

JANUARY 23, 2004

TALON



Into the fire

Inside this issue:

**Rev. King commemorated
ASG welcomes new commander**

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TALON

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TRICARE benefits explained

Staff Sgt. John Indrehus
TRICARE Representative

With redeployment starting you have many things to think about. One thing you shouldn't forget about is health care and dental needs for you and your family. If you start thinking about this now, the transition back to your family will be much easier. TRICARE for most has been a good experience, but know what needs to be done ahead of time so there is a better outcome in the end.

Reserve Component members ordered to active duty for more than 30 days in support of a contingency operation are entitled to transitional health care and dental benefits upon separation. Family members are not eligible for transitional dental benefits, but they are eligible for dental benefits under the Tricare Dental Plan. Members separated with less than six years of total active federal military service (as indicated on the DD 214) and eligible family members are eligible for 60 days of transitional health care.

Reserve component members also are eligible for the Continued Health Care Benefit Program when they lose military health benefits and their transitional health care benefit period has expired. They also may enroll their family members for this coverage. CHCBP provides benefits similar to TRICARE Standard for a specific period of time (up to 18 months for members and their family. They must enroll within 60 days of the date that their transitional benefit period expires and pay quarterly premiums (\$933 per individual, \$1,966 per family). For more information about CHCBP, individuals may call toll free: 1-800-444-5445, visit online at <http://www.humana-military.com>, or write to Humana Military Healthcare Services Inc., Attn: CHCBP, P.O. Box 740072, Louisville, KY 40201.

Members of the Selected Reserve and Individual Ready Reserve and/or their families may enroll in the

TRICARE Dental Plan. Reserve component members who are ordered to active duty for more than 30 consecutive days are eligible for military dental care, the same as active duty service members, and are automatically disenrolled from the TDP if previously enrolled.

Reservists leaving active duty status (who were previously enrolled) are automatically reenrolled in the TRICARE Dental Program. However, coverage is not reflected in DEERS until the month following deactivation. Reservists should ensure coverage is in effect by contacting the TDP Administrator, United Concordia Companies, Inc at 1-800-866-8499. The TDP requires a minimum 12-month enrollment period; however, that commitment is waived for families of reservists called to active duty for certain contingency operations.

If you have specific questions about these benefits, please address them to SSG John Indrehus: john.Indrehus@email-tc3.5sigcmd.army.mil or 314-762-3669. The following statements were pulled from the TRICARE web page <http://www.tricare.osd.mil>.



About the cover: A bin of confiscated weapons is pushed into a furnace at Zenica Steel Factory last Thursday. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Clinton Wood

Rev. King commemorated

Eagle Base observes Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday with ceremony

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

The airing of the film at Triggers Monday night of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s peaceful march on Washington, D.C., on Aug. 28, 1963, where he delivered his address, "I have a Dream" hit home for Maj. Yvonne Breaux.

Breaux of Task Force Med Eagle, attended the march. She had just turned 18 years old six days before.

The showing of this classic film was part of a two-hour ceremony held on Eagle Base to celebrate King's birthday. The event started at the Eagle Base Chapel, followed by a candle light march to Triggers.

"(Ceremonies like this) mean more to me each and every year," Breaux said. "All the stuff he talked about, we as people of color now have. I never realized I would be part of history."

Breaux said she could only hear King speak. She was too far away to see him.

"King was an American and he was for all people," she commented. "Each time I celebrate his birthday, I feel more grateful. Wearing this uniform I feel more bonded."

A poem titled "Lessons in the Air" written by Sgt. Keshia Whitehurst of TF Med Eagle, also helped bond the audience at Triggers.

One of her verses was, "Bring on the storms, don't change the weather Lord; I am ready to learn patience, love, wisdom and worship. And when I grow weary in a foreign land, I understand Lord, that all I have to do is hold on."

Whitehurst received a standing ovation after reading her poem.

Brig. Gen. Nash, commander of Multinational Brigade (North) was in



Sgt. 1st Class Toni Nelson (left) and Staff Sgt. Toscha Stanley were among the gospel choir members singing during the Martin Luther King, Jr., Birthday ceremony Monday at the Eagle Base Chapel. Cheryl Graves directs the choir.

the audience.

