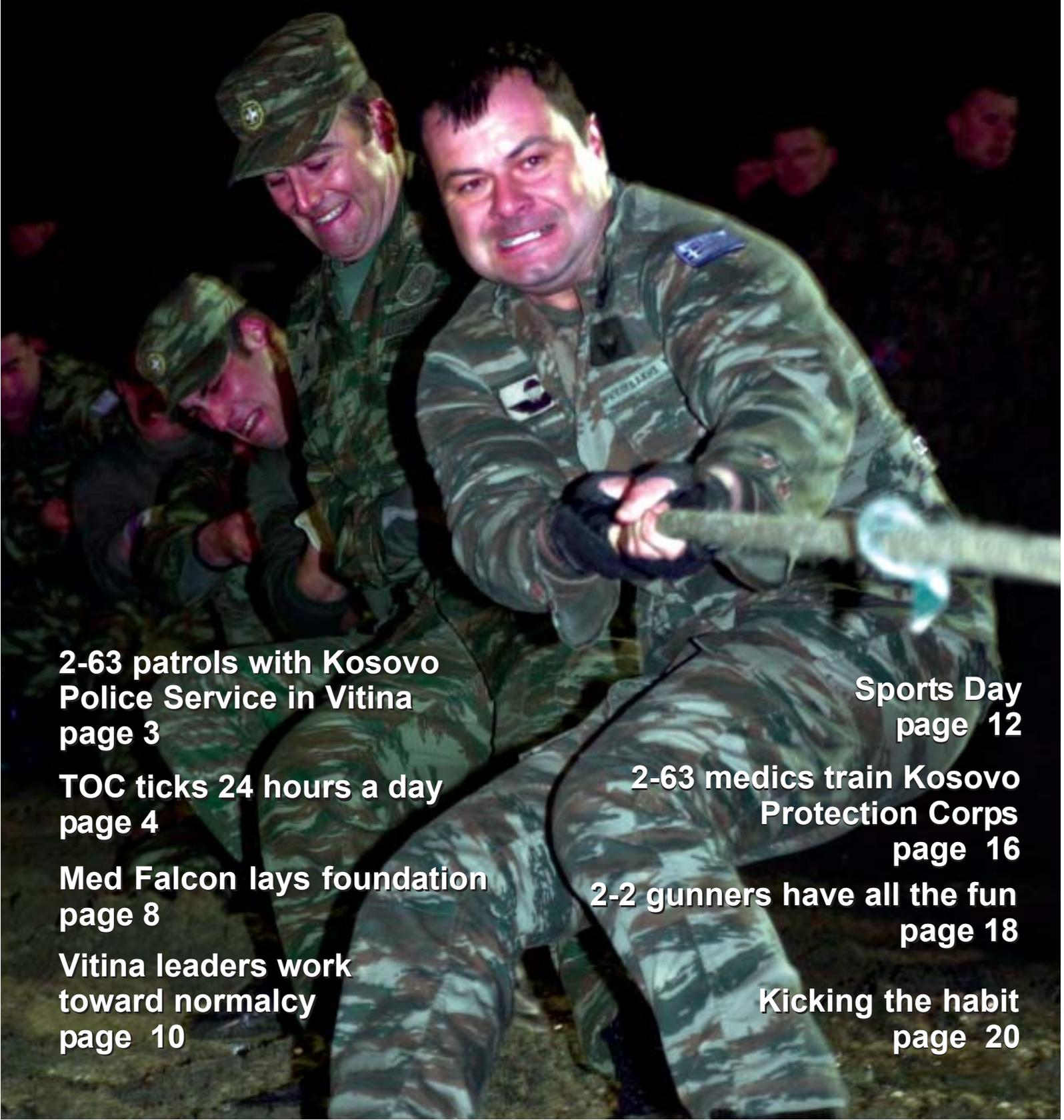


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Guardian East

Volume 8, Issue 8

March 5, 2003



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Message to the troops



Building the team: A work in progress

By Col. Walter Golden, MNB(E) Chief of Staff

The ultimate end of war, at least as America fights it, is to restore peace. For this reason the Army must accomplish its mission honorably. The Army fights to win, but with one eye on the kind of peace that will follow the war. FM 22-100, Army Leadership

Four months into our rotation of the peace stability operation in Kosovo, I'd like to offer you a perspective on the work of the Multi-National Brigade (East) staff so far. First I'd like to tell you what the MNB(E) staff does and then a little bit about who we are.

From a functional perspective, the MNB(E) staff is pretty traditional and is manned much the same as most general officer staff headquarters. The traditional functions of a general staff are to provide information, make estimates, provide recommendations, prepare plans and orders, and supervise execution.

Coordination with the KFOR, U.S. Army Europe and the First Infantry Division staffs, as well as MNB(E) units in sector, is also important in ensuring timely and successful mission accomplishment. What's unique about the MNB(E) staff though, is that it's an ad hoc organization. Formed from components of many organizations and entities four to six months ago, only a small portion of the staff had ever worked together before.

The core of the staff is the officers, NCOs and soldiers from the 3rd Brigade Combat Team. We've capitalized on their knowledge and experience to build "the team." The MNB(E) staff team also includes members of the Division Staff, 2nd Brigade, 4th Brigade, the Engineer Brigade, Division Support Command, and separate battalions like 4-3 Air Defense Artillery, 121 Signal, 793rd Military Police and

101st Military Intelligence.

Other staff members are from various base support battalions, Army National Guard and Army Reserve, the U.S. Air Force, as well as representatives from Russia, Greece, Poland, and the Ukraine.

Contractors are a big part of our organization. Their contributions are significant and growing. We perform all the traditional functions of a staff team in the areas of personnel and administration, intelligence, operations and plans, supply and logistics, civil military operations, communica-

tions, engineering, legal, public affairs and safety. Members of our team also include the cultural advisor, political advisor and the joint implementation commission (JIC). And don't forget our liaison officers for each battalion, the UNMIK police, multinational support unit (MSU), and MNB(SW).

Our challenge, of course, has been to build this diverse

group of talented individuals into a team - all working toward achieving a common goal or purpose. That goal or purpose is provided in the form of our mission - to provide a safe and secure environment and promote the transition of responsibilities to civil authority in Kosovo.

