TASK FORCE FALCON

Falcon Flier

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Wounded cavalry scout honored for bravery

Understanding that his field dressing and staying calm wasn't going to be enough for his badly wounded right leg, Sgt. Richard Casini took off his belt, broke a stick in half, and applied a tourniquet to his own leg.

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Sgt. Richard Casini, a cavalry scout wounded by a landmine from C troop 1st Cavalry Brigade Reconnaissance Troop, is awarded the Kosovo Campaign Medal and the NATO Medal for Kosovo Operation.

Children play football at a local Gjilan/Gnjilane sport center June 9. The event was coordinated by 404th Civil Affairs Battalion out of Camp Monteith, with the purpose of brining the community together.

The generations before them fought, but with the help of 404th Civil Affairs these children play together.

Soldier from Company B of the 2-502nd download their fellow soldier under the direction of Sgt. Derek Kubacki, a flight medic with the 50th Medical Company, during a medical evacuation exercies at Zegra Base.

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50th Med trains soldiers on medical evacuations.

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KFOR provides garbage trucks to clean up Gjilan/ Gnjilane

Three Garbage trucks are presented to the city of Gjilan/Gnjilane by KFOR during a presentation ceremony outside the city theater. This is just a small part of the programs KFOR has in place for working with local communities.

Providing safety for the people of Kosovo

Story by
Brig. Gen. William C. David
Task Force Falcon Commander

Dominating the landscape around Camp Bondsteel and much of Kosovo is a mountain we affectionately call "Big Duke." The view from the top is awesome. The villages and towns below look peaceful and serene. The impression is one of tranquility, peace, and abundant natural beauty.

The reality at ground level, however, is much different. The land – and its people – are deeply scarred. Years of bitter and violent struggle have left marks that will not be quickly erased.

Smarter people than I debate how events here will play themselves out. No one knows for certain. Yet, amidst this uncertainty, in my heart, I know that our presence here has a purpose. We're here to provide a safe and secure environment for all the people of Kosovo – so that peace, and prosperity, might have a chance. In a sense, our job is to set the conditions that keep hope alive. From Private to Brigadier General, it's a huge responsibility.

No garden ever flourished on rocky ground. And plants can't grow to their full potential without warmth, sunlight, water, air, and nourishment. It takes work and patience to enable the plants to take root and grow. The plant can't do this for itself. In a way, that's what we're doing for the people of Kosovo.

Every patrol we conduct, each time we discourage some weapons smuggler from using this place, every time we escort children to school, we are aiding in Kosovo's growth. When we provide medical assistance or build relationships based on mutual dignity and respect, we have helped to foster hope for the future. Each of you has a part to play in this process.

Throughout our military's history, servicemen and women have deployed to far-away lands to help others in the same way we are now. Many of you have now joined their ranks for the first time. I am reminded of WWII veterans who returned to Europe and the Pacific in their later years, finding friends who remember and appreciate what they did. The shared feelings of having done something special were their own reward.

The view of Kosovo from Big Duke won't change. But ours will. Your memories of Kosovo will fade in the rear-view mirror of time. But you will leave a legacy among those you leave behind. Make it a good one. Be relentless in doing so.

July 1
2000 Pokemon 3
2200 Josie and The Pussycats
July 2
2000 Miss Congeniality
2200 Cast Away
July 3
2000 All The Pretty Horses
2200 Sweet November
July 4
NO SHOW
July 5
2000 Josie and The Pussycats
2200 Heartbreakers
July 6
BAZZAR
July 7
BAZZAR
July 8
2200 Blow
July 9
2000 Exit Wounds
2200 Freddy Got Fingered
July 10
2000 Blow
2200 Traffic
July 11
2000 Freddy Got Fingered
2200 Blow
July 12
2000 Down To Earth
2200 3000 Miles to Graceland
July 13
2000 Crocodile Dundee In LA
2200 Valentine
July 14
2000 Some One Likes You
2200 Along Came A Spider
July 15
2000 One Night At McCool's
2200 Along Came A Spider
July 16
2000 See Spot Run
2200 Get Over It
July 17
2000 Along Came A Spider
2200 Wedding Planner

Keys to counseling Soldiers

Story by
Command Sgt. Maj. Marvin Hill
Task Force Falcon

Often, when I have friends over to my house for a good time, we play a game. It can be any game, but the first thing we do is break out the rulebook. I never assume that everyone knows the rules. After all, the game may be played differently in other places.

By knowing the rules, we avoid confusion and everyone has a chance to win. The same is true of our deployment here. Soldiers are here from different units everywhere in the Army. Everyone still wants to win.

The challenge for a leader is to ask, "have I counseled my soldiers on what I expect them to do in the areas of job performance, off-duty performance, physical fitness, professional development, and military bearing?" If you are counseling your soldiers, you can expect high performance, strong esprit de corps, and everyone has the chance to win.

The rulebook is the Developmental Counseling Form (DA Form 4856) dated June of 1999. It is the best form the Army has come up with in my 23 years of service because everyone's role is laid out. Break it open and lay down the rules.

Unlike the old system, leaders can't just say "straighten up and fly right, or else." Now, with the new form and process the leader says "straighten up, fly right, and here is how I am going to help you win." Everyone participates.

Feedback is the breakfast of champions. When you tell a soldier what he or she is doing right, the soldier will keep doing it. Likewise, when you tell a soldier where improvement is needed, the soldier will fix it.

The guide for soldier counseling is Field Manual 22-100, Appendix C, dated September of 1999. I encourage all leaders to visit www.counseling.army.mil. You will find all you need to effectively counsel your soldiers there.

Recently I watched Pfc. Gibbs from the 1st of the 41st Field Artillery deliver an intelligence summary to the company commanders in his task force. I was impressed by his performance and I know that his leaders are doing their part in developing this soldier.

A winning team grows from your effort through counseling.

BE RELENTLESS!

Falcon Flier

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Task Force soldier completes loading the howitzer with a night illumination round.

1-41st Field Artillery turns night into day

Story and photo by
Spc. Maria Jaramillo
Camp Bondsteel PAO

With a loud bang and explosion of light, two silhouettes stood out against the glowing night sky. The burst of light faded and they were once again concealed in the darkness. Another burst two minutes later, and the shapes jumped out again.

The looming shadows were M109A6 Howitzer guns, 155 mm weapons also known as "the Paladin." The 1-41st Field Artillery fired illumination rounds with the Paladin to light up the night sky.

"These rounds provide approximately one million candle light of illumination. They basically turn the night into day," said Sgt. 1st Class Fred Poole, platoon sergeant, A Battery 1-41st Field Artillery.

The Bright Sky Mission was conducted over sections of the Kosovo border for two purposes: to light up the area for Kosovo Force (KFOR) border patrols during hours of limited visibility and to discourage smuggling along the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia border.

"KFOR soldiers near the FYROM border…observe suspected routes where we believe weapons, ammunition and explosives are flowing in and out of Kosovo," said Lt. Col. David Anderson, commander, 1-41st Field Artillery Battalion, "Kosovo will not become a safe haven for illegal activities."

Forward Observers (FOs) placed along the border used the light provided by the howitzers to observe possible illegal activities. The FOs communicated information about the target area back to the Fire Direction Center at the firing site. That information was sent to the Paladin, which computed the data for the crew operating the howitzers. The 15-minute pre-firing process ended when the rounds were projected toward the southern mountains.

"We'll illuminate one square kilometer for 120 seconds. We will be illuminating several kilometers throughout the night for maximum observation," said Capt. Keith Jarolimek, commander, A Battery, 1-41st Field Artillery.

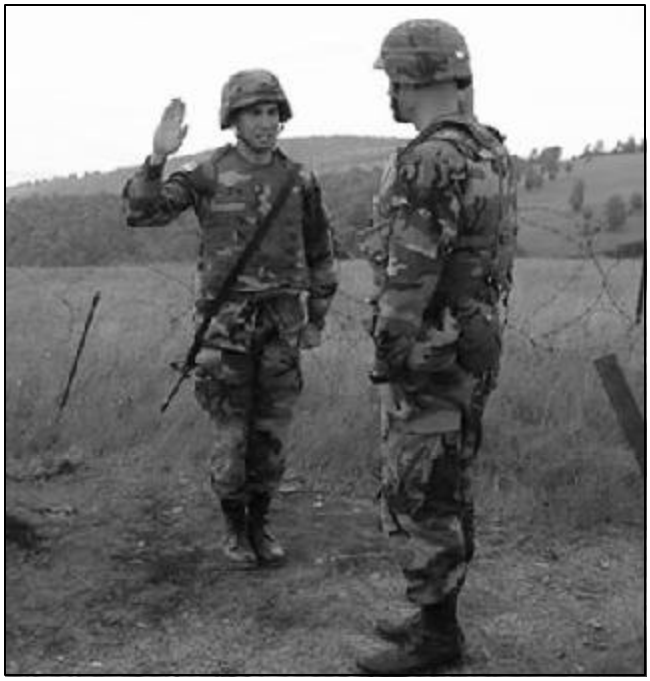
"Bright Sky Missions have been conducted since the first Task Force Falcon rotation. Well-trained soldiers ensure a safe operation." Anderson said

Safety considerations included both the civilian population and the environment. The area approved for illumination was marked off on a map with a "safety box." This area was monitored closely to make sure that no civilians were present. The rounds themselves were aimed with a trajectory that ensured they burned out before hitting the ground.

These missions will continue, and the 1-41st Field Artillery will be doing their part to provide a safe and secure environment for Kosovo throughout TFF Rotation 3A.

Army of One reenlists for five more years

Story and photo by
Spc. Brian Zacharias
C/311th MI



Sgt. Rafael Sampayo, C Company of 311th Military Intelegence Battalion, reenlists for another 5 years.

In a ceremony that reflected the true multi-national nature of Task Force Falcon's efforts in the Balkans, the Army retained another quality non-commissioned officer.

On Friday, June15, Sgt. Rafael Sampayo of C Company, 311th Military Intelligence Battalion took the oath that would re-enlist him in the Army for an additional five years.

What made this re-enlistment special, however, was the location. When given the option to choose where he would re-enlist, SGT Sampayo chose a hilltop about a hundred meters from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia border.

Thanks to some hard work back at Camp Bondsteel, a couple of hours was all that was needed to get Sgt. Sampayo's wife, Karen, also a soldier with the 311th MI Bn., to this remote hilltop so she could witness the ceremony.

A team of British soldiers, who have been working with Sgt. Sampayo's team for the past two weeks, also attended the ceremony.

The re-enlistment oath was given by 1st Lt. Gary Pool, platoon leader C Company, 311th MI Bn. Sgt. Sampayo closed the ceremony by leading all the 101st Airborne Division solders present in the Screaming Eagle song.

"It was really quite nice to be a part of such a significant event in the career of Sgt. Sampayo," said Corporal Dave Hall of the 14th Signal Regiment, British Army.

"I'm glad he did it here. Sgt. Sampayo and his team have developed a good working relationship with my team and we wouldn't have been able to be a part of this if it happened anywhere else," said Hall.

And if you think Sgt. Sampayo's name sounds familiar, you're probably right. Sgt. Sampayo has recently appeared in the widely popular "Army of One" advertisements. His picture has also turned up in popular magazines like *Men's Health* and *ESPN the Magazine.*

Any soldiers with questions pertaining to re-enlistment should call the Task Force Falcon re-enlistment office at extension 5004.

WANTED

The Falcon Flier wants your stories -- award ceremonies, events, activities, or human interest news. All units from Camps Bondsteel, Able Sentry and Monteith are invited to submit information for publication. While we may not be able to run every story because of space limitations, we would like to hear from you.

Please feel free to contact the Task Force Falcon Public Affairs Office with your ideas, news and comments at:

(DSN) 781-5200

or e-mail at:

Gary.Peterson@bondsteel2.areur.army.mil.

I pledge allegiance to the flag

Story by Arizona Senator John McCain

"I Pledge Allegiance"

Let me tell you what I think about our Pledge for Allegiance, our flag, and our country. I want to tell you a story about when I was a prisoner of war.

I spent five plus years in the Hanoi Hilton. In the early years of our imprisonment, the North Vietnamese kept us in solitary confinement or two or three to a cell.

In 1971, the North Vietnamese moved us from these conditions of isolation into large rooms with as many as 30 to 40 men to a room. This was, as you can imagine, a wonderful change. And was a direct result of the efforts of millions of Americans, led by people like Nancy and Ronald Reagan, on behalf of a few hundred POWs, 10,000 miles from home.

One of the men moved into my cell was Mike Christian. Mike came from a small town near Selma, Alabama. He didn't wear a pair of shoes until he was thirteen years old. At seventeen, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy. He later earned a commission. He became a Naval flying officer, and was shot down and captured in 1967. Mike had a keen and deep appreciation for the opportunities this country - and our military - provide for people who want to work and want to succeed.

The uniforms we wore in prison consisted of a blue short-sleeved shirt, trousers that looked like pajama trousers and rubber sandals that were made out of automobile tires. I recommend them highly; one pair lasted my entire stay.

As part of the change in treatment, the Vietnamese allowed some Prisoners to receive packages from home. In some of these packages were handkerchiefs, scarves and other items of clothing.

Every afternoon, before we had a bowl of soup, we would hang Mike's shirt on the wall of our cell, and say the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mike got himself a piece of white cloth and a piece of red cloth and fashioned himself a bamboo needle. Over a period of a couple of months, he sewed the American flag on the inside of his shirt.

Every afternoon, before we had a bowl of soup, we would hang Mike's shirt on the wall of our cell, and say the Pledge of Allegiance. I know that saying the Pledge of Allegiance may not seem the most important or meaningful part of our day now, but I can assure you that - for those men in that stark prison cell - it was indeed the most important and meaningful event of our day.

One day, the Vietnamese searched our cell and discovered Mike's shirt with the flag sewn inside, and removed it. That evening they returned, opened the door of the cell, called for Mike Christian to come out, closed the door of the cell, and for the benefit of all of us, beat Mike Christian severely for the next couple of hours.

The Hanoi Hilton had glass embedded in the mortar on top of the wall.

Then they opened the door of the cell and threw him back inside.

He was not in good shape. We tried to comfort and take care of him as well as we could.

The cell in which we lived had a concrete slab in the middle on which we slept. Four naked light bulbs in each corner of the room.

After things quieted down, I went to lie down to go to sleep. As I did, I happened to look in the corner of the room. Sitting there beneath that dim light bulb, with a piece of white cloth, a piece of red cloth another shirt and his bamboo needle, was my friend, Mike Christian. Sitting there, with his eyes almost shut from his beating, making another American flag.

He was not making the flag because it made Mike Christian feel better. He was making that flag because he knew how important it was for us to be able to pledge our allegiance to our flag and country.

Duty, Honor, Country. We must never forget those thousands of Americans who, with their courage, with their sacrifice, and with their lives, made those words live for all of us.

FALCON'S FORCE

What does loyalty mean to you?

Sgt. Michael Daversa Utilities Equipment Repair Specialist Task Force Med Falcon 399th CSH

"I think loyalty is the foundation for everything else. With loyaly everything else can be accomplished."

Pfc. Carmen Reynolds Supply Specialist HHT 2-17th Cavalry

"Loyalty is very important. I have to trust the people I work with to be loyal, especially since I work in the arms room."

Spc. James Abbott, diesel mechanic with HHC 3-7th Infantry

"It means standing by your fellow soldier no matter what the situation may be."

Pvt. Sean Welch Engineer Equipment Repair Specialist 3rd Logistics Task Force

"We've got a bunch of guys up at work that will stick with you all day long. Loyalty is when somebody stays with you until the end."

Staff Sgt. Andrea Wingo, NCOIC with D Det, TF 101st Soldier Support Battalion

"Loyalty means being honest and forthright in your beliefs and views."

Spc. Anthony Aya Computer Systems Specialist 501st Signal

"Loyalty is the beginning of everything. Without trust and loyalty everything is dead. It's very important."

Civil Affairs warms the hearts of children

Story and photo by
Spc. Maria Jaramillo
Camp Bondsteel PAO

Children huddled together for warmth as their teacher continued with the math lesson. Each breath pulled into their lungs stung from the cold, and the boiler room lay lifeless in the basement.

Schools in Kosovo that use a steam heating system are faced with the dilemma of fixing the entire system once pipes begin to leak. If the pipes leak, then there is no heat.

A Task Force Falcon Civil Affairs unit embarked on a project to help fund the renovation needed in this downtown Vitina School. The project included allowing local construction companies to bid on the project.

"We use humanitarian assistance funds for these kind of projects. Using local contractors helps to put money back into the economy," said Marine Master Sgt. Stephen A. Holliday, Team 7, 4th Civil Affairs Group, 404th Civil Affairs Battalion.

In mid-June civil affairs group met with nine contractors and the school director to walk through the school and determine what needed to be done. One of the conditions the bidding contractors were given required that at least 50 percent of the work force is Serbian.

"One of the major problems we are facing is that the majority of the Serbian population don't have jobs," said Marine Maj. Darren L. Richardson, team 7 chief officer, "They (Kosovo-Albanians and Kosovo-Serbians) have shown that they can work together."

Once the bidding process is complete and the contactor is selected, civil affairs will remain involved in the construction project until it is completed.

"We have two contractors on our team. When we go out and do spot checks on the construction, we check for quality and make sure that the stipulations of the contract are followed," Holliday said.

The heat renovation is one of many different types of projects civil affairs conducts at Kosovo schools. In another renovation project, a Vitina school will be completely remodeled in July with the assistance of civil affairs.

Civil Affairs (CA) officer Maj. Darren Richardson hammers out the details of the school heat renovation with fellow CA soldiers and the school director.

"The school was in pretty bad shape. Things didn't work, there were leaks and it was dirty," Richardson said. "Everything from classrooms, bathrooms and windows will be remodeled."

School will be out for the year before the construction is complete. When next year begins, the children will have something brand new to come back to.

50th Med trains soldiers on hot and cold operations

Story and photo by
Spc. Marshall Thompson
Camp Bondsteel PAO

Air pummels down from above increasing the effects of gravity as four soldiers move quickly and surely carrying another soldier to a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter. The soldier-bearing litter is placed securely onto the Black Hawk with the help of Sgt. Derek Kubacki, a flight medic with the 50th medical Company.

If this had been an actual emergency, the soldier would have been lifted out of the area with a gravity-defying leap in the helicopter. However, this is a training exercise so instead, another set of four intrepid soldiers quickly down load the patient and the next four put the patient back on again.

The soldiers are from Company B of the 2- 502nd Infantry Regiment stationed in Zegra Base. They received training from the 50th Med, part of Task Force Saber, on hot and cold medical evacuations. A cold medical evacuation means the patient is loaded when the helicopter blades are not turning, and a hot medical evacuation is when the helicopter is left running – ready to take off the instant it can do so safely.

Pfc. Juarez Francisco, an infantry soldier with Company B of the 2-502nd Infantry Regiment, said, "It's good training to have, but I hope we'll never have to use it. It gives us some perspective on situations that we wouldn't have been prepared for. Now we'll know what to do."

"When I land and pick up patients during training exercises like this, it facilitates a quick movement on and off of the aircraft," Kubacki said.

Chief Warrant Officer Andrew Feris, a tactical operations officer with the 50th Med, said, "It's useful training because we don't want the soldiers coming to the aircraft without having some semblance of what to expect –the noise, the wind and that sort of thing.

"We'd rather have them do this in a training environment first rather than with a sense of urgency because they have a wounded comrade. It's safer for them and it's safer for us."

It seems this training makes it safer for the soldiers loading the victim. There are many dangers involved with loading a wounded soldier on a running helicopter said Kubacki.

"It's very important that the soldiers have this training. They could come to the aircraft the wrong way and run into a rotary blade if they're not careful," said Kubacki.

A UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter lands at Camp Bondsteel prior to departing to Zegra Base to train the 2-502nd on hot and cold medical evacuations.

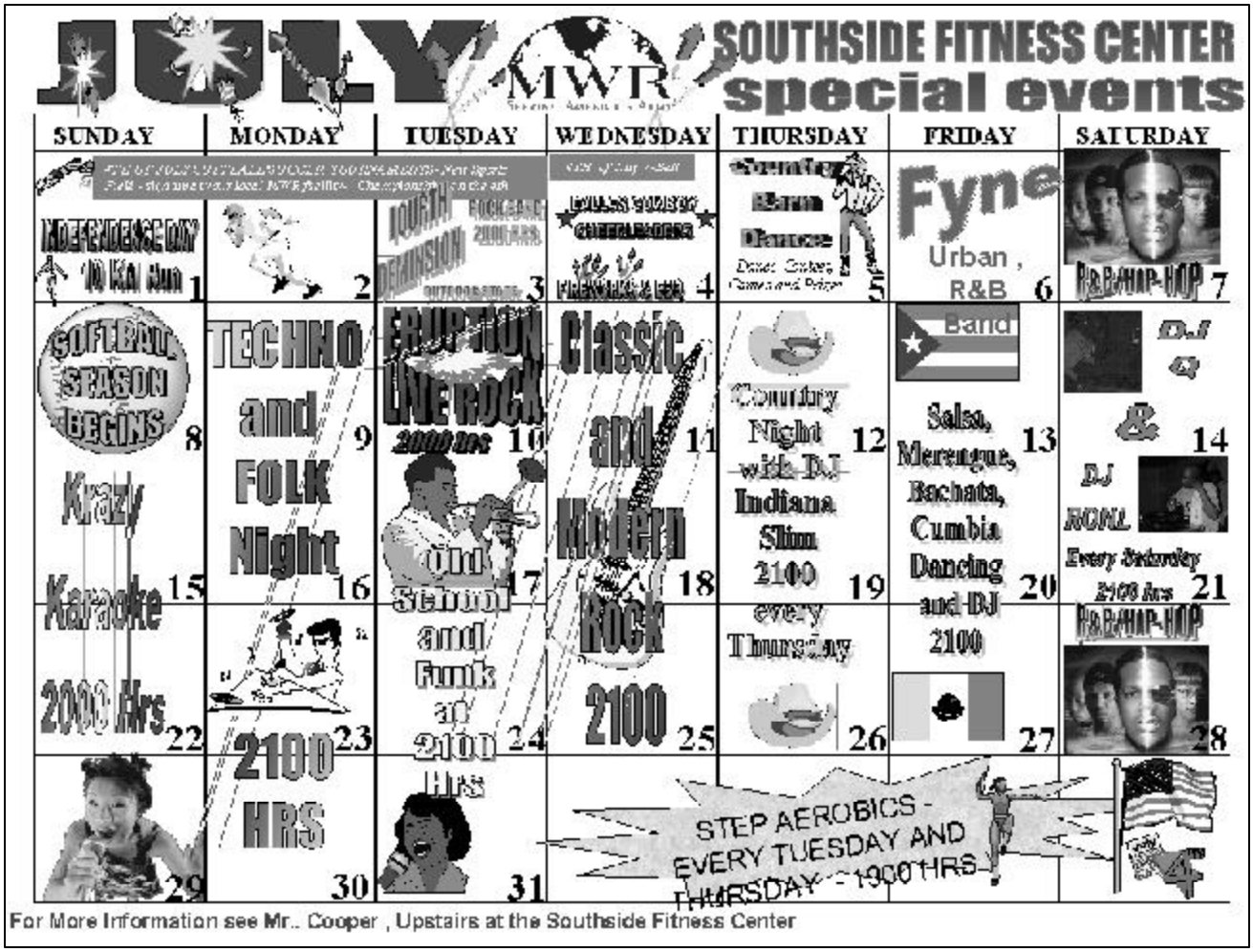
Kubacki warned the soldiers that if they passed the Red Cross symbol on the helicopter's door he would tackle them for their own safety.

It's not only important for American soldiers to be trained in medical evacuations. The mission in Kosovo requires the 50th Med to work with all sorts of different countries.

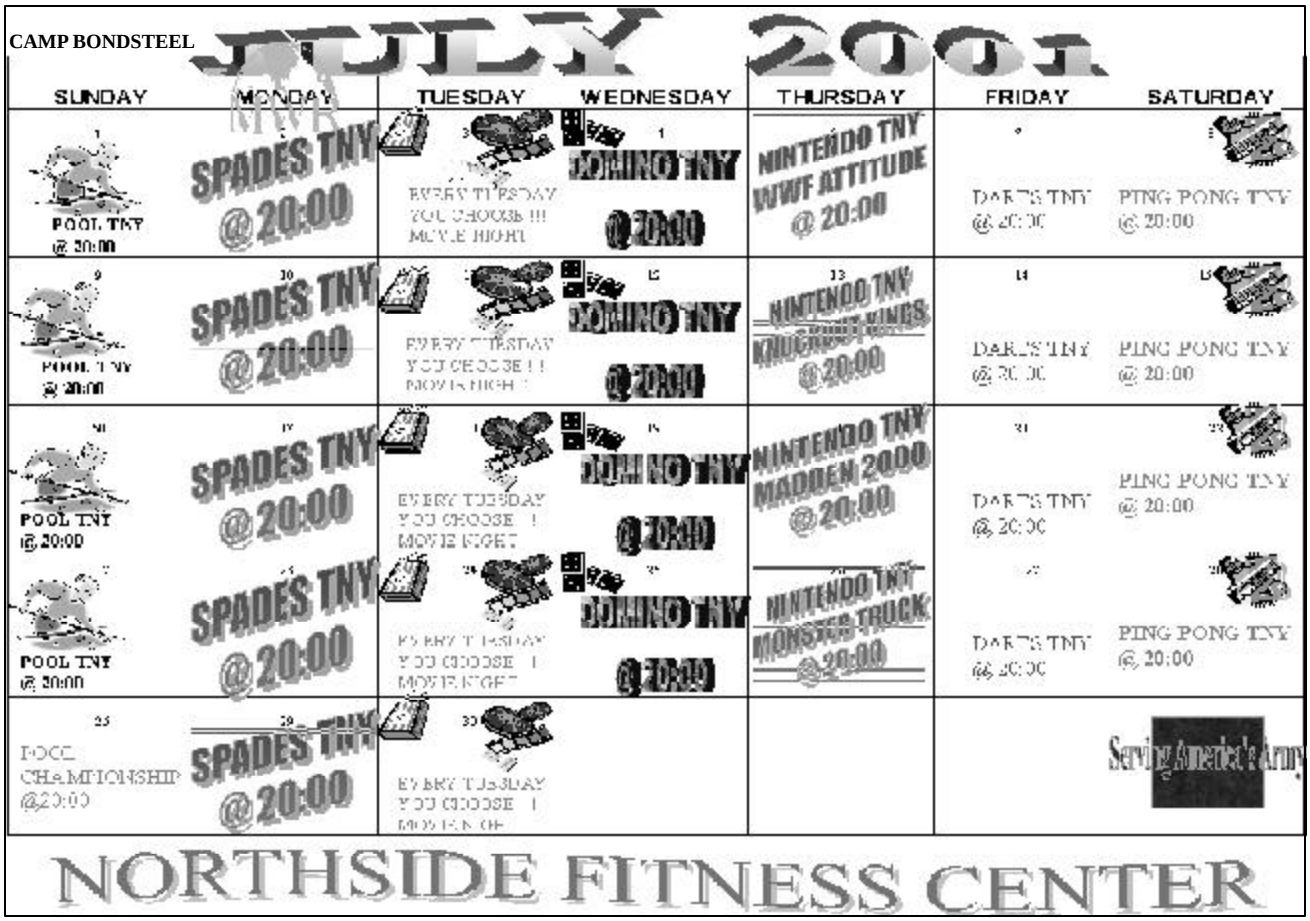
"This is our sixth training mission like this. We've trained Italians, Spanish, British, Norwegian, and now the 502nd as well as the Air Force," Kubacki said.

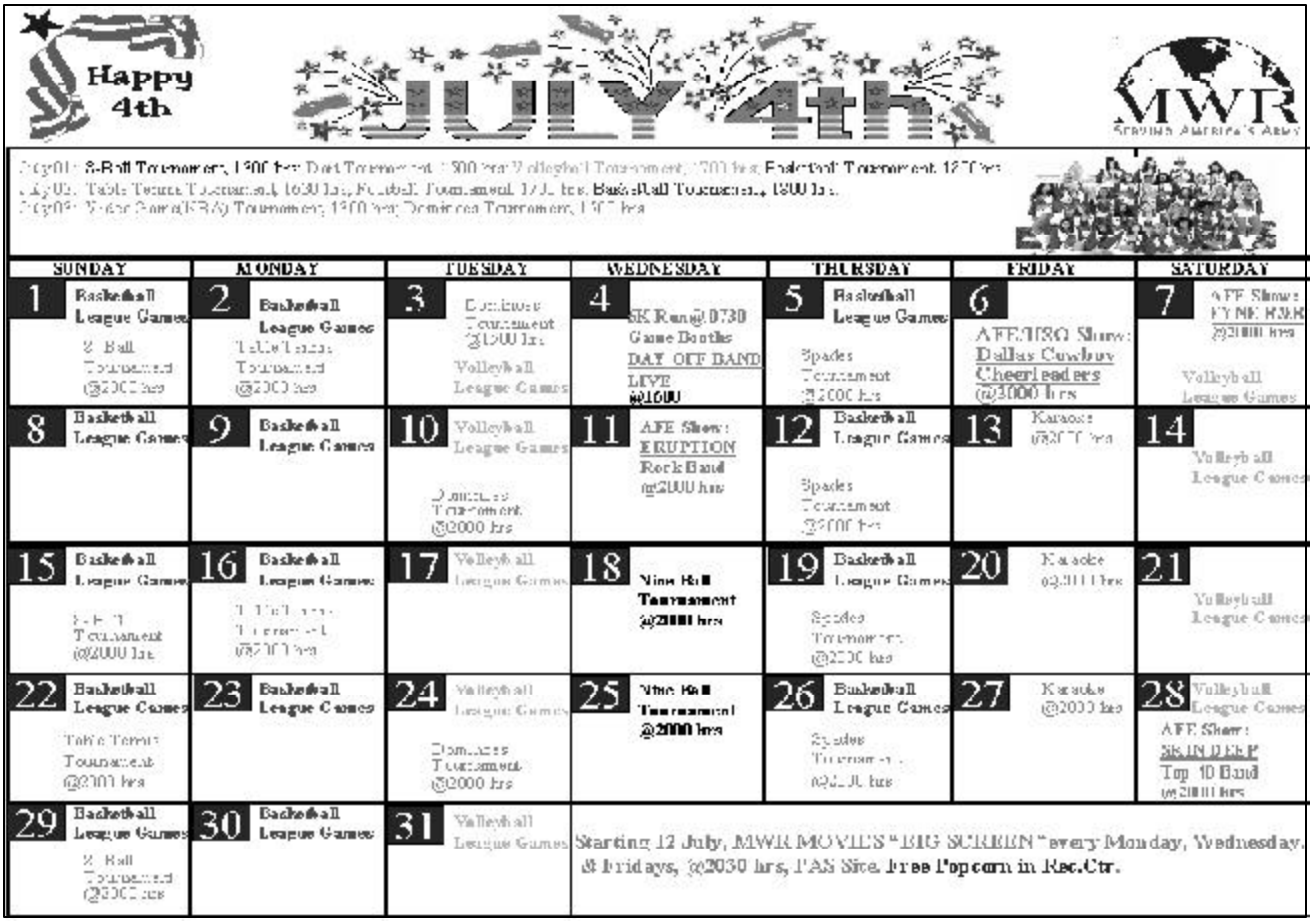
At the end of the day the crew flew off. They said they felt good making sure that everybody had the knowledge they needed to take care of their fellow soldiers in an emergency situation.

"Again, it's just safer for them and safer for us," said Feris after it was all done.

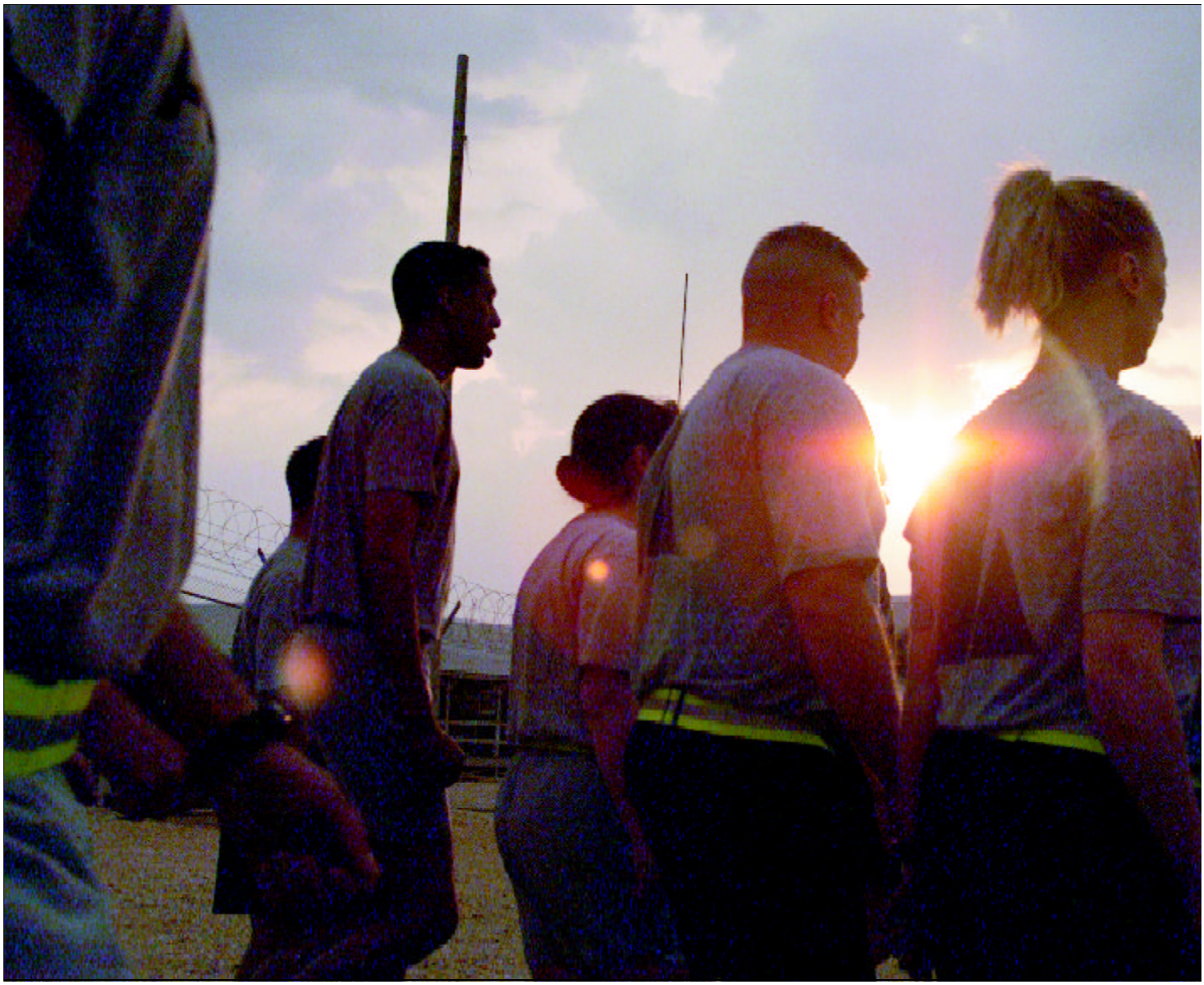


For More Information see Mr.. Cooper , Upstairs at the Southside Fitness Center





CAMP MONTEITH



TFF celebrates Army Birthday: 226 years and running

Story and photos by
Spc. Marshall Thompson
Camp Bondsteel PAO

Many people celebrate various events in different ways. For birthdays, most people invite friends over and exchange presents, but Camp Bondsteel celebrated the Army Birthday by running down a muddy road in torrential rain. Camp Bondsteel remained traditional when they brought out the quintessential birthday cake at the end of the run. However, when most people use a knife, Brig. Gen. William David, accompanied by the youngest and oldest soldier in Task Force Falcon, cut the cake with a saber. It's an Army thing.

The birthday celebration started out on the parade field where almost the entire camp gathered behind their colors. Even the British from the joint hospital showed their support of the 226th anniversary of the birth of the United Sates Army.

After a disciplined flag ceremony, David introduced the youngest soldier and the oldest soldier. Originally, the oldest soldier was thought to be Col. Billie Fitzgerald, TFF Chief of Staff, but in the end it turned out that there was one older than Fitzgerald. Staff Sgt. Joseph Cosenza, a military policeman with the 340th Military Police out of Jamaica, New York, was named TFF's oldest runner at 55 years old.

"It's an honor," said Cosenza. "It's nice to know that I can still hang in at 55."

As the sun rose higher in the sky, the youngest soldier, the oldest soldier, and all the soldiers in between marched off the parade field and began the run. To motivate everybody, gift certificates of $50 and $25 would be awarded to the first and second place finishers from the males and females respectively.

Sgt. Neil Freckleton of the 37th Engineers came in first and Staff Sgt. Thomas Fuss, a heavy track mechanic with the 3d Forward Support Battalion, came in second for the males.

"30 seconds prior to the race, the company commander patted me on the back and asked me if I knew the importance of the run. I felt I had to place so I ran like a wild man," said Freckleton

However, the real surprise was an outstanding showing by the 2nd of the 17th Cavalry, from which came the first and second place females.

"It feels good because I wasn't expecting it at all. There are a lot of females here and a lot of physical excellence patches," said Sgt. Jennifer Shibley, the first-place finisher and ammunition specialist in the 2-17th Cavalry.

Sgt. Rosa Sheridan, the second-place finisher and supply specialist with the 2nd of the 17th Cavalry said, "We feel very proud of ourselves because we were representing our unit and at the same time all females in the Army."

"I feel proud because I'm in the Army and I'm doing something for the [Army's Birthday]. It takes your mind off the run because you're doing it for a cause," Shibley said.

These two soldiers truly lived up to the ideals that the Army relies on and has relied on for 226 years. They lived up to their unit motto as well, "Out front."

Above: Brig. Gen. William David, TFF commander, cuts the Army birthday cake with the oldest and the youngest soldier.
Above left: Soldiers march off the parade ground to begin the Army birthday run.
Above right: Spc. Jonathan Bailey, a combat medic with Headquarters, Headquarters Company of Task Force Falcon, helps fold the flag in a practice ceremony early in the morning before the official celebration.
Left: Two soldiers congratulate each other as they finish the run ahead of the crowd.
Right: Soldiers waiting in line for some cake examine their muddy legs.

Horses cross the border to Kosovo

Story and photo by Sgt. Gary Peterson Camp Bonsteel PAO

A horse is a horse of course, of course. Unless of course that particular horse was used to carry mortar rounds, shot gun shells, and several other types of munitions in and out of Kosovo.

Soldiers of the 2-502nd Infantry Regiment discovered and captured 11 of these horses carrying weapons, munitions and supplies in the hills near Vitina/Viti on the night of June 17th.

"The main transportation up here are horses," said Spc. Dustin Seay, a rifleman for the 2-502nd Infantry Regiment.

The night began when soldiers of the 2-502nd Infantry Regiment spotted an undetermined number of personnel traveling with four loaded down horses. Before the soldiers were able to reach these individuals, the personnel fled leaving the horses behind. When the soldiers arrived at the location, they discovered that the horses were loaded down with weapons and munitions.

"There was a lot of weight on the horses," said Seay.

The four horses were loaded down with 16 cases of 12.7 mm ammunition, 23 cans of munitions primer, 42 mortar rounds, and 23 boxes of mortar fuses.

A few minutes later, another team of soldiers with the 2-502nd Infantry Regiment spotted more personnel traveling with horses loaded with suspicious looking packs. Once again the personnel fled leaving the horses behind.

These horses were packed with eight cases of 7.62mm ammunition, food supplies, and several pairs of black boots.

"This is where all the smugglers go in and out of Kosovo," said Staff Sgt. Anthony Sardina, a squad leader for the 2-502 Infantry Regiment. "Here we have already stopped so much from coming through."

Thirty minutes later a third team from the 2-502nd Infantry Regiment found yet another two horses packed with munitions. However, these horses were found without any personnel escorting them.

"I think that these animals were overworked and mal nourished," said Sardina concerning the horses treatment and packs.

The horses were carrying 61 mortar rounds, three cases of 7.62mm ammunition, and five cases of 12.7mm ammunition.

Once the sun came up, the soldiers of the 2-502nd Infantry Regiment conducted a recon of the area. Three additional horses were discovered packing munitions.

As the morning sun rose higher in the sky, a complete tally of the weapons and munitions was taken. These horses were carrying ten rocket propelled grenade rounds, 19 cases of 12.7mm ammunition, 23 cans shot gun shell primer, 103 mortar rounds, 21 cases of 7.62mm ammunition, and various food and equipment supplies.

"We are making this place a lot safer," said Pfc. Jeff Hubbard, a soldier with the 2-502nd Infantry Regiment. "People are not as afraid to go out in the streets with us here."

Col. Billie Fitzgerald, Task Force Falcon Chief of Staff, feeds one of the horses recovered by the 2-502nd Infantry Regiment near the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Safety

Omnitracs helps guide Army to safety and security

Story and photos by Maj. Norman Johnson Camp Bondsteel PAO

Do you remember the first time you operated a computer? If you are like the average soldier, you were afraid to push the buttons. "It might break." Once you pushed the first key, you realized that it wasn't going to break after all. You actually enjoyed operating it.

Our world is evolving. Everything is digital and fast. People are able to know what is going on at a moments notice. The Army is also evolving with this technology.

There's a space-aged system that's in many of the vehicles that travel throughout Multinational Brigade East (MNB-East). It's called Omnitracs.

"This system was designed to answer three critical questions: where am I; where are my buddies; and where is the danger at," said Oswaldo Morales a network technician with General Dynamics who supports the Kosovo Position Locator System or more commonly known as, Omnitracs.

Omnitracs is a satellite communication system that's in about 366 vehicles used by Task Force Falcon.

Sgt. Carey Webb, a soldier with Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment of the 716th Military Police Battalion operates an Omnitracs from her MP vehicle.

It's a digital communication system with a keyboard that allows soldiers to send and receive messages to their tactical operations center anywhere in Kosovo.

"The system is quite simple to use, but takes a lot of technology to make it happen," said Morales. "Each vehicle is equipped with a keyboard that has a message screen on it. You simply type in your message and then push the send button."

The message travels thousands of miles to a satellite receiver orbiting the earth. The satellite takes that message, sends it to Manheim, Germany where the message is processed and sent to your TOC. All of this takes about a few microseconds to happen.

"It's really simple to use," said Sgt. Carey Webb, a soldier with Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment of the 716th Military Police Battalion. "It has a panic button for emergencies. All you have to do is push the red button and it automatically sends your coordinates to the operations center."

"Unfortunately, the system is not being used to its fullest capacity," said Morales. "Therefore, my goal is to raise the awareness of the soldiers and the command so that they know where the soldiers are at, at all times."

Omnitracs is monitored 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It can save lives and it's extremely reliable. You can communicate virtually anywhere in MNB-East's sector.

If you are still having doubts about your ability to operate the Omnitracs system, "its no problem," said Morales. "I will come to you and train you on how to operate this system. Call me at 6601."

Medical

What to do about sprained ankles

Story and photos by Maj. William J. Stanton, MD. Task Force MedFalcon

The ankle is a complex joint which connects the foot to the leg. It mainly moves in one plane, but has small motions in all three planes. Ankle joint stability is due to its tight bony architecture and multiple ligaments joining the various bones of the ankle. An ankle sprain is injury to the ligaments holding the ankle in proper alignment. Sprains usually occur while playing cutting sports, walking or running on uneven surfaces, etc. Ankle fractures result when greater energy is added to the deforming force after the ligaments have given away. Ankle sprains by definition have negative screening X-rays.

Cpt. Yvonne Ivanov and Sgt. Brian ORoarke (standing) supervise four patients as they apply ice to their ankle sprains. Ankle sprains are one of the most common sports injuries on Camp Bondsteel.

Ankle sprains are graded by severity into grades I-III.

Grade I is a stretch injury to the ligaments. The ankle usually "turns" resulting in minimal pain and swelling. Patients are able to continue play or walking with little to no residual pain. Bruising is not normally seen.

Grade II ankle sprains are more severe in that the ligaments are stretched to the point of intrasubstance tearing but not complete rupture. Pain and swelling are worse. Despite the more severe nature of the injury, many times play is continued but residual pain is greater and bruising is common.

Grade III injuries involve complete rupture of the ligaments and are very severe injuries. They can sometimes result in chronic pain and loss of function especially when not treated. Swelling and pain are severe. Patients cannot continue activity and most of the time are unable to bear weight.

The treatment is determined by the grade. Grade I sprains require little treatment and rarely result in long-term disability. Normal use is gained within days of injury.

Grade II sprains are treated by rest, ice and elevation. Patients sometimes require a day or two of crutches, an ace wrap and occasionally a supportive brace for a short period of time. Physical therapy is helpful for a prompt return to activity and decreasing recurrent sprains. Use is regained in 2-3 weeks.

An ankle is being iced at the medical facility.

Grade III sprains require similar treatment but crutch use is prolonged and a more aggressive treatment for swelling and immobilization with a splint or cast is required for 2-3 weeks. Physical therapy is required to avoid recurrent sprains and ensure maximum function.

A return to normal activity is delayed 4-6 weeks with a greater chance of prolonged disability and recurrent sprains. Any type of sprain that results in greater than 6 weeks of significant pain despite proper treatment deserves further examination and radiologic studies.

Legal

Your rights and responsibilities in a Report of Survey

Cpt. Matthew W. Caspari
Chief, Client Services

You've just been handed a notice telling you that a Report of Survey (ROS) says you may have to pay the Army for lost or damaged property or equipment. What does this mean and what can you do about it?

First, nothing is final yet. This is not a criminal charge. After receiving the notice, you have the opportunity to review the Survey Officer's findings and evidence. If you desire, you can submit a rebuttal statement that offers your point of view.

Once the Survey Officer has your rebuttal, he or she must consider it and may do additional investigation.

If he or she continues to believe you are responsible for the loss or damage, the ROS will be forwarded to the Approving Authority for final action.

Should you be found liable, you may submit a request for reconsideration to the Approving Authority. If it is turned down, your request will be forwarded to the next higher commander as an appeal. In all but a few exceptional cases, the decision on the appeal will be final.

You are not alone in this process. You have the right to consult with a Legal Assistance Attorney who will discuss with you the issues involved and work on ideas for a rebuttal. Your attorney can help you write your rebuttal and review your drafts for you.

He or she can also answer your questions about the process and advise you on your options. However, it is your signature on the rebuttal and, ultimately, it is your responsibility to provide a rebuttal statement.

Don't just drop off your ROS and expect the Legal Assistance office to do the rest.

As soon as you have been handed the notice, your may contact the Legal Office to meet with an attorney. From the time you are handed the notice, you normally have seven calendar days to prepare your rebuttal before the Survey Officer will forward the ROS without your input (you get more time if the ROS has to be mailed to you due to your unavailability).

If circumstance will make it difficult to finish your rebuttal in the time limit, either you or your attorney may ask for an extension of time, but don't count on this request for extension being granted.

Before you go see your attorney, think about the issues that seem unfair or incorrect to you. Prepare a draft rebuttal.

Read through the packet carefully and identify points you disagree with and be prepared to tell your attorney why you think this should change the outcome of the ROS.

Your attorney will discuss your ideas with you and help explain why the Survey Officer has found you liable. Your attorney will also help you create a final draft of your rebuttal statement.

Together, you and your attorney will be able to ensure that your side of the story is heard and that the Approving Authority has the full picture before he or she acts on the recommendation of the Survey Officer.

If you have any other questions, contact the Camp Bondsteel Legal Office for further assistance at 781-4012.

Computer Seminars

Learn how to do it better

CAPP100A-Intro to Microcomputers
DAYS: Mo, Tu, We, & Th
DATES: June 25, 26, 27, 28
TIMES: 0800 - 1200
CAPP100K-Accessing the Internet
DAYS: Mo, Tu, We, & Th
DATES: July 2, 3, 4, 5
TIMES: 0800 - 1200
CAPP100G-Microsoft Excel
DAYS: Mo, We
DATES: July 2, 4, 9, 11
TIMES: 1900-2300

Stop by the North or South Town Education Center today!!

Soldier wounded by landmine honored

Story and Photo by Spc. Marshall Thompson Camp Bondsteel PAO

Two U.S. soldiers thought they had found something they could walk on safely when they discovered a narrow flat trail on a steep incline in a thick forest just outside of Basici, Kosovo on June 25.

Sgt. Richard Casini and Pfc. Joshua Beavers, cavalry scouts in C troop of the 1st Cavalry Brigade Reconnaissance Troop, were on a patrol near the border of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. They were trying to help stop the incessant flow of weapons into the already war-torn area of the world that they were called to protect when a landmine exploded under Casini's foot.

"We were trying to move to another ridge line to look for any personnel or weapons caches. It was a pretty steep slope on the hill, but we found a narrow part that was a little flat. It was kind of small, but it was flat enough that we could walk on it," said Beavers.

"We were on a dismounted patrol and there really wasn't supposed to be any mines in that area, but I just happened to stumble across one," said Casini. "When I stepped on it and heard the explosion, I knew exactly what happened."

"I was about seven meters behind him [Casini]. That first minute I was shocked. I sat there and watched it happen and it just shocked the hell out of me," said Beavers.

When a mine explodes soldiers are trained not to move until a path is cleared.

Casini, understanding that it would be hard for anyone to get to him quickly, immediately started taking care of the situation himself.

Beavers said that he looked over and Casini was "putting the field dressing on himself."

Casini said, "I was the only one that was going to be able to do first aid on me. [Beavers] was stuck where he was because you can't really walk around in a minefield. He helped me out and kept me calm. He was a big help."

Casini, realizing that his field dressing and staying calm wasn't going to be enough for his badly wounded right leg, took off his belt, broke a stick in half, and applied a tourniquet to his leg.

Beavers said, "I was talking to him. I got on the radio and talked to my platoon sergeant. He let me know what to do. Then [Casini] started to put a tourniquet on his leg."

"When it happened, I just followed basic first aid then applied the tourniquet and all that. Beavers relayed all the information on the radio, got the grid and called in a nine line medevac [medical evacuation]," said Casini.

Sgt. Christine Roberts, a flight medic with the 50th Medical Company, said that the call came in that there was a landmine casualty. She knew immediately that it would be hard to land in a minefield. When the complete report was received it was confirmed that she would have to be lowered down from the helicopter through the trees on a hoist.

"In less than five minutes we were out the door and taking off," said Roberts.

After orbiting the site to find a safe way to get Roberts on the ground, she was lowered from over 200 ft. down into the dense forest.

"I banged into a few trees on my way down. It was not easy. As soon as I hit the ground I noticed the terrain. It was very uphill and downhill. Any step you took, you could roll down and maybe hit a mine," said Roberts.

Roberts was carrying all her equipment which included a jungle penetrator, a device for raising and lowering people out of places where a helicopter landing is impossible, a scant, which is a portable stretcher, and a first aid bag.

Roberts said, "Once I got down, I tried to unhook myself from the jungle penetrator as well as the scant that I had on my back. At that time, my aid bag fell and rolled down the hill. It ended up rolling to the bottom of the hill where there are landmines. I didn't go get it."

After taking into account the terrain and her equipment, Roberts looked for the soldiers.

"I saw the marker, then I saw Beavers, then I saw the walking path that they had taken. Finally, I saw Sgt. Casini over by a tree. Sgt. Casini had put the tourniquet on himself. He was holding his tourniquet –keeping it tight," said Roberts. "He knew what he needed to do and he did it well."

Without the help of her aid bag, Roberts had to improvise.

"The only thing I could do was use what I had," said Roberts. "So I took off his shirt and used it to take care of his wounds."

"[Roberts] had to wing a lot of things to get us out of there, but she did it really well. She risked her life to save mine," said Casini.

Using the jungle penetrator, Roberts extracted Casini, Beavers and herself from the area and took them immediately to the hospital at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo. The whole while Sgt. Casini remained surprisingly in control.

"When I got to Sgt. Casini, he had a complete calmness about him. He wasn't yelling, screaming, or doing anything that you would think a patient would be doing," said Roberts.

Back at Camp Bondsteel, Casini remained an outstanding example of a soldier, helping his fellow platoon members deal with the situation.

Sgt. Richard Casini, a cavalry scout wounded by a landmine from C troop 1st Cavalry Brigade Reconnaissance Troop, shakes hands with a fellow soldier after being awarded the Kosovo Campaign Medal and the NATO Medal for Kosovo Operation. Behind him are Pfc. Joshua Beavers, a cavalry scout from Casini's platoon, and Sgt. Christine Roberts, a flight medic with the 50th Medical Company, who both helped to save Casini's life.

"He's so great," said Cpt. David Raugh, Company Commander of C troop 1st Cavalry BRT. "He's been a trooper through the entire experience. He's done a lot to help us cope with it. I know it's amazingly difficult but he's making the transition easier for everybody in the troop."

"I'm happy that Sgt. Casini is going to be all right. You don't want this to happen to anybody, but it's nice to know that he's in good hands. He's going to be missed very much," said Sgt. 1st Class James Baugh, Casini's platoon sergeant.

With Casini's help and with a true Army spirit the 1st Cavalry is driving on.

"The platoon is a very close and tight platoon. Everybody is leaning on each other –supporting each other. The morale is very good and we're going back out as soon as we can get out. That's what we need to do as a platoon. It's part of the healing process. Right now we're going out there with a lot of concerns, but once we get out and go through it again, we can go back to being who we are," said Baugh. "It's our job, as cavalry reconnaissance, to go into areas that nobody knows anything about. We live with the danger every time we go out."

For his bravery in the face of danger, Casini was recognized on Wednesday by having the Kosovo Campaign Medal, and the NATO Metal for Kosovo Operations pinned on him by Col. Vincent Brooks, Multinational Brigade East Deputy Commander.

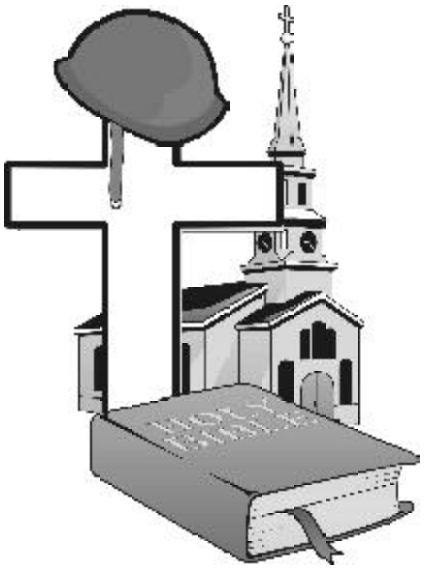
Raugh said that Casini would be receiving more awards including the Purple Heart later when he arrives in Germany.

After Germany, Casini will go to Walter Reed Hospital in Maryland for physical therapy and then home for a bit with his family in West Virginia.

Casini said, "It was a mission that I had and there was definitely a risk. If I didn't want to do it I could have just stayed back or refused to go. But it's what I signed up to do. I still love our country and the military."

Chaplain's Page

Relentless caring and compassion



Story by
Chaplain Stephen Alsleben
3/69th AR BN Chaplain

Do you know who Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu is? You might not recognize her by that name, but you would almost certainly know who she is by her more popular name, or her picture. Before I share that more popular name, let me tell you a bit more about Agnes. She is an ethnic Albanian who was born and raised in Skopje. Agnes' father died when she was 7 years old when he got caught in the middle of a Balkan ethnic brawl. So far, Agnes could be just about anyone we meet on our day to day missions here in Kosovo.

However, when Agnes was 12, her life took on a whole new direction. She felt that God was calling her to serve him by serving the poor, and so at age 18, Agnes left the Balkans for Ireland where she joined the Order of the Sisters of Loreto and became Sister Teresa. Later, Sister Teresa found herself in India working as a teacher and felt God refining his call on her life to work among the poorest of the poor. Sister Teresa then became Mother Teresa as she began the Missionaries of Charity. She worked first among the destitute and dying of Calcutta, and then, gradually in other poverty-stricken areas of the world.

I tell you all this for three reasons. First, Mother Teresa is my hero. That may sound strange because we don't usually think of heroes as dead, five foot tall, frail, stooped, old women with very wrinkled faces who spend their days among poor, dying people. Yet, there is something remarkably strong about this tenacious woman. If you ever read a biography about Mother Teresa, one thing quickly becomes clear. God did not make it easy for her to do her work among the destitute of Calcutta. Mother Teresa resorted to all sorts of strategies and methods to provide for the poor entrusted to her care; she begged, borrowed, and did everything short of stealing. In short, the RELENTLESS way in which Mother Teresa went about accomplishing her mission serves as a model for us in achieving our mission.

The second reason I write this is because I want to share two things Mother Teresa said that have direct bearing on our present mission. The first one is: "God hasn't called me to be successful. He's called me to be faithful." She also said, "We can do no great things, only small things with great love." Peacekeeping is long, frustrating work. Occasionally we will see what appear to be incredible strides forward toward peace and then that will often be followed by two great steps backward into the destructive patterns of the past. At times during this deployment, we may wonder if we are doing any good at all here. It's at times like those when we must, like Mother Teresa, take solace in the fact that we are here simply because God wants us here and so we are being faithful to his will. It would be great to do such a tremendous job here, that we put ourselves out of business. That would certainly be a "great thing." But great things are only accomplished through remaining faithful in the small things. The United States military has a great legacy in our sector. We have brought stability to this region and the people appreciate our being here for the simple

See Mother Teresa page 14

KFOR Worship Schedule

Camp Bondsteel

PEACEKEEPERS CHAPEL SERVICES

Sunday
0800 Episcopal/Lutheran
0930 Catholic Mass
1100 Collective Christian
1500 Gospel Choir
1600 Gospel Service
Monday
1900 Navigators
Tuesday
1900 Women's Bible Study
2000 Catholic RCIA
Wednesday
1200 Lunchtime Bible Study
1900 Mid-Week Bible Study
Thursday
1800 Hour of Power Prayer/Bible Study
1900 Gospel Choir
Friday
1900 Gospel Joy Night
Saturday
1300 Protestant Choir Practice
1900 Gospel Choir Practice

SOUTH CHAPEL

Sunday
0800 Catholic Mass
1000 Protestant Service
1300 Gospel Service
1600 LDS Service
1700 LDS Sunday School
1900 GenX
Monday
1800 LDS Family Home Evening
Tuesday
1900 Gospel Service Prayer
Wednesday
1900 Mid-Week Service
Thursday
1930 Bible Study
Friday
1200 Islamic Prayer
2000 Jewish
Saturday
1100 Adventist Service
1900 Movie Night

Camp Monteith

SUNDAY
0830 LDS Service
0930 Contemporary Protestant Service
1100 General Protestant Worship
1300 Gospel Service
1900 Roman Catholic Mass
Monday
1900 Family Life Study
Tuesday
1900 Bible Study
Wednesday
1900 Roman Catholic Mass
1930 Roman Inquiry Class
Thursday
1900 Contemporary Praise Team Practice
2000 Gospel Choir Practice
Friday
1200 Muslim Prayer Service
1200 Christian Mid-Day Prayer
1900 Praise and Worship Service
Saturday
1800 Gospel Choir Practice
2000 Movie Night

Camp Able Sentry

Sunday
0130 Protestant Service
1300 Spanish Mass
1600 LDS Service
1900 Gospel Service
Tuesday
1900 Gospel Bible Study
Wednesday
2000 Mid-Week Bible Study
Thursday
1900 Prayer Meeting
Friday
1900 Gospel Hour
Saturday
1730 Catholic Mass
1900 Choir Rehearsal

Children take the first step for Kosovo

Story and photos by Spc. Engels Tejeda
Camp Monteith PAO

Children of both ethnicities, Albanian and Serbian, take the "first step" towards a peaceful Kosovo at a game that was arranged by the civil affairs department at Camp Monteith.

A history of war, hatred and segregation takes a turning point as children of Albanian and Serbian ethnicities score the goal and take the "first step" towards a united Kosovo.

It was a clear Saturday morning in the city of Gnjilane/Gjilan. Business went as usual, with hundreds crowding the streets while purchasing food and clothing on "market day." All the while foreign troops patrolled the city with armored vehicles, loaded weapons, and stiff faces.

At the entrance to the city, the sport center looked as lively as it has since the Kosovo Force (KFOR) entered the area. Children of all ages run around the indoor basketball court kicking footballs as if they were on a soccer field.

Yet the state of normalcy observed was a vail covering the evolving history that was taking place. This quite normal day marked one of only two times that children of Albanian and Serbian ethnicities shared one roof, competed for a common goal, and strived to score for the same team.

"This is the second interethnic athletic event since the end of the war," said Maj. Steve Katz, officer in charge of the 404th Civil Affairs Battalion at Camp Monteith. "We did a soccer match on May 5. After this first match the children, particularly the Serb kids, would ask us when we would do it again," he added.

Soldiers of the 404th Civil Affairs Battalion at Camp Monteith distributed soft drinks and pizza to children who participated in a multiethnic game at Gjilan/Gnjilane on 9 June.

The boy's soccer game began with the Serbian team scoring the first goal. Then, Fidan Halili, a seventh grader with the Albanian team, got the ball past the Serbian goalie. The game went on with both teams scoring once each, finalizing the game in a tie.

Halili commented on the outcome of the game. "I think they (the Serbian team) did really well. They were tough competition," he said. "I would like to play with them again," he added.

When the boy's game was over, the girls began their volleyball match. On the first game, the Albanian team having practiced for several weeks defeated their counterparts. In an effort to have fair competition the referees suggested that the teams be mixed. Surprisingly at such an early stage, the girls agreed and played a game together.

This was a moment of importance. The Serbian girls would set the ball, and the Albanians would spike it, or vice-versa. During the game, one of the Albanian players spiked the ball and it hit a Serbian girl who was on the opposite team. To the surprise of many, again, the Albanian girl walked to the bench and apologized for the accident.

A state of harmony and sportsmanship reigned throughout the game. The behavior of the teams was rewarded with a treat: the event organizers distributed pizza and soft drinks.

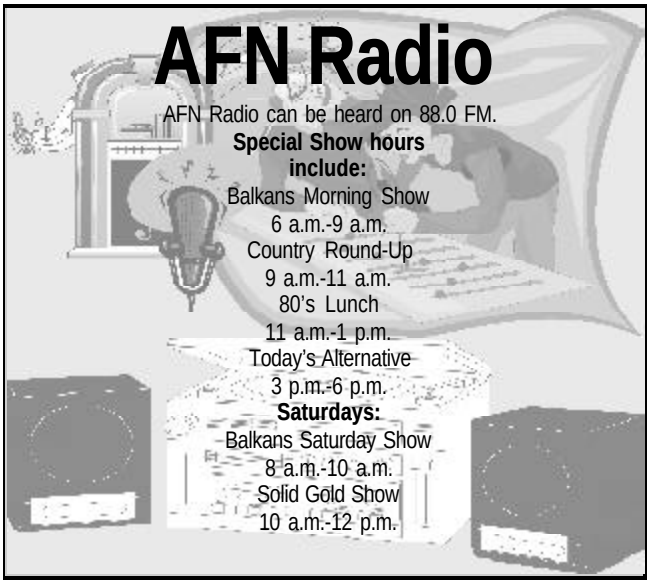
Katz, who was there with a small team from the 404th Civil Affairs Battalion, said the event took a while to arrange.

"It took about three months of talking – not to the children, they were more than willing – but to the adults; to convince them that this was a good idea and that we could provide a safe environment for their children to play. Once we convinced them, it took about two weeks of planning security and transportation for the kids," Katz said.

Security was provided by soldiers from C Company of the 3rd of the 7th Infantry.

Katz said he believes activities like this are important because the war left "deep wounds" on the adult population of Kosovo.

"With kids," Katz said, "we have a chance."



Mother Teresa's kindness

Mother Teresa cont...

reason that those who have gone before us have done the small things right, and in a spirit of love. That is the reason that kids smile and wave or give us the thumbs up—because they recognize our genuine care for them.

Finally I write about Mother Teresa because we are in her backyard. The same conflict that killed her father killed the fathers of many of the children we encounter on our daily missions. So just think, maybe one of us will touch the life of one of these children in such a way that they will grow up and become as great or greater than Mother Teresa.

Be Relentless!

Speed and Power!

Mother Teresa in Shishu Bavan.

The Declaration of Independence; the price of freedom

Story and photo by Spc. Marshall Thompson Camp Bondsteel PAO

Have you paid for your freedom? Or were you paid for?

The great poet Maya Angelou spoke to a group of students in 1998 at Weber State University in Ogden, Utah. The theme she spoke on was "being paid for." She said that we had all been paid for. She went on to explain that her ancestors had to fight for their freedom against the prejudices of slavery. In that sense, they paid for the freedom that she now enjoys. She went on to explain that every member of this nation has been paid for by the sacrifices of their parents. Whether they were French Protestants or pilgrims. Whether they came from China, Europe or Mexico. They had felt the need to secure a better life for their children and they gave all they had to provide that for them. On this 4th of July we all need to remember how we were paid for.

In a broader sense we can attribute a large portion of the price paid for liberty to the founders of this nation. They were normal men and women that didn't perhaps completely understand the importance of what they did at first. They weren't perfect, but through trial and error they brought forth this great nation of the United States.

What brings loyal, law-abiding citizens to execute a revolution? The answer first lies in a powerful and revolutionary idea. Inspired, our founding fathers wrote the following:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

These are known as the unalienable rights and were contained in, what was considered by many at the time to be a spurious and treacherous document, the Declaration of Independence.

But this incredible document, and the bold truths it contained, did not come just from ideas. It came from actions.

The actions that lead the founding fathers to feel there was no other alternative but revolution were many. However, there are a few that stand out.

In 1767 a series of taxes on imports were imposed on the colonists. They were called the Townshend acts and they required them to pay customs taxes on items supposedly from their own country.

The colonists were outraged especially since they had no representation in the English Parliament. Boston merchants boycotted the English goods and many people protested.

English troops were sent to ensure that the taxes were paid. On May 5, 1770, British troops fired into a riot killing five men. Their funerals were a rallying point for the revolutionists. Robert Treat Paine, a signer of the Declaration of Independence tried the men for murder. Interestingly enough, John Adams, another signer of the Declaration, was the defense for the British troops. This might seem odd, but it was quite normal. Many great men of the revolution such as Benjamin Franklin and George Washington were loyal to the British Empire until there was no other alternative.

That's why in 1776 when the Declaration of Independence was written, they wrote:

"That to secure these rights [the unalienable rights], Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their power from the consent of the governed, -That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes... But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security."

What these revolutionary colonists did was unheard of. They were declaring themselves free by no earthly power or authority. They were claiming their freedom based on an inherent human authority never before recognized as legal and binding.

To make it binding and effective many people would have to give their lives, but once the revolution was completed the precedence would be set for men, in whatever circumstances, to declare themselves free.

It was a precedence that flew in the face of the common practice of slavery at the time. It would take time, but even that injustice would be effaced by these ideals. Eventually, every man will be paid for.

Finally, the Declarers of Independence wrote:

"We therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, that these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the state of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. –And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our fortunes and our sacred Honor.

Pvt. 1st Class Christopher Holcomb of the 2nd of the 502nd stands guard in Vrboc/Vrbovac.

KFOR provides means for waste disposal

Maj. Kantz and the mayor

Story and photo by Spc. Travis Bascom Camp Montieth PAO

The City of Gnjilane/Gjilan received three new garbage trucks from Kosovo Force (KFOR) in order to help with disposing waste from the surrounding region on June 10.

The garbage trucks, brought from Turkey, are worth $200,000 and are greatly needed in an area where disposing of garbage has become a real challenge.

In order to receive the garbage trucks the city of Gnjilane/Gjilan agreed to hire five Serbians. Resumes were passed throughout the surrounding area and five Serbians were promptly hired.

"These trucks will be a great help for the city," said Halit Zymberi, director of public utilities for the city of Gnjilane/Gjilan.

"With the help of these trucks we will soften the load for the city and the surrounding villages," said Zymberi. "We appreciate the donation."

The donation of the trucks allows, for the first time ever, for garbage to be collected from some of the outlining villages, including Serbian villages.

"This is a wonderful step toward bringing these two groups together," said Maj. Steven D. Katz, Officer in Charge of the 404th Civil Affairs Battalion at Camp Monteith.

"The trucks give the municipality the ability to collect their trash properly and every citizen needs to take the responsibility not to throw away trash in illegal dump sites," said Katz.

"KFOR would like to thank the citizens that helped the relaxation of Zone Bravo to happen peacefully," said Katz.

This is just another way KFOR is glad to help.

Children see KFOR in a new perspective

Story and photos by
Spc. Engels Tejeda
Camp Monteith PAO

Nightmares of war come to mind when children of Kosovo see tanks. Yet that is all changing, as Camp Monteith makes an effort to give a different impression to these youngsters by allowing them not only to see the peace-keeping tanks, but also go inside them.

In spite of a menacing cloudy sky, soldiers from Headquarters and Headquarters Company 1-41st Field Artillery, A Company 3-69th Armor and 3-7th Infantry Regiment displayed heavy machinery to include a tank, a howitzer, and a HMMWV.

Fifty children from a local school near Gjilan/Gnjilane arrived via a school bus to at Gate 2 of Camp Monteith. The children, representing 3d through 8h grade, said they were scared at first. Years of military instability during their infancy had left deep wounds of fear within them.

"I think the tanks are cool," said Burim Demiri, one of the students attending the event. "I liked looking through the (scopes) of the tank," he added.

According to Capt. Mike Lucy, fire support and information operations officer with 3-7th Infantry Regiment, the event was held in an effort to "bring the soldiers and local community together." Lucy emphasized that Camp Monteith feels the future of Kosovo has "hope" within the young generation.

Halim Vranovci, director of the school, shares Camp Monteith's feelings, stating:

"I think this is a great way to reach the community... The kids are really enjoying it."

Camp Monteith held several other activities of this nature in hopes of reaching the community. A week prior, the camp hosted a similar display for adults; and just a few days prior, another group of honor students were invited to walk through the camp.

The children departed the gate after two hours of "having fun on the tanks."

Approximately 50 children joined soldiers from Camp Monteith June 20 to "see how the machines work." The children said they were very impressed with the machinery. Above, Sgt. Todd Buerger waves hello with several 6h graders.

Burrying the hatchet; weapons melted down for peace

Story and photo by
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Camp Bondsteel PAO

In the past people have used various items to symbolize peace. The Native Americans have used a broken arrow, and a common expression is "burry the hatchet." The idea is always the same. The destruction of weapons is seen as a sign of ensuing peace. This same idea was echoed by the great Hebrew poet Isaiah when he wrote, "and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

These ideas became reality once again in Kosovo when KFOR reopened a weapons destruction plant just outside of Pristina/Prishtina June 18. The plant takes weapons that were either turned-in under amnesty policies or confiscated by Task Force Falcon and KFOR .

The weapons are heated in a glowing red furnace that when opened breaths out a dizzying blow of heat. After a few minutes, the weapons are taken from the furnace and bent by a huge hydraulic press until they are completely useless except for scrap metal.

"I can tell you it's hot," said KFOR Commander Lt. Gen. Thorstein Skiaker as he tossed a few stripped down weapons into the gaping red mouth of the furnace beast.

A Norwegian officer explained that the weapons had to be stripped before they were melted because the wood and grease would have caused too much smoke. The furnace had recently been out of commission for this very reason.

"I think it's a much needed facility to make sure that weapons that are confiscated will not get back on the streets and will never again be used in violence," said Skiaker.

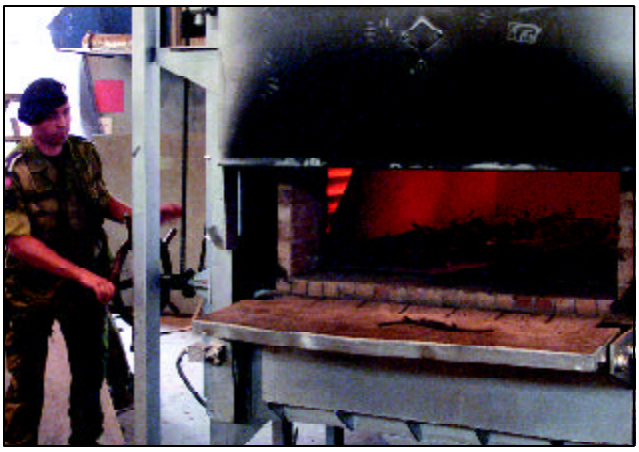
The re-opening of the weapons destruction facility was funded by the Norwegian government and is run by the Greeks.

Skiaker said, "It is said that guns don't kill people, but people kill people. That of course is true. But at the same time, I think that in a society where guns are readily available to take and use to solve problems, it is much easier than it otherwise would be."

A Norwegian officer said that after being melted and bent to a useless chunk, they are then piled up like the bones of some metallic monster. The officer said that many people have asked for the disabled weapons. Artists have wanted to make sculptures out of them, but the destiny of these once powerful weapons is utter destruction. From this plant they will be taken to a local metal refinery where they will be melted down completely.

These weapons being turned in and sacrificed on the alter of a hydraulic press is an excellent beginning and must continue, but as Skiaker said, "it's not the final solution."

"We can confiscate weapons. We can destroy weapons. It is only the people of Kosovo that can decide that weapons and violence are not part of the way they want to live in the future and make a difference," Skiaker said.



A Norwegian officer opens the fiery furnace revealing weapons that have been heated sufficiently to be smashed into a worthless pile by a large hydraulic press during the reopening of a weapons destruction facility just outside of Pristina.