an important part of our goal to provide professional training education as well as joint training opportunities."

The class rooms will have video and data projection capability and be wired with network computer capabilities.

The construction is scheduled for completion in late spring and will be a welcome addition for cadre conducting training missions for mobilizing Soldiers.

The most exciting news at Camp Atterbury is that the 38th Infantry Division is returning from a successful command mission in Bosnia.

The return of Task Force Eagle is yet another milestone in the successful execution of an ongoing war on terrorism. KUDOS!



The Camp Atterbury Joint Simulation Training and Exercise Center is scheduled for completion in the early spring of 2005. The center will be used by joint military forces as well as civilian entities to simulate various wartime and crisis scenarios for command training exercises.

A Long Strange Trip... To Bosnia

Story by Spc. Mike Bennett
TFE Public Affairs

At Camp Atterbury, Ind. in January, elements of the 38th ID and supporting units came together as the American contingent of Stabilization Force 15. At the camp, the Soldiers received basic instruction on the unique aspects of this mission and began to finalize staffing the sections and Task Forces.

After a month and a half of training, the Soldiers moved on to Hohenfels, Germany, where they engaged in a Military Readiness Exercise to certify their ability to take over the peacekeeping mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Once the MRX was complete, they completed their journey and moved into Bosnia. The majority of the Soldiers began to settle into the main American base camp, Eagle Base, near the city of Tuzla. There they took command of the Multinational Brigade (North). This later was reclassified as the Multinational Task Force (North).

The rest moved to their assigned positions, either as liaisons to the multinational forces working as a part of MNTF(N) with the Americans, to the SFOR command base near Sarajevo, or to the smaller Forward Operating Bases in the MNTF(N) Area of Responsibility.

Since that time, the Soldiers have witnessed a large number of changes in the way this mission has been conducted. First was the refocusing of efforts on Bosnian self-reliance and helping the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina to professionalize. Then came the closure of most of the remaining base camps and the move to Liaison and Observation Teams actually living in local communities.

But the one thing that has not changed is each Soldiers' commitment to excellence.

And now that they are beginnig to return home as a part of the last SFOR, they can take pride in helping the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina.





The End of An Era -

Looking Back At A Decade of American Involvement in Bosnia

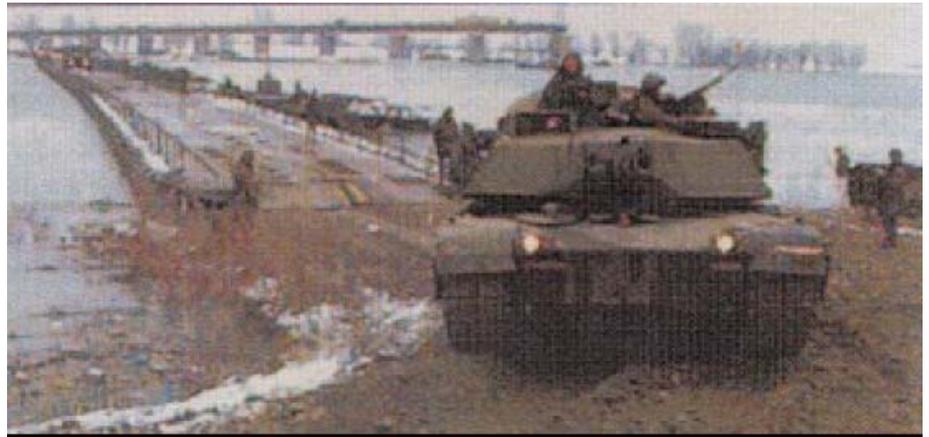
Compiled By Maj. Markus Novosel and
Nedima Hadziibrisevic
TFE Public Affairs

In the early 1990's the world's history once more took a sharp turn here in the Balkans.