In addition to daily, sometimes hourly, coordination with higher, adjacent and subordinate headquarters; routine meetings such as the nightly commander's update briefing (CUB), staff huddles, and conferences between brigade and

Chief of Staff continued on page 17

To the brave men and women who wear the uniform of the United States of America -- thank you. Your calling is a high one -- to be the defenders of freedom and the guarantors of liberty.

**George H.W. Bush
41st President of the United States**

On the cover: Photo by Spc. Whitney Hughes
From front, Sgt. Nikolaos Fragioudakis and Warrant Officer Alexandros Smiaris, lead the 501st Mechanized Battalion (Greeks) in tug-of-war during Sports Day, Feb. 22.

SEE THE PHOTO OF THE DAY
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2-63 patrols with Kosovo Police Service in Vitina

Photo and story by Spc. Christopher Gookin

VITINA, Kosovo— Call it patrolling for a better tomorrow.

On Feb. 13, soldiers of 2nd Platoon, Charlie Company, 2-63 Armor Battalion joined members of the Kosovo Police Service and UNMIK-Police for a daylong patrol through several towns and Vitina proper.

The combined patrols, which occur on a weekly basis, are a step toward an eventual transition of KFOR law enforcement duties to civil authorities. The KPS is the police force that is assuming those duties under the authority of local municipalities.

In the three years since the KPS was established, training and increasing multiethnic membership remain two of the organization's biggest challenges.

"There is still a lot of animosity between some of the Serbs and Albanians," said Lloyd Sells, a team leader with UNMIK-P. "We're attempting to make inroads on a variety of positions and with different entities. The grenade attack in Mogila saw Serb and Albanian KPS officers working together. They're working together more and more and there is still a way to go."

It was a quiet morning in Letnica. A group of local men in a small café welcomed the patrol as they passed through by.



From left, Safdar Bangash, UNMIK police officer, and Sgt. Robert Eggenberger, Company C, 2-63, walk through Letnica during a joint patrol, Feb. 13.

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The patrol moved back down the mountain to Grncar to establish a vehicle checkpoint on a well-traveled portion of road edged by cornfields.

"We'll establish a VCP here before we head back into Vitina for the joint foot patrol," said 2nd Lt. Mark Amargo of Company C.

The soldiers and their civilian counterparts checked many vehicles.

The traffic was heavy to and from the market place in Vitina and as one team held traffic the other methodically checked documents and inspected vehicles for contraband.

"One of the challenges is training (the KPS) to be professionals," said Safdar Bangash, an UNMIK police officer from Pakistan. "To approach problems in a professional manner and to be a police officer for everyone."

Another challenge is gaining the trust of the community, said KPS Officer Srdjan Jernic. To do that, they need to be a consistent presence in the community, he added.

The joint patrol checked about 15 vehicles before returning to an UNMIK/KPS station in Vitina to coordinate the afternoon's patrol and take a short lunch break.

"When we first started the patrols with KPS, it was difficult to coordinate with all the different sectors," said Amargo. "But following the initial confusion we made it work. Our goal is to work closely with KPS and that helps reinforce their role with the community."

For the remainder of the afternoon, the joint patrol stayed in Vitina.

The morning snow flurries gave way to overcast skies and biting winds that had the concessionaires in the market place stamping their feet and slapping their hands. Small fires burned on street corners to provide some warmth.

KPS Officers Filloreta Kosumi and Adnan Kastrati spoke to various shop owners and market goers.

"Before, the police were a (threatening) force," Kosumi said. "We're here to help people now."

The patrol weaved its way through the crowd of people, some leading horses and cows.

"We let KPS be in control," said Pfc. Scott Schroeder, of Company C. "We let them run the show, communicating more as peers or coworkers than an outside influence."

The streets flooded with teen-agers as school let out and the cafes and restaurants opened.

"What's up KFOR!" shouted a group of teens as they cut across the intersection, barely containing their laughter.

"These patrols are important," said Amargo. "The people are happy to see KFOR and KPS together."

The setting sun hastened the end of the market day as shopkeepers packed their merchandise at a leisurely pace. Lights from cafes reached into the streets casting strange shadows.

The joint patrol continued, its pace unchanged. KPS and UNMIK-P officers walked together with the American soldiers. The KPS officers introduced soldiers to local residents. The soldiers provided additional set of eyes and ears.

"I have an added appreciation for our local police forces at home after this experience with joint patrols," said Amargo. "The KPS is starting from scratch, regaining the trust of the local population. Our services are well established and that reinforces the trust in our security at home."



TOC ticks 24 hours a day

Heart of MNB(E) pumps information in and out

By Spc. Catherine Caruso

Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Dan Landry

Maps dominate the Tactical Operations Center at Camp Bondsteel. Large maps. Small maps. Projected maps. Secret maps behind drapes or makeshift sheets.

If the information traffic through Multi-National Brigade (East) were represented on a map, every road would lead to the TOC.

In the TOC, the Battle Desk staff seeks new information via banks of screens, radios, and phone lines. They send out updates, maintaining a running record of events in MNB(E). The Intelligence Desk investigates incidents reported throughout the sector. The liaison officers transfer information from battalion to brigade, then brigade back to battalion.

Every second, 24 hours a day, the TOC is ticking.

A Guardian East journalist spends a day with the soldiers who ensure the ticking never stops.

SITREP: The overall situation in the MNB(E) area of responsibility remains calm.

WEATHER: Mostly cloudy, with rain and light fog in morning.

The night shift has been on for nearly three hours.

"How late are you going to be here?" Battle Capt. John Sabala asks Capt. Eric Durham, Southern European Task Force liaison officer.

"Until I get tired," Durham says.

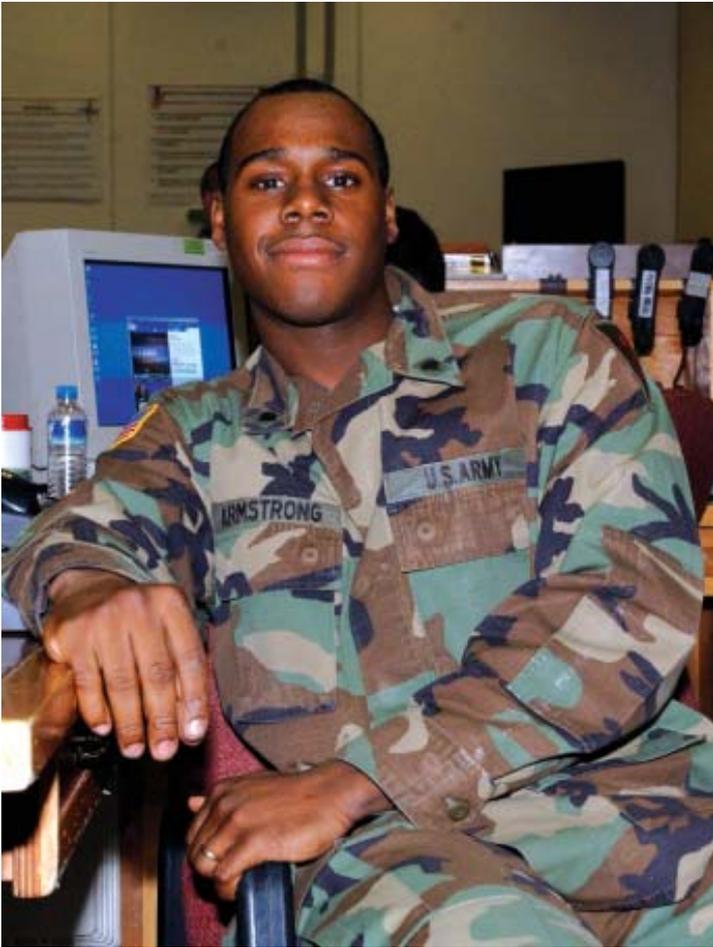
4 ♦ March 5, 2003

Chow arrives.

"We are the Night Crawlers!" Sabala says referring to the tiered stations of the mostly empty, amphitheater-like room.

The TOC is a maze-like complex in the heart of Camp Bondsteel, but it might be better described as the nerve center of MNB(E). Each person inside has a job. They are a link in the critical relay of information across the sector. The day unfolding could bring nothing. It could bring something.

www.mnbe.hqsareur.army.mil



Spc. Lemonte Armstrong
G3 Radio Transmitter Operator

Their job is to be ready if it does.

“Our biggest challenge is to go from mundane to crisis in zero seconds flat,” says Maj. Harry Yockey, G3 Operations Chief.

The G2, or intelligence, staff spends the night preparing “read books” for the top officers. There are intelligence summaries, fragmentary orders known as fragos, situation reports, news reports and analysis.

“I’d say there is about 800 pages analyses total each night put in those books,” says 1st Lt. Natalie Friel, G2’s night intelligence officer. In between, they try to close out incidents from the previous day.



Staff Sgt. John Berry, liaison officer for the 212th Military Police Company, is working on his computer. Sgt. Scott Darling, liaison for 2-2 Infantry Battalion, is deep in consultation with Staff Sgt. Michael Siller, 2-63 Armor Battalion liaison.

“When stuff happens...” Berry says.

“We save him (Sabala) a lot of work,” Darling finishes.

Siller calls the LNO team the “black ops of our units.”

“They don’t even know we exist until they need us,” he quips.

What he does, along with Darling and Berry, is wait. And when information comes to them from their unit, or from the brigade for their battalions, they make sure it moves smoothly to and from each place.



Outside the TOC, dawn is a pink smear above hills to the east. It silhouettes a chain-link fence that secures the TOC and a small compound of SEA Huts. A coil of razor wire runs along the top of the fence like a stretched out Slinky. The only way in and out is through the guard shack where lower enlisted soldiers rotate from the TOC for two-hour shifts.

Inside, dawn is something that can only be sensed through the windowless walls.

Pvt. Richard Fletcher, G3 Peacekeeping Common Operations Picture operator, said he hasn’t left Camp Bondsteel since arriving nearly three months ago. He maintains the largest map in the TOC, plotting points and creating new overlays as needed. He gets one day, or rather one night off a week, which he spends watching movies, playing video games, or hanging out with his roommates. The rest of the time, he is on duty in the TOC or in the guard shack.



As the morning progresses and the day shift arrives, the sound of information moving through the building is amplified. The clatter of typing on keyboards increases. The hum of



Maj. Harry Yockey
G3 Operations Chief

Guardian East

conversations grows louder. Footsteps sound in the hallways more often. Capt. James "Mike" James has assumed the battle captain's seat in the TOC. G3 Operations Sgt. Todd Mann updates the weather posting on the board.

There are two slogans on the wall: "Who Else Needs To Know" and "What Are We Doing About It."

"Those are our mottos around here," Mann said.

The shift change barely makes a ripple in the information flow.

Some reports are compiled. Some are written. They are simple, straightforward, and even formulaic. They circulate the nuggets of information that drive the information train.

In an office hidden high in the rafters of the second floor of the main building, Capt. Brian Hooks toils away at what he calls the most underappreciated job in the TOC.

Hooks is the FRAGO writer.

He also writes the situation reports, or SITREPS, and follows up on Significant Action reports.

"I'm isolated. No windows," he says.

Hooks is connected to the rest of the brigade by no fewer than six computers and four phones, but he prefers to collect information in person. Otherwise, he might be forgotten entirely.



James briefs Yockey on recent significant events.

The phone rings. James answers. "Sir, you have 17 minutes until the briefing," he says.



Sgt. Todd Mann
G3 Operations



File photo by Spc. Tina Tomassetti

Spc. Trang Quach **G1 Awards Clerk**

While the plans and intelligence sections manage the operational information flow, more specialized information is diverted to a series of outlying offices. For example, all the paperwork that keeps account of brigade personnel runs through G1.

Strength Manager Sgt. Rafael Matos has been consolidating daily reports from the units for the last two hours, and compiling the four updates he puts out each day. He is so busy he doesn't have time to break from his computer to talk.

At another desk, Spc. Trang Quach, G1 awards clerk for HHC, processes all the awards for MNB(E).

"I've done 559 Letters of Release since I've been here," Pfc. Bradley Abbott says, explaining why his job is so stressful. Temporary duty, medevacs, emergency leave — it all gets pushed through the system by Abbott.

With much of the task force about to become eligible for regular leave, Abbott is expecting many more Calgon moments.



There is a report of a mudslide from a Psychological Operation team on a mission in the Polish-Ukrainian sector. Spc. Lemonte Armstrong updates the overlay on the map.

"Did you tell the engineers?" James asks.

The phone rings. Someone is looking for a helicopter. James checks with G3 Air and assures him it will be there momentarily.

Across the room in the G2 area, two soldiers are hoisting a large plasma-screen television onto a ledge overlooking the TOC.



**Sgt. Rafael Matos
Strength Manager**

12:15

Brown and Root reports an activated alarm. They send a team to investigate. A faulty smoke detector is discovered.

12:37

There's a report of an accidental discharge at the gate. There's a flurry of phone calls, first to collect the details, then to notify the appropriate parties. It is a few minutes of the kind of excitement James says, "we're trying to *avoid* on an average day."

This time, at least, no one got hurt.

If information has to do with logistics, it's collated, analyzed, and processed in G4. Spreadsheets dominate almost every screen. Everything from purchasing plane tickets to ordering bookshelves through Brown and Root is initiated, coordinated, monitored and tracked in this office.

"No one gets anything unless we get it for them," says Chief Warrant Officer Carroll Randall, a materiel readiness technician.

From his desk, Randall can track every humvee in the fleet, whether it is up and running or broken down. He knows what parts are needed and why a humvee is or isn't on the road.

Without the streamlining efficiency of their procedures and special information filters, Randall said much of the data they use would be unmanageable.

17:13

The last range has closed for the day. The mudslide reported earlier has been cleared. An aerial insertion and extraction has been completed. The command update brief is about to begin. MNB(E) Commander Brig. Gen. Daniel Keefe briefs the assembled officers on his meeting with Kosovo officials that day. A series of presenters from each staff section brief him on the day's key events. The large screen behind them becomes a cinema size power point presentation.

17:45

Another mudslide is reported, this time by Brown and Root drivers on Route Hawk. James dispatches the POLUKRBAT LNO to find a patrol to verify it. He sends Sgt. 1st Class Khanh Phan to find a Civil Affairs representative to identify assets to deal with it.

19:58

Mudslide reported cleared.

23:52

Inside the TOC, Sabala has resumed his seat at the Battle Captain's desk. Lt. Friel is on the phone. Another shift changes while the TOC keeps on ticking.



**Chief Warrant Officer Carroll Randall
Materiel Readiness Technician**

Med Falcon Lays F

At Gjilani Regional Hospital

GJILANE, Kosovo – Task Force Med Falcon has engaged in many projects to train, mentor, and assist the local medical community in attempts to improve health care. But the ultimate goal is to train citizens to help themselves, which is exactly what the TFMF soldiers are preparing the nursing staff at Gjilani Regional Hospital to do.

Maj. Richard Caldwell, OIC of training for TFMF, has been teaching an eight-week nursing course at Gjilani Regional Hospital. His students include both Albanians and Serbs. On Feb. 18, the fifth week of the course, 17 Albanians and 10 Serbs attended.

“The idea of nurses taking the responsibility to continue their own education is one of the goals here,” said Caldwell.

At the end of Caldwell’s rotation, the hospital’s head nurse Xhyllie Hajdari will take over the course.

“This is the second course that Xhyllie has been through,” Caldwell said. “She has developed a mastery of the course content.”

And mastering this course is no small feat. It is considered college-level material.

The depth of the course content was apparent at the Feb. 18 class, which focused on treating shock. Caldwell’s lecture and power point slides were translated into both Albanian and Serb for the 27 students who listened intently and took notes. At the beginning of the course, Caldwell was impressed by the nurses’ knowledge, so he added more advanced material into the coursework.

Education is a much-needed step for emergency nursing, Hajdari said. It is new ground for health care in Kosovo.

Until recently, nurses were not allowed to perform the most basic tasks such as checking blood pressure, giving intravenous lines, or administering oxygen without a doctor’s permission, she said.

“Simply, we were not allowed to do anything,” Hajdari said. “Our duty was to wait and take orders from the doctor.”

Part of the reason was because the nurses lacked the necessary training.

Under the new system, the nurses are trained to perform these tasks. They must complete high school level training and go before a board to become licensed.

“We now have the necessary training and knowledge and are skilled at these techniques,” said Hajdari.

The goal of the nursing classes is to improve on the nurses’ current skills and achieve a higher level of professionalism among them, she added.

So far the course has been a success. Attendance has more than quadrupled since the first class, Caldwell said. The students come from the hospital as well as clinics in outlying villages, said Hajdari.

An indirect goal of the course is to impress on the students that healthcare cannot succeed in communities divided by ethnic intolerance.

Gradually, the lesson is taking hold.



Xhyllie Hajdari, head emergency nurse at Gjilani Regional Hospital, takes notes during a Feb. 18 nursing class.



A member of the medical staff helps load a mock patient into a medevac during training, Feb. 18.

oundation

Story and Photos by Spc. Whitney Hughes



Chief Warrant Officer Jason Hyer, a medevac pilot, climbs onto a backboard and becomes a simulated patient during medevac training, Feb. 14.

At Pristina University Hospital

PRISTINA, Kosovo – In Kosovo, multinational efforts have proven time and again that anything is possible. Earlier this month, the KFOR medical community christened another success – the completion of a new emergency helipad at Pristina University Hospital.

Saving time was the reason that the whole project was conceived, said Maj. Aaron Tremain, medical plans officer with KFOR headquarters. The new helipad is located a short distance from the emergency room doors. The old helipad, located behind the hospital, was about 300 meters away – 100 yards or the distance of a football field.

“(The helipad) decreases the amount of time to get the casualty from the point of injury to definitive care,” he said.

On at least two occasions, KFOR medevac crews have had to hump a patient the entire distance. Another time, a vehicle linked up with the crew to transport a patient.

That precious time could make a difference in a critical case.

The construction was relatively easy, thanks to the funding and physical labor donated by KFOR soldiers.

“It is simple work, but very important for it’s function at the hospital,” said Lt. Col. Roberto Faragua, a project officer with KFOR headquarters.

Before the helipad can be officially opened, the hospital staff must undergo medevac safety training. On Feb. 14, soldiers with 236th (Air Ambulance) Medical Company and Task Force Medical Falcon conducted a familiarization.

“If they’re out there being somewhat apprehensive then we can lose valuable time,” said Chief Warrant Officer Jason Hyer, a medevac pilot.

The training was also for the benefit of the medevac crew. It began with the crew landing in a Black Hawk on the new helipad. As in any new situation, the crew had to look for obstacles, such as wires, telephone poles, buildings and in this case a nearby Ferris wheel.

“It (familiarization) makes you feel more at ease, especially for us,” said Spc. Robert Sage, a crew chief with the 236th. “We’re the eyes in the back.”

f at Pristina University Hospital
o the litter of a Black Hawk
p. 14.

Vitina leaders work toward normalcy

2-63 facilitates grass roots approach to community issues

Story and photo by Spc. Christopher Gookin

VRBOVAC, Kosovo— In a conference room smelling of fresh paint and sawdust, a Croatian mayor and two Serbian mayors demonstrated a commitment toward normalcy.

Once a week the leaders from within the Vitina Municipality gather with representatives from 2-63 Armor Battalion, Kosovo Police Service, United Nation agencies and non-government organizations to address the concerns facing their communities.

Freedom of movement, ethnic tolerance, and respecting the rule of law are dominant themes.

Issues dealing with infrastructure, employment, the economy and

education seem to hinge on the progress of the others.

KFOR initiated the forum because there was no means for municipal leaders to get a grass roots perspective on the issues, said Maj. Fred Nutter, executive officer for 2-63. Nutter has acted as a facilitator as well as liaison for Multi-National Brigade (East).

“The concerns of one ethnic group don’t differ that much from the other,” he said.

Mayors Trajan Trajkovic of Klokot, Mitar Staniojevic of Vitina, and Froka Dokic of Letnica (who is Croatian), attended the Feb. 12 meeting. They are not mayors in the traditional sense. They were not elected or appointed. KFOR identified them as leaders because they stepped forward with a concern for the future of their respective communities.

“Many little towns go without representation,” Nutter said. “It is further complicated by the Serbs, who have not had a member participating in the municipal meetings.”

“One of the messages that we put out at these meetings is for them to talk to their friends and neighbors,” he added. “It is safe and secure but they have to come back to participate.”

“... we have to treat everyone the same way and respect everyone’s rights.”

***Froka Dokic
Mayor of Letnica***

Dokic and Trajkovic voiced their concerns over a recent grenade attack in Mogila.

“If some individuals are trying to intimidate the population, they are doing this with a purpose to encourage minorities to leave,” Dokic said.

Nutter restated an earlier point that the explosion was due to a fight between families, not an ethnic attack.

“How can we say this to the world?” Dokic responded. “This happened four years ago too.”

The wider issue of possible minority targeting weighed heavily on the assembled body.

“What would we say if the incident occurred between two Serbs, two Croats or Albanians?” Nutter asked.

“Then we have to treat everyone the same way and respect everyone’s rights,” Dokic said.

Earlier in the meeting, Staniojevic addressed media reports of increased activity by Albanian militants in the Strpce and Kamenica municipalities.

“As a Serb leader I am worried that the roads to Serbia



FROM LEFT, Mitar Staniojevic, a Serb leader of Vitina; Igor Ivancic, a UNHCR field officer for the Vitina Municipality; Ivan Todorovic, a UNHCR returns officer for the Gnjilane Region; Mikhail Krasnoschekov, a UNMIK local community officer for minorities; and Maj. Frederick Nutter, executive officer for 2-63, conduct the weekly Serb Leaders Meeting, Feb. 12.

may be blocked, and we will be isolated again as in the past," he said.

Nutter assured him that freedom of movement in other municipalities was not as bad as it was portrayed in the media.

The weekly meeting is one of several opportunities for KFOR, UNMIK, and NGOs to discuss and update each other on incidents and concerns within each other's spheres of influence.

"Interaction with KFOR is important as a counterpart of the people," said Lucia Donaggio, a representative of Caritas, an Italian NGO. "We now see improvement, increased security and meetings like this that represent minority concerns."

Her coworker Monica Buonomo added, "When we first came here the population had a different opinion of soldiers. (The adults) were scared, but I realized that children are more accepting of soldiers. Dealing with children there is a shorter contact point."

The cooperation between the various agencies has helped.

"The Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe role has decreased as elections and governments are established and represented. UNMIK then picks it up," Nutter said. "You can see the progress in places like the Vitina

municipality. The new construction is the result of NGOs and (International government organizations) playing a role in helping progress in these municipalities."

Peacekeeper profile



David Watts

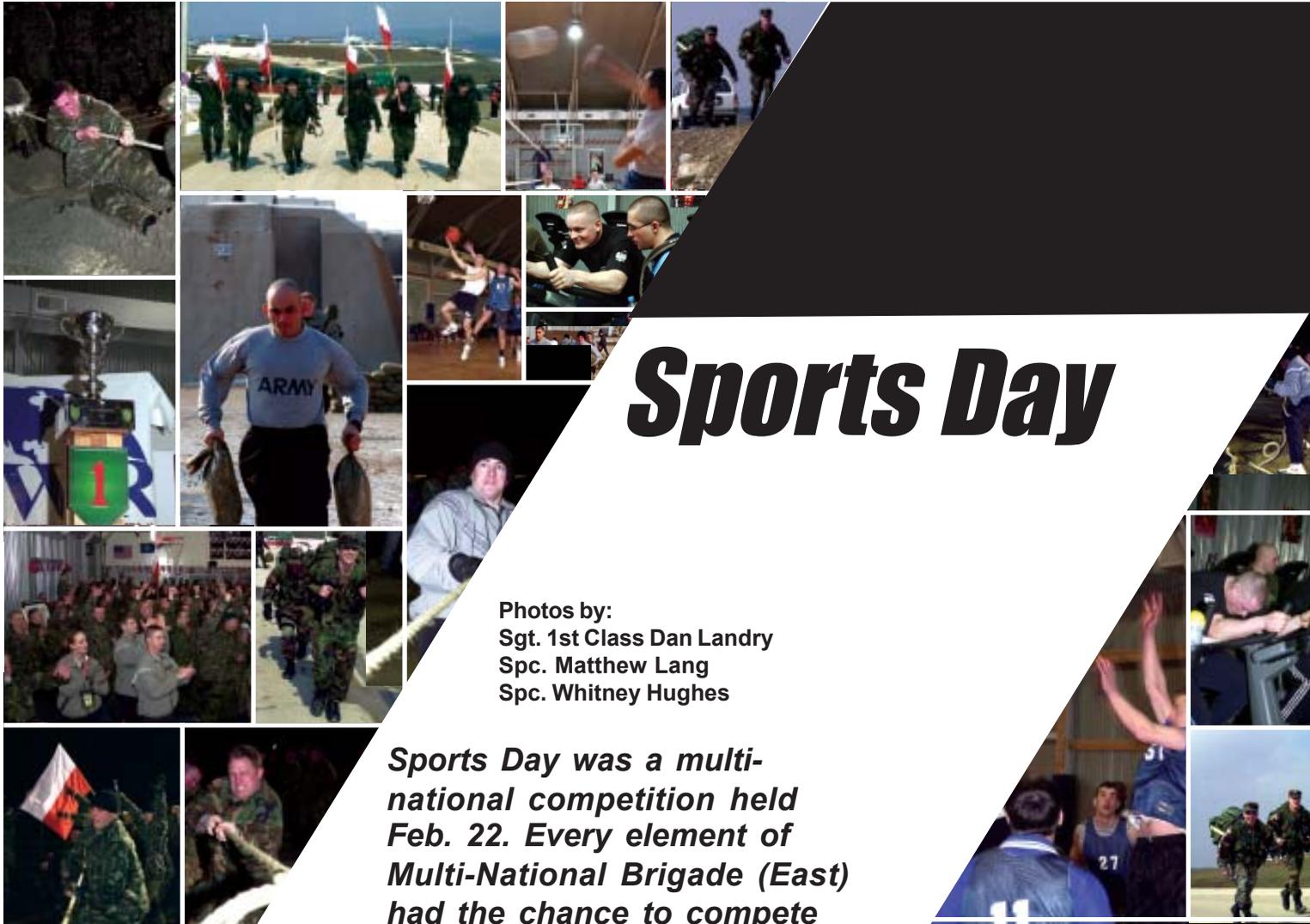
Age: 26
Rank: Sgt.
MOS: 11B, infantryman
Unit: 2-2 Inf.

Camp: Monteith

Hometown: Bound Brook, N.J.

Why did you join the Army? To get my life straight and it is a family tradition.

What advice would you give to soldiers coming into Kosovo? Stay positive. Stay focused. Try the chicken.



Sports Day

Photos by:
Sgt. 1st Class Dan Landry
Spc. Matthew Lang
Spc. Whitney Hughes

Sports Day was a multi-national competition held Feb. 22. Every element of Multi-National Brigade (East) had the chance to compete for the Commander's Cup. The winners of the six events were:

***Basketball: 82nd Engineers
Ruck March: POLUKRBAT
Volleyball: POLUKRBAT
Bike, Run, Press: Task Force Dragon
Sandbag Race: 13th Tactical Group (Russians)
Tug-Of-War: 13th TG***



From left, Lt. Col. Serhii Karnaushenko, deputy commander of POLUKRBAT and Maj. Waldmar Makowski, chief of logistics accept the Commander's Cup.

The Sand Bag Race

Left: Spc. Kyle Sherwood, an infantryman with the 2-2 Inf., passes a sand bag to Sgt. Christopher Echevarria, also with 2-2 Inf., during the Sandbag Race.

Below: Two teams sprint off the line to get all 60 sand bags.



The 10K Ruck March



Above: The POLUKRBAT team marches to a first place finish.

Left: Staff Sgt. Guillermon Fonseca (left) and 2nd Lt. Tyler Gence, both of 2-63, keep a steady pace.

Right: Cpt. Jamey Friel (left) and Cpt. Michael Brian, both of 2-2 Inf., sprint the last 100 meters.



Volleyball

Right: The POLUKRBAT volleyball team dominates their opponent, the ASG/TFMF team.

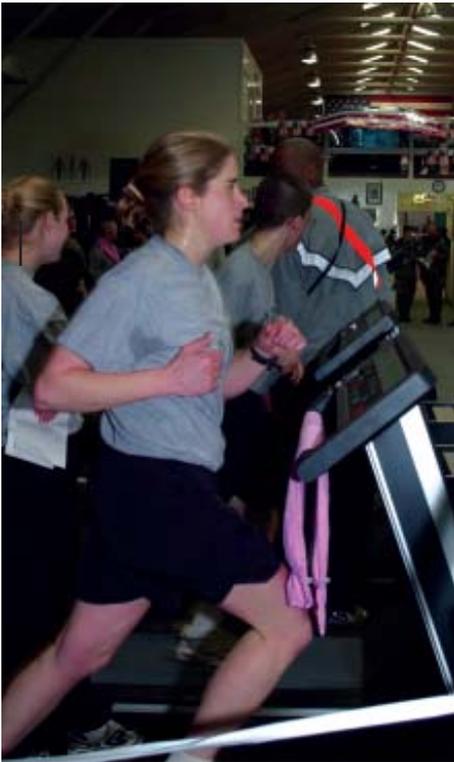


Bike, Run and Press

Right: 1st Lt. Erin McGill, Spc. Perlacia Monzon, Spc. Justin Winger, and Sgt. Bryan Morr pedal hard on stationary bikes.



Below: Spc. Justin Winger, with the 201st LTF, gets ready to press.



1st Lt. Erin McGill, with the 201st LTF, steps it out on a treadmill.





Above: Spc. Blake Vogt, of the 793rd MPs, drives to the basket.

Right: Pfc. Carlo Arvizu, with HHC, 3rd Brigade, dribbles past a defender.

Basketball



Below: Sgt. 1st Class George Croom leads the 793rd MP tug-of-war team.

Tug-of-War





From left, Agim Beqiri, chief of staff of the local KPC detachment, translates for Spc. Roberto Miranda, a medic with 2-63, during the emergency medical response class given in Vitina, Feb. 10.

2-63 medics train Kosovo Protection Corps in basic first aid techniques

Photo and story by Christopher Gookin

VITINA, Kosovo—The students filed in to their desks in an orderly fashion and immediately sat down, hands folded, staring straight ahead.

This was not a typical classroom. It was a Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) training room.

Earlier this month, two medics from the 2-63 Armor Battalion provided advanced first aid training to 15 members of the Kosovo Protection Corps and four firefighters from the Vitina Municipal Fire Department.

The KPC (in Kosovo it is known as the TMK or Trupat e Mbrojtjes se Kosovoes) was provisionally established in 1999 and formally recognized in 2000 in an attempt to provide former members of the Kosovo Liberation Army an opportunity for employment.

There are about 3,000 active members and 2,000 reserve members who comprise five regional emergency response units, one rapid response unit and units specializing in communications, engineering, search and rescue and chemical decontamination.

In accordance with the KFOR peacekeeping mission, 2-63 has made a deliberate attempt to increase the professionalism of the KPC as a community agency capable of responding to natural disasters and civil emergencies, said 1st Lt. Gregory Tomlin, information operations officer for 2-63. The battalion has focused its training on responsibilities prescribed by the Joint Implementation Committee, which serves as the primary facilitator for KFOR-KPC relations.

The medical platoon's training with the local KPC detachment is part of the ongoing partnership.

For the recent training session, the medics and translators gathered the several pieces of equipment needed to begin the instruction as the students opened notebooks and eagerly talked amongst themselves.

"One of the difficulties is not knowing the level of care and using a translator to relay the information," said Spc. Thomas Kerns, a medic with 2-63.

The class started with a short history of why the U.S. military uses the Combat Lifesaver program to ensure that several members of each unit would be trained in emergency

medical procedures on the battlefield.

"This class, along with other planned classes, forums, and multiethnic Medical Civilian Assistance Programs with Serb and Albanian health care providers, are designed to bolster the authority and responsibility of the local health care providers," said 2nd Lt. Tyler Gence, of the 2-63 Medical Platoon. "We want them to succeed. We want them to take ownership of the medical programs and issues that challenge their communities."

With the aid of a translator, the medics began by identifying the contents of an emergency aid bag and their purpose. Students crowded around the instructors to get a better view of items like intravenous solution bags, splints, and oxygen masks that fold into a small plastic kit.

"This is similar to the standard Combat Lifesaver class, but it has been adapted for civilian applications," said Spc. Roberto Miranda, a medic with 2-63.

Calling for a short break, the medics adjusted their Power Point presentation and prepared for the next phase of instruction.

"We want to show them enough skills to take home with them, for the things they'll probably see like car accidents, or to be able to help their neighbors" said Kerns.

The next phase of instruction centered on the circulatory system. The students paired up and put the morning's instruction to use by checking respiration and how and where to find a pulse.

"You learn by doing, so we'll have them do hands-on exercises after each of the phases of instruction" said Kerns.

After, the class received a short lecture on the equipment and capabilities of the ambulance used by KFOR. They reviewed each piece of gear including the backboard and portable oxygen tanks, as well as demonstrating patient loading techniques.

"This is very good," said Fadil Islami, a member of the KPC. "It is our pleasure to have more contact and to have more meetings with KFOR. It is of great interest to practice to see how capable we are."

Chief of Staff continued from page 2

battalion staff counterparts provide us with the tools and interface that allow us to all work toward this common goal

The collective results of our multinational brigade have been rather significant. Our presence, hard work and impartiality are making a difference. Although fragile, the environment in Kosovo is more safe and secure. Violent crime and incidents in Kosovo such as murder, kidnapping, ethnic assault, rape, arson, shootings, bombing and explosions fell by over one third from 2001 to 2002.

Successful elections occurred in the fall of 2002 and it appears that democracy is beginning to take root in Kosovo, demonstrating progress in the transition of responsibilities to civil authority.

Despite this success, challenges for the staff and for the soldiers and leaders of MNB(E) remain. As we approach our transition of authority in July, our force structure will be

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reduced, reflecting the new environment in Kosovo, one that is more safe and secure than when we arrived in November, but still fraught with danger and risk. The MNB(E) staff has worked diligently with the battalions to ensure that the reduction is coordinated and that information is gathered, estimates and courses of actions are prepared and wargamed, and recommendations are provided to the commander for decision before the orders and plans are published.

And of course no plan is perfect. We continue to build upon and refine the existing plans based upon after action reviews of our operations to date. Over the next several months we will continue to build our staff team, provide information, prepare estimates, make recommendations and supervise the execution of an important mission. A mission that fittingly mirrors the motto of the First Infantry Division – No Mission Too Difficult, No Sacrifice Too Great.

DUTY FIRST!

Gunners have all the fun

2-2 Inf. soldiers sharpen skills on Bradley Fighting Vehicles

Photo and story by Master Sgt. John Barr

CAMP MONTEITH, Kosovo – Being a gunner for a Bradley Fighting Vehicle is an opportunity some young infantrymen would kill for, in a manner of speaking.

Just ask Pfc. John Sabo, a grunt with Alpha Company, 2-2 Infantry Battalion, a former Bradley driver who got his chance while deployed here in Kosovo.

“I like shooting the Bradley,” said Sabo, during a recent gunnery practice at Falcon 4 range. “Shooting is definitely better than driving because you feel more like part of the show going on.”

And the gunner is the main attraction, according to Sgt. Brandon Knicely, a Bradley commander with Company A.

“That guy has to jump up in there and go down range rock steady,” Knicely said. “He has to know that gun system so he can up load it, down load it, and fix malfunctions.”

The Bradley is a light armored fighting vehicle used by infantry to maneuver to critical points on a battlefield. For scout and armored cavalry units, the Bradley is used for reconnaissance, screening, and security missions. The vehicle is named after Gen. Omar Bradley, who in World War II was known as the “GI General.”

A crew of three – the commander, driver and gunner – operates the Bradley, which can transport an additional squad of six. The crew provides for the “care and feeding” of the light armor “horse” of today’s mechanized infantry.

“The gunner has to know a lot. He has pre-checks even before drawing ammo on all the weapons systems,” Knicely said.

The gunner becomes proficient with the 7.62 mm coaxial machine gun, the 25mm main gun and the tube-launched, optically tracked, wire command-link guided anti-heavy tank weapon system or TOW, he added.

To develop the skills to be a Bradley gunner, the training starts long before a trip to the range. First, an infantryman must train on crew proficiency and laser targeting skills. Next, he is paired with a Bradley commander and they train together on a simulator called the Mobile/Unit Conduct of Fire Trainer or M/U-COFT system.

Their success on the simulator depends on their teamwork, Knicely said.

“The simulator teaches basic and advanced teaming and conduct of fire procedures,” Knicely said. “Crew coordination, use of the gun station, selection of ammo, and coordination of commands between the BC and the gunner are all learned before going to the range.”

Training on the range for track vehicle crews is known as “training tables.” They are designed to establish a common standard for skills and evaluation for individuals, squads, and platoons. There are a total of 12 training tables, but here in Kosovo Multi-National Brigade East can only train through Table 7.

For the gunner, Table 1 and 2 develop skills with the laser targeting system and progresses to Table 5, which includes live fire. Tables 3 and 4 continue training on individual and crew weapons for all members of a platoon.

Incorporated in the tables are crew practice team tasks,



Sgt. Paul Busby, of Company A, 2-2 Infantry, with a Bradley Fighting Vehicle following a day of gunnery practice on Falcon 4 range in January 2003.

which begin at Table 5. Table 5 also begins live fire with the 7.62 mm machine gun on stationary targets from stationary positions.

Table 6 continues live fires, targeting and shooting with the 25mm main gun. Tables 7 and 8 increase the complexity of tasks.

All crew members must complete and pass the Bradley Gunnery Skills Test (BGST), a 15-task proficiency exam of skills, knowledge and abilities, according to 1st Sgt. Peter Smith, of Company A. He stressed that the overall training of the crew is the responsibility of each Bradley commander.

Bradley commanders like Knicely are eager to teach soldiers like Sabo. In a place where maintaining a safe and secure environment is the priority, they understand that making time for combat readiness is just as important.

“I like to see a soldier go out there and learn something new and be proficient at it, that’s teaching him,” Knicely said.

U.S. KFOR medics and local doctors provide free medical aid in Zitinje

Photo and story by Spc. Catherine Caruso

ZITINJE, Kosovo— U.S. KFOR and local medical professionals provided free medical care to residents during a daylong clinic in Zitinje on Feb. 24.

Doctors and medical personnel from the Task Force Medical Falcon hospital at Camp Bondsteel and the medical platoon at Camp Magrath cooperated with Dr. Fadil Zuka, Dr. Gazmend Halili, and Dr. Gjylsime Qamilia from the Vitina Health House, Dr. Srender Gajhi, an Ophthalmologist from Jerli Sadovina, and Dr. Jelica Krcmartic, who has a practice in Klokot, to provide medical assistance, dental care and eye exams to over 300 people at the Zitinje secondary school.

In all, 258 patients underwent medical screenings, 20 patients received dental care, and 35 patients were given eye exams over the course of the day.

Medical Platoon Leader 2nd Lt. Tyler Gence said KFOR soldiers from D Company at Camp Magrath specifically requested the clinic in Zitinje to thank residents for their especially close cooperation with KFOR's mission during the past few weeks.

Local doctors also volunteered their services to the local community.

"There's not much incentive for them to be here," Gence said. "We try to provide them with a little bit of professional development, but they are really just here to help."

The civilian doctors do not receive any pay or other compensation for the services they donate to the community during such clinics.

Many of these medical professionals have also participated in recent free clinics in Smyrna and Mogila, and that raised some concerns among KFOR personnel that some Serb and Albanian residents were refusing services from doctors of other ethnicities.

Gence said he hopes patients participating in the clinics will see that their doctors are all professionals who will treat everyone without regard to their ethnicity. He said he asks patients to respect the doctors as professionals by not refusing their assistance.

"They are all members of our team," Gence said.

Muharrem Haziri, an Albanian, brought his niece, Gjilan, to the clinic for a mild case of influenza, and said he was happy with the care she received from the Serbian doctor, Krcmartic. She prescribed antibiotics, and a pain reliever and fever reducer for Gjilan.

Haziri said he appreciated the care because he usually



Dr. Jelica Krcmartic conducts a medical screening with a resident during a medical clinic in Zitinje, Feb. 24. Krcmartic was one of five local doctors who volunteered to treat more than 300 patients during the daylong clinic, which was facilitated by U.S. KFOR medical personnel.

has to travel to Vitina to see the doctor, and had no reservations about seeing a Serbian for medical care.

"She's a doctor, and if she's doing her job well, I'm fine (with her care)," he said.

Zuka said he sees Albanian and Serb patients in his practice at the Vitina Health House, including some of Dr. Krcmartic's patients, since she works in Klokot but goes home to Mogila at night.

Krcmartic said she hopes residents will see the clinic as a gesture of goodwill to Zitinje's residents and other Albanians. She worked at the ambulencia in Zitinje before the war.

"People should know a doctor is a doctor. Medical ethics say we should treat without regard to ethnicity," said Krcmartic.

While the doctors volunteered their time to help the local population, it is important for people to support their local medical professionals, as well, said 1st Lt. Greg Tomlin, information officer for the 2-63 Armor Battalion at Camp Magrath.

Medical professionals are an important civil institution, he said, and their success can only improve the health of the community.

"We can provide the security, some resources, and some peace of mind if they need it, but really... we're here for the local doctors," Tomlin said. "They are all true professionals."

Gence said that the most recent free clinic was the most diverse to date. In all, 26 local and KFOR medical personnel participated, as well as seven Albanian and Serb interpreters, two KPS officers, and a security squad from the 4-3 Air Defense Artillery, stationed at Camp Magrath

Kicking the habit

Smoking cessation programs offer alternatives to quitting cold turkey

Story by Spc. Catherine Caruso

Illustrations by Sgt. Erin Elliott & Spc. Whitney Hughes



Do you have what it takes to be a quitter? Or are you just blowing smoke?

Military personnel can get help quitting cigarettes faster than ever through the Smoking Cessation Program, a multi-pronged approach to helping smokers become ex-smokers at Task Force Medical Falcon.

"I know there are a lot of smokers out there, because I see a lot of butts," said Lt. Col. Domingo Gonzalez, chief of primary care at the hospital.

The once three-session weekly seminar is now condensed into a single convenient introductory session, offered at 1200 the first and third Sunday of each month. Follow-up visits are held at the convenience of the patient during regular sick call hours.

"The one thing people really care about, is 'What's in it for me,'" said Spc. Patrick Crisostomo, a licensed practical nurse and NCOIC of the smoking cessation program.

Participants will definitely feel the difference right away, especially in their wallet.

A carton of Marlboro cigarettes is \$32.55 at the Camp Bondsteel Post Exchange. A single pack is \$3.85. Nicotine release patches and gum are available over the counter, but a two-week supply of either smoking cessation aid is \$42.95.

In contrast, the Smoking Cessation Program will

prescribe the nicotine release patch or the nicotine-free medication Zyban to U.S. military personnel free of charge. British troops can also receive the patch. For civilians and others, prescriptions may be filled outside the hospital or the TFMF staff can recommend other forms of therapy.