"I feel just blessed when I see talent like that," he commented.

Nash also observed "talented performers" during the Chapel service attended by about 60 people. The seven-member gospel choir sang three songs with several solos.

Larry Williams also had the audience read several scriptures from books of the bible about Moses and David.

Williams said that King exhibited, displayed and put forth the attributes of these two men.

Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Alan Johnson said King's dream belongs to all Americans to close the ceremony.



Col. Ferdinand Peters, TFE, (left) and Spc. Brian Kennerson, TF Renegade, were among the marchers during the candle light march.

No returns

Harvested weapons turned into steel

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

ZENICA, BiH – Weapons and munitions that once “rained steel” on Bosnia and Herzegovina and its citizens during the 1992-95 war were brought to the point of no return here last Thursday at this steel factory.

The weapons were crammed into a large cast-iron bin and pushed into a Siemens-Martin furnace to be melted down at approximately 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit. The molten steel is recycled into raw steel for construction

use.
Stabilization Force 14
Commander Maj. Gen.

“It was nice to see how civilian companies can help out the whole country by helping get rid of these weapons.”

– Staff Sgt. Chris Swoboda

Virgil Packett was among a NATO delegation who attended the destruction, including NATO Secretary General Japp de Hoop

Scheffer, said that destruction of these weapons is very important. “So that the people of Bosnia know that when they turn in a weapon that it will be properly secured and eventually destroyed,” he commented.

The weapons and munitions were collected from Operation Active and Passive Harvests from the Multinational Brigade (North) and Multinational Brigade (Northwest).

A MNB (N) representative said there were approximately 1,000 weapons and 3,000 rifle magazines from MNB (N). Soldiers from MNB (NW) delivered about 200 weapons for destruction.

Delivering the weapons

to the furnace took time. The weapons were unloaded from a metal shipping container by Soldiers and crammed into long bathtub-shaped cast-iron buckets. These buckets were then brought to the furnace area by an overhead crane. Once the bucket was placed on the floor, Soldiers yanked the weapons out of the bucket