A 46 year old nation tore itself apart, spurred on by extreme nationalism, intolerance, hatred and revenge. After hesitating far too long, the international community moved to stop the killing. Under the leadership of the United States, NATO forged its instrument of peace: IFOR, and ultimately SFOR. Peace was established and maintained, and IFOR/SFOR became the finest example of international cooperation in history. Nations that had been cold war enemies until only five years before, worked side by side to prevent further bloodshed and to keep the war from spreading beyond the former Yugoslav border. The world had learned history's lesson about war in the Balkans.

Ensuring peace in Bosnia wasn't a simple thing to do. It was a very complicated social and political situation and there was no previous example to show the best way to carry out this mission. Even getting the first troops here was complicated by the fact that all the bridges over the Sava River had been blown up. IFOR had to construct a pontoon bridge to get in-country. Each rotation built upon the lessons of the previous ones. A decade of peace is proof that the lessons were learned well. All of us here, and our comrades in arms before us, have taken part in the making of history.

The ten years of IFOR/SFOR was punctuated by many significant events. On this and the following pages are a collection of photos showing some of the significant occurrences during IFOR/SFOR's stay in BiH.



Above: An M-1 A1 Abrams tank from the 1st Squadron, 1st Armored Cavalry Regiment, 1st Armored Division crosses the 600-meter long pontoon bridge across the Sava River Jan. 1, 1996. Just six days earlier before the bridge was completed, troops from the same Regiment crossed in rafts as the people of Orasje cheered and applauded their arrival. The original bridge was destroyed in 1991 when the conflict in the region began.



Above: Jan. 13, 1996 President Clinton visited the Soldiers of Task force Eagle in Tuzla. Clinton visited BiH several times as did the First Lady and even their daughter, Chelsea.



Above: Mar. 28, 1996 The bridge over the Sava River is reopened thanks to the work of U.S. and Hungarian Engineers.

Right: Mar. 25, 1996 First Lady Hillary Clinton and her daughter Chelsea visit with Soldiers of Task Force Eagle.



Above: On Mar. 22, 1996 Demo experts from Co. B, 23rd Eng. Bn. removed these massive slabs from the ruins of the bridge across the Sava between Brcko, BiH and Gunja, Croatia.





Above: On Apr. 3, 1996 Secretary of Commerce, Ron Brown, came to BiH on a three day visit to the Balkans accompanied by a delegation of American business executives. After visiting 709th MP Bn at Guardian Base, Mr. Brown and the delegation headed for Dubrovnik, Croatia. Not far from their destination, the aircraft, an Air Force T43A, veered off course and struck a mountainside. There were no survivors.



Above: Jul. 12, 1996 The new Secretary of Commerce, Mickey Kantor, came to BiH to complete Ron Brown's mission.



Left: July 1996 Her Majesty Queen Noor of Jordan arrives at Eagle Base. She came to join several thousand Bosnian women who gathered at the Tuzla Sports Center to commemorate the one year anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre.



Above: Jul. 4, 1996 Secretary of Defense, William J. Perry, visited the troops to help celebrate Task Force Eagle's first Independence Day in Bosnia.

Below: In late July, arrest warrants are issued by the Hague's Tribunal for the apprehension of the two main war criminals, Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic. This sparked threats from the Bosnian Serb community.



Above: Sep. 14, 1996 The first nationwide elections, sponsored by the Office for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), were held. This was an important milestone for the future of an independent Bosnia.



Left: Mar. 15, 1997 Soldiers of Co. C TF 1-26 discovered a stolen, repainted Dutch YPR. During the siege of Srebrenica in the summer of 1995, the white painted vehicles of UNPROFOR (UN Protection Force) symbolized neutrality and safety. Bosnian Serb forces seized the vehicles and used them to hunt down the Bosnian Muslim men of the Srebrenica area. The armored vehicle had been repainted olive drab and was found in an out-building at a weapons storage site near Zvornik.



Above: Sep. 14, 1996 Richard Holbrooke, the architect of the Dayton Agreement, came to visit and witness the 1st national elections.



Above: Early in February 1998, an important step in restoring the infrastructure of BiH was taken, the Lukavac Rail Station was reopened. Revitalizing the rail network boosts the national economy by allowing more goods to get to market and providing cheap mass transportation. In the picture, two U.S. Soldiers are doing a final serial numbers check of milvans before loading them onto rail cars.



Above: Mar. 5, 1999 the Brcko District arbitration decision is made. Brcko is the bottle neck region linking the two halves of the Republika Srpska (RS) to each other. The Bosnian Serbs saw it as absolutely essential for the survival of the RS and were therefore, very reluctant to let it go. Because of possible repercussions, SFOR was put on a heightened state of alert. In the picture we see a U.S. Soldier from PSYOP getting the opinion of people on the street about the Brcko decision. As it turned out, the district became autonomous and was demilitarized.

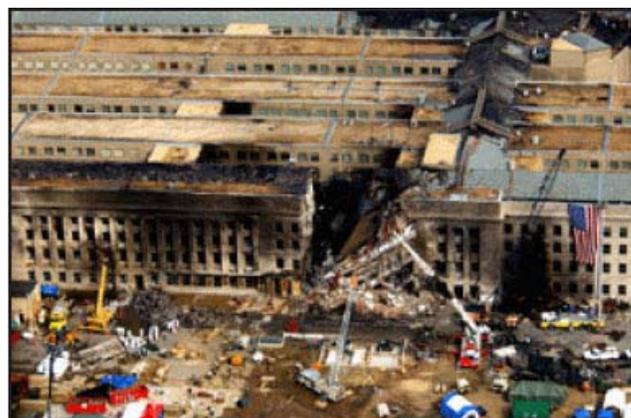
Right: Jul. 11, 2001 This day saw the first memorial ceremony of the Srebrenica massacre taking place at the nearby village of Potocari.



This location for the memorial grounds and eventual monument was chosen by the women of Srebrenica because it was the last place where they saw their husbands, sons, fathers and brothers. The potential for an incident was very high which required SFOR troops to be prepared and on hand. 82 bus loads of people came to the observance. 2,600 RS policemen and 700 SFOR troops ensured the peaceful conduct of the ceremony. Two years later on Sep. 20, 2003 former President Clinton officially dedicated the memorial.

Right: Sep. 27, 2002 the fourth Dynamic Response exercise took place. This exercise included Soldiers from six different countries and several military specialties.

It was designed to assure the people of BiH that NATO could rapidly reinforce SFOR with a highly effective, mobile, combat force.



Above: Sep. 11, 2001 When the terrorist attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center took place many things changed, especially if you were in the military. But it did not change the execution of SFOR's mission of peace.

Below: May 16, 2003 Deputy Secretary of Defense, Paul Wolfowitz, visits Eagle Base.

A 45-minute town hall meeting was held during which Mr. Wolfowitz listened to Soldiers' concerns on a variety of issues.



Above: Apr. 30, 2003 Tuzla International Airport reopens. TIA shares the airstrip with Eagle Base and represents a significant economic stimulus to the area. The picture shows the signing of the documents opening the airport.

Right: May 28, 2003 The Russian Military Contingent ends its mission in Bosnia. This marked the beginning of SFOR's draw-down which will end with the last troops of SFOR 15.

The picture shows the dignitaries attending the Russian departure ceremony.



Right: Jul. 21, 2003 The Danish Contingent reaches the end of its mission, too, and heads back to Denmark.



Left: Jul. 14, 2003 The Finnish Contingent completes its 7 year mission with SFOR and returns home. In October of 2004, the Finnish returned to Eagle Base to take command of the new European Union Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina to help continue the reconstruction of this country and maintain the peace and stability of Bosnia.

A Farewell Letter to SFOR Soldiers

Dear Friend,

I still remember the day that you crossed the Sava River almost nine years ago.

I didn't know what to expect from you, but I had to respect that you're here so I don't have to listen to artillery rounds, climb the mountains, be a target or target others.

We met on a cold January day and were pretty distant from each other. I guess you didn't know what to expect from me either.

And our journey has taken off from that day.

We walked the tiny roads of the Srebrenica area, pulled security for the first returnees at the village of Nežuk and Dugi Dio; rode Hummers and Bradleys on the Han Pijesak Highlands; lived for months under the Bosanski Brod Bridge patrolling back and forth to Croatia; we've done thousands of radio shows, meetings and Round Tables, Harvests, Weapon Storage Inspections, demining operations, trainings and what not. The pictures of Ulice are still fresh in my mind as walked in silence overwhelmed by the amount of devastation trying to figure out what it is that drives a human being to that kind of destructive insanity. I still remember when the crowd threw the rocks and boards at us and hit you in the head at Brčko Bridge; negotiations with groups of people on numerous check points at the IEBL; even how you started the worldwide renowned Arizona Market to bring people closer to each other.

Now, after tens of millions of miles, thousands of sleepless nights in the woods and hilltops of this country, I don't know if we became best buddies but I know we made a pretty good team that accomplished a very good job.

You've taught me a lot. But several things are paramount. The professionalism and impartiality that you've shown me will lead me through this world, which is still, after millions of year of evolution, somewhat infected with prejudice. You have shown me how to feel love for my homeland. I remember how I stood ashamed before your tremendous and unconditional love for your country. It taught me to appreciate my flag and the anthem a lot more and that by doing a number of small things for my country, it will grow to something I'm proud of.

The most important thing you taught me was to believe in myself and that I 'm able to achieve anything if I put my mind to it, as you helped me accomplish tasks that were challenging even for a more experienced person than a 20-year -old .

You've given me a beautiful decade, a head start for the future, hope for all of us underdogs and underprivileged who are not "connected", "family related" with "the right people at the right places", nor have "the right name" in a country that still cherishes these substandard values.

I admire you for the fact that I'm not sure that I would do the same thing for someone I didn't know.

Conspiracy creators say you never do anything without your own interest. I can't agree, and this is why.

The ones who have had a near-death experience claim their whole life flashes before your eyes just prior to the judgment moment. The reminiscent roll of film unwinds, the most emotional frames of your existence; first trophy, first kiss, first love, wedding, birth of your children, family reunion on a Christmas or 4th of July, championship game of your favorite team, divorce, death of a loved one, ...

Before you say the final goodbye to this world end go to the place where the peacekeeping job is already taken; your film could be missing some of the most important things of your life; Simply because you couldn't be there to witness it. Because someone else needed your help even more. Instead, your film could contain tears of an old Bosnian lady in Srebrenica, excitement and gratitude in the eyes of a smiling child from Tuzla Orphanage who just received school supplies and toys from this Soldier that speaks this funny language, a mind-blowing view from Zvornik and Srebrenik Castle or the horrifying sights of Snagovo mass grave.

So, if you even took anything from Bosnia, anything at all; my country and I have taken a lot more from you.

All I know is you will make a significant part of my film when it unwinds.

For all this

So Long and Thank You, 'G.I. Joe'

Aleksandar Ilic

TFE Public Affairs Media Specialist

Reflections On America's Role in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Story by Ivana Avramovic
AST Eagle Historian

The first time I ever saw American Soldiers "live" was when a couple of them entered the bus I was on. I was traveling from Tuzla to Zagreb, Croatia where I was supposed to catch a flight that would take me to my American host family in Brockport, NY. It was late February 1996 and the NATO peacekeeping mission in Bosnia had just started. The Soldiers were checking IDs of the people crossing the Inter Entity Boundary Line, or IEBL as it became known. I was 16 years old and it was the first time I had left my home town of Tuzla since the war in Bosnia had begun. I never would have thought that when I returned to Bosnia a year-and-a-half later, I would spend years working with their fellow Soldiers.

There was no end to my excitement during my first assignment with the *Stars and Stripes* reporter and photographer in August 1997. It was the first time ever for me to visit an American military base, Camp McGovern, and I earned some badly needed money translating on that assignment. Half a year later I earned a full-time job as a translator for the newspaper serving America's military. Luckily there was room for personal and professional growth at that job. Soon I picked up photography and had my first pictures published. Some time later I took a shot at writing as well. As the situation in Bosnia stabilized and other countries and their problems took over the primetime news on CNN, my newspaper stopped sending other reporters stationed elsewhere in Europe and I became the reporter and photographer for *Stars and Stripes* in Bosnia.

Over the years U.S. troops have gone on countless patrols, conducted

many harvest operations, weapons destructions, helped with demining, built roads and bridges, donated school supplies, toys, clothing, and even money and construction material to the less fortunate Bosnians. Traveling thousands of miles on Bosnian roads that went from impassible to decent since late 1995 when the war ended, many troops invested their time, money and often emotions to improve the lives of the people they had just met. People from the communities, churches and schools of the American troops deployed in Bosnia got involved too, mailing thousands of packages to Bosnian people they have never met but have heard stories about.

I am glad to have had the opportunity to be there to capture images and stories of some of those events.

Seeing weapons collected through operation Harvest being swallowed by the flames of a furnace at the Zenica steel factory is an image I will never forget. I don't know if the steel from those weapons was ever used for the construction of a home or a factory, as it was supposed to be, but the symbolism was great - what was once used to destroy, was now to be used to build.

While my job as a *Stars and Stripes* reporter ended in May of this year, I have the opportunity to see the SFOR mission come to an end and document that as the Area Support Group Eagle Historian.

I see that this year, like every year before, the troops have stayed true to their holiday tradition of giving gifts to Bosnian children even though many will be home by the time Christmas comes. Some of the name tags on the Angel Tree at the PX have been picked up, and gift-wrapped packages are already waiting to be delivered to the children. Things have not changed much in some respects,



Eagle Base has seen its share of changes over the course of the past decade, from tent cities to the more permanent wooden South East Asia huts.

but they have changed. I have noticed that the children on those cards are older now. There is a 20-year-old and many 15-year-olds. Hopefully, they will be in a better place in their lives this time next year and the Soldiers will be able to stay home with their children.

Through the years, I have heard so many American Soldiers say that they've come to realize how fortunate they have it with all the opportunities and wealth in the U.S. after seeing Bosnians who have lost family members, and homes, soldier on through life with very little.

But I hope that my fellow citizens have learned as much as I have from American Soldiers about the importance of giving.

I wish the war in Bosnia did not have to happen - and that foreign troops did not have to come and bring us peace - but since it did, I am grateful for all the memories and the great friends I have made.

The situation is different than it was during the war when we did not have electricity, the phone connections were broken and the mail did not work. We have electricity, telephone, mail, computers and the Internet now and I am sure that we will keep in touch wherever life takes us next.

Multinational Task Force (N) Mission

MNTF(N) conducts military operations across its area of operations to deter a return to major violence, contributes towards sustained stability, and establishes conditions for a successful transition to follow-on forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!

NO RETURN OF HOSTILITIES

STABILITY MAINTAINED

SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION TO EUROPEAN FORCES

7,900 PATROLS

1,300 AVIATION MISSIONS

15 FOCUSED OPERATIONS

4.9 MILLION MILES DRIVEN

100s OF BILATERAL MEETINGS

HARVESTED:

160 PORTABLE AIR DEFENSE SYSTEMS

509,769 ROUNDS OF AMMUNITION

776 POUNDS OF EXPLOSIVES

1,562 MORTAR ROUNDS

1,856 SMALL ARMS

8,314 GRENADES

246 MORTARS

775 MINES

DESTROYED:

1.7 MILLION POUNDS OF WAR MATERIALS

1 MILLION SEPARATE ITEMS