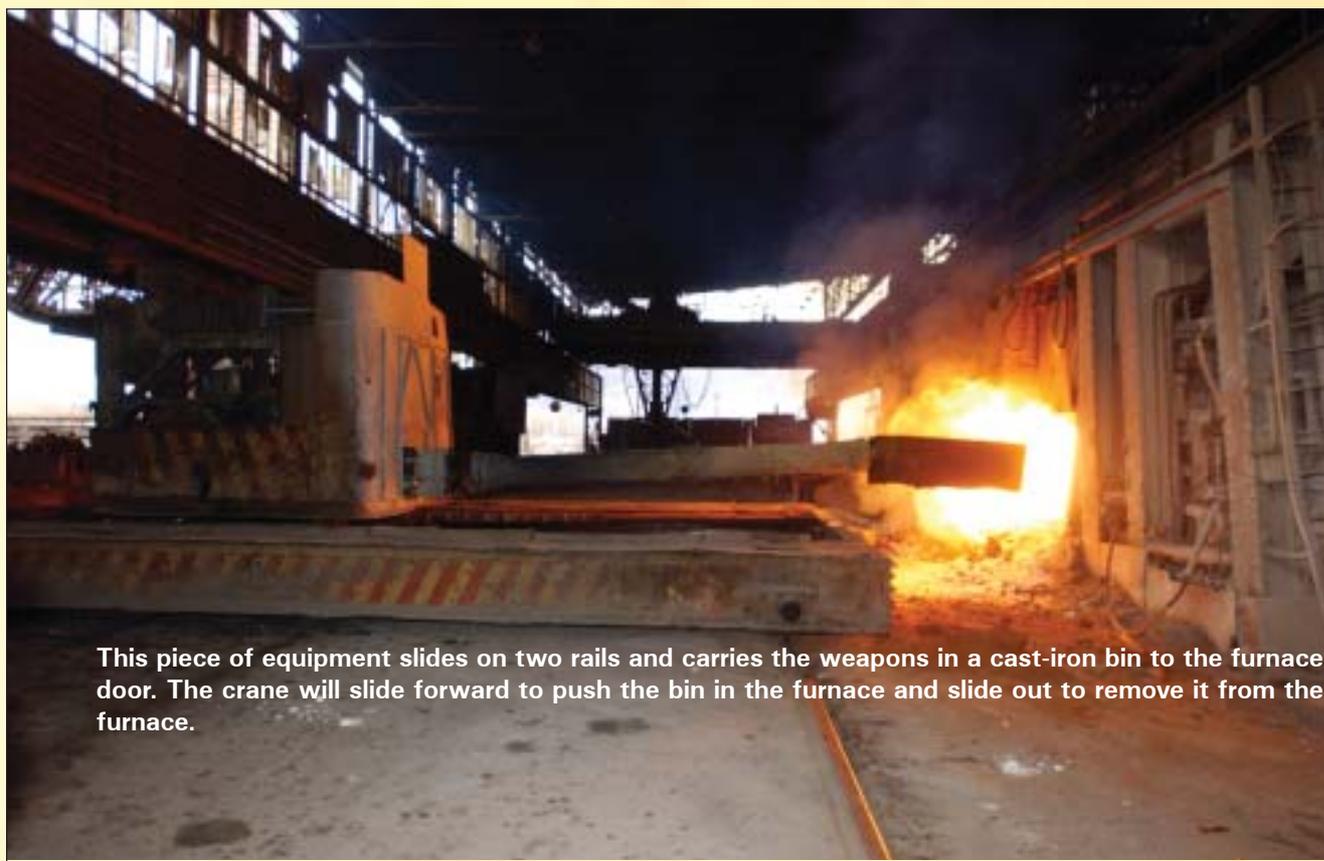
and placed them in the smaller bin.

Staff Sgts. Chris Swoboda and Ronald Stenger, both of MNB (N) Joint Military Affairs, were among the Soldiers placing the weapons in the bins.

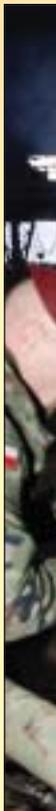
This was the second time that Swoboda



A worker at the Zenica Steel Factory with weapons is lowered at the factory.



This piece of equipment slides on two rails and carries the weapons in a cast-iron bin to the furnace door. The crane will slide forward to push the bin in the furnace and slide out to remove it from the furnace.



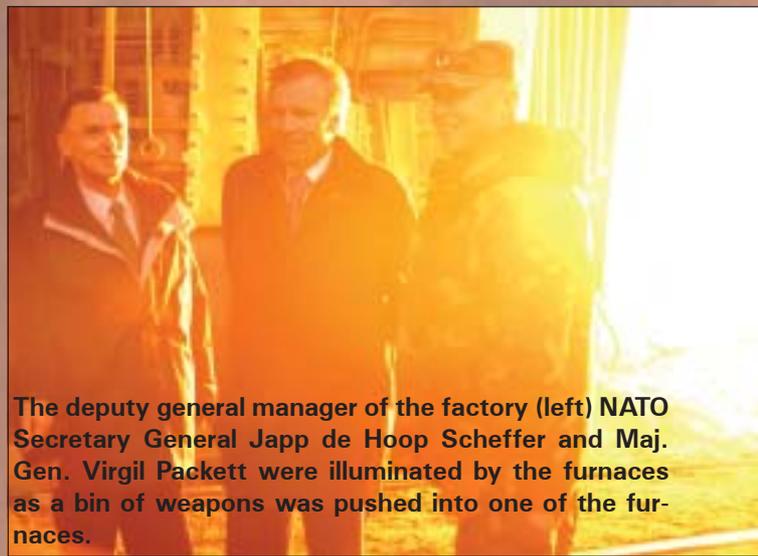
A Po Ronald Stenger pulls



ches as a heavy bucket jammed full of confiscated

TALON

machine slid on two metal tracks and picked up the bin with a long barrel-like device. A fastener at the end of the 12-inch diameter barrel hooked



The deputy general manager of the factory (left) NATO Secretary General Japp de Hoop Scheffer and Maj. Gen. Virgil Packett were illuminated by the furnaces as a bin of weapons was pushed into one of the furnaces.

completed the task.

“It was nice to see how civilian companies can help out the whole country by helping get rid of these weapons,” Swoboda said.

Once the Soldier’s mission was done, a

into the back of the bucket.

The weapons and munitions were pushed into the furnace, the barrel turned and dumped the bin and the bin was pulled out of the furnace in less than 15 seconds.

The melting process takes about seven hours and turns the weapons into molten steel.

“While SFOR plays a key role in removing the weapons from society during operations such as Active Harvest, it is the local authorities and the armed forces of Bosnia who need to take the lead and recover and destroy these weapons,” Packett said.



British Army Soldier hands a rifle to Staff Sgt. Ronald Stenger as Staff Sgt. Chris Swoboda handles a sawed-off shotgun from the bin.



Staff Sgts. Ronald Stenger (left) and Chris Swoboda lift a recoilless rifle into the bin.

Zenica Steel Factory



The furnaces were located in the third level of this building at the Zenica Steel Factory. The factory was built in the 1800s.

- The steel factory in Zenica was built in the 1800s and is owned by BH Steel.
- Formerly, the factory was the largest of its kind in Europe, employing about 25,000 workers.
- Today the factory, the size of a mini city, employs about 2,500 and operates at about 10 percent of its capacity.
- During 2003, more than 11,000 weapons were destroyed on the site.

G1, people serving personnel

Doing the job for MNB (N)

Story by Master Sgt.
Edwin Holt
135th MPAD

They handle all aspects of personnel while working for Stabilization Force 14's Multinational Brigade (N) interacting with Soldiers from American, Polish, Slovakian, Turkish and Portuguese forces along the way.

They are the 34th Infantry Division's Personnel Section, G1, and they have overall responsibility for coordinating and implementing personnel issues for Soldiers in MNB (N) during the deployment.

From accounting and recording strength management to overseeing awards for Soldiers, G1 is the nerve center of the deployment.

"Fortunately, I had an advantage in that everyone in G1 came on Active Duty for Special Work orders two months prior to our mobilization," Sgt. Maj. David Larson, section sergeant major said. "We got to know each other and the job. The Soldiers here are excellent. I couldn't ask for a better section."

The section is made up of eight Soldiers led by Maj. Matthew VanOrt, assistant chief of staff G1, and 1st Lt. John Donovan, deputy G1. Larson is the section's sergeant major

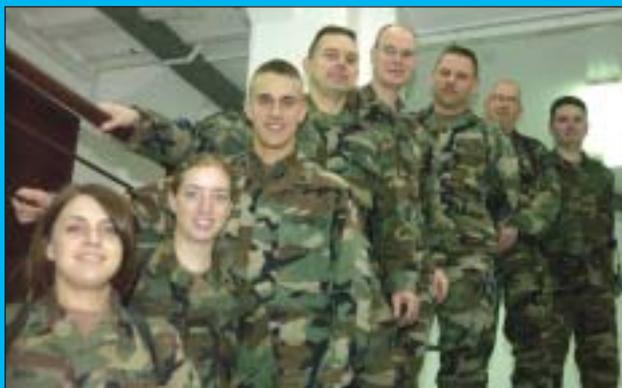


Photo by Spc. Jeremiah Wickenhauser, 135th MPAD

Members of the G1 section are Staff Sgt. Lisa Fleck (left), Sgt. Sara Obermoller, Spc. Ryan Hallberg, Master Sgt. Erik Noraas, 1st Lt. John Donovan, Sgt. Maj. David Larson, Staff Sgt. James Feeney and Maj. Matthew VanOrt.

and Master Sgt. Erik Noraas serves as strength manager along with Noraas' assistant, Spc. Ryan Hallberg.

Sgt. Sara Obermoller is awards' noncommissioned officer and Staff Sgts. James Feeney and Lisa Fleck are special leave actions' noncommissioned officers. Feeney has an additional duty as the division's equal opportunity representative.

Larson said one of the earliest challenges his section faced was working with 27 state systems along with the Army Reserve system and blending all those systems into one.

"We have come a long way," Larson said. Staying ahead of the process of activities in the deployment is the ongoing challenge, Larson added. One example of that is the end of tour recognition of Soldier accomplishments.

"We know there will be a lot of awards coming up," Larson said. "We want to process those prior to redeployment so Soldiers get their awards and recognition while they are here as much as possible."

Echoing Larson's comments, VanOrt said the chance for his Soldiers to serve in the G1 section as part of MNB (N) has been extremely successful.

"We have performed well as a group. We're meeting mission requirements very well," VanOrt said. "Everybody is putting in a full day of work and staying motivated.

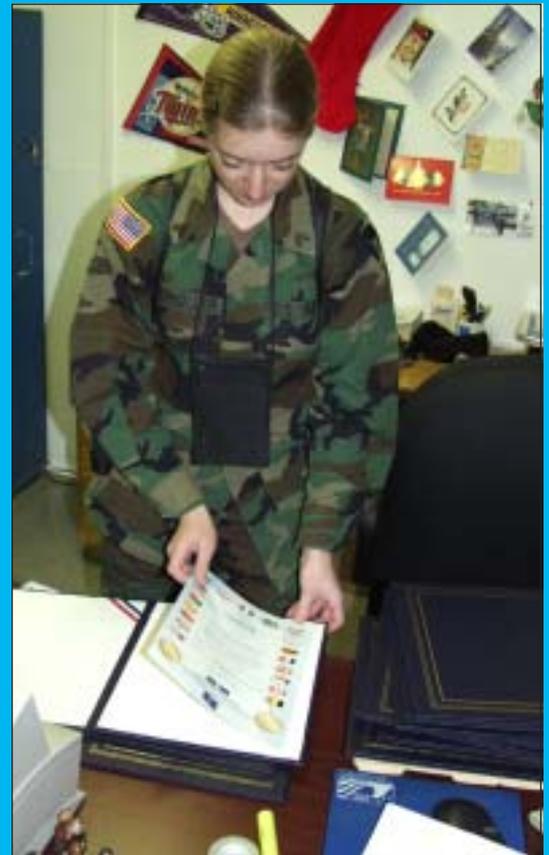


Photo by Master Sgt. Edwin Holt, 135th MPAD

Sgt. Sara Obermoller prepares a NATO Non-Article 5 certificate in her office to be awarded to a Soldier.

So much of what we do is behind the scenes and it's important to coordinate our efforts to get the job done."

Perhaps no one experiences the need for coordination more than Fleck, who as actions' NCO, handles all emergency leaves and leaves under extenuating circumstances.

"Most of the leave situations I deal with are difficult enough for the Soldiers involved and it's important to have them handled as smoothly as possible," Fleck said.

"The best part of my job is when a Soldier comes back off leave and tells me a plain thank you. Then I know I've done my job," Fleck said.

The same could be said by all the Soldiers in the G1 section.

ASG welcomes new commander

Col. Croom takes over during COC

Story by Master Sgt. Edwin Holt
135th MPAD

Col. Jerry Porter turned over command of Task Force Eagle Area Support Group to Col. Joe Croom during a change of command ceremony Tuesday at Peacekeepers Hall.

Croom has almost 34 years of military experience spanning parts of four decades and three branches of service: the Air Force, Navy and Army.

"I'm happy to be here and love getting the chance to command one more time," Croom said during an interview prior to the start of the ceremony.

This is Croom's first time in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but the veteran of two tours in Vietnam said he does not expect any major challenges. Draw downs, cutbacks and a reduced command structure are considerations coming down the road during his command Croom said.

"I don't plan on making any big changes. This is a good command" Croom said. "I will try to find ways to improve and maintain what is already here."

Croom said a focus he has is to

support the task force by getting equipment and supplies to ensure health and welfare of the deployed Soldiers is as high as possible.

During his remarks, Croom told the audience that he spent eight years as an enlisted Soldier.

"I've heard that, seen that and done that and may have invented some of those things during my time," Croom said.

"Col. Porter has left some huge footprints to be followed," Croom said.

"With the draw down and cutbacks, we may need to do more with less and we shall. If we need to work longer hours, we shall," Croom said.

"I will always put the mission first. I will not ask you to do anything I wouldn't do myself," Croom added.

Along with Porter and Croom, Brig. Gen.

Richard Nash, commander,

Mutinational Brigade (North) made remarks at the ceremony.

Nash told the audience that although ASG is the smallest command in terms of numbers of Soldiers, it is the largest command when civilian and contracted employees are added.

"Col. Porter



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

Col. Joe Croom (left), incoming commander of the ASG, Eagle Base, Brig. Gen. Richard Nash, commander of the MNB (N) and Col. Jerry D. Porter, outgoing commander of ASG, present arms during the ceremony at Peacekeepers Hall.



Brig. Gen. Richard Nash, gives the ASG colors to Col. Joe Croom during the ceremony.

has created an excellent command climate," Nash said. "He has an outstanding record. The team he leaves behind has a wealth of experience."

At the ceremony's conclusion, Nash presented Porter with a framed print of the 34th Infantry Division in action during World War II during the Italy campaign.

A brief reception followed at Triggers.

Croom and his wife Judith, live in Sondra, Calif. and have three children, Michelle, 15; Nicole, 13; and Danielle, 12.

 **In our sights** 



Photo by Staff Sgt. Ralph Hurley, TFME

Sgt. Jennifer Lewis, TFME, speaks with Brig. Gen. James A. Hasbargen, commander of 330th Med Bde, during his visit last week.



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

Humvee gunner Spc. Benjamin Anderson, TF Bearcat, watches his fellow Soldiers prepare for an Operation Active Harvest in Cosici last month.



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

2nd Lt. Joe Casey, TF Renegade, mounts an M-60 machine gun on a Black Hawk before a Jan. 17 mission

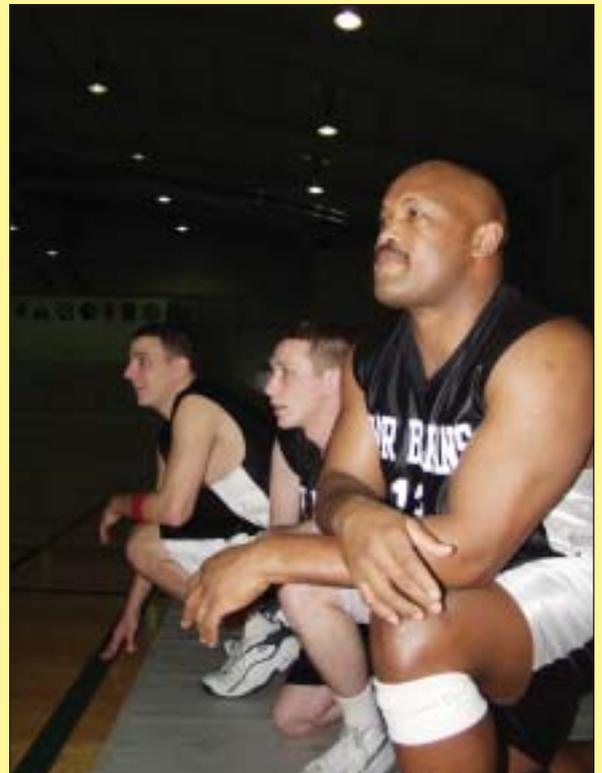


Photo by Sgt. Brian Taylor, TF Iron

Camp McGovern's Spc. Jamie Leal (left) Sgt. Trevor Gibbs, and ITT Guard Jerry Harris wait to enter the game at last weekend's Martin Luther King Invitational Basketball Tournament at Eagle Base.



Photo by Master Sgt. Edwin Holt, 135th MPAD

One of the many VIP jets sits on the C-Ramp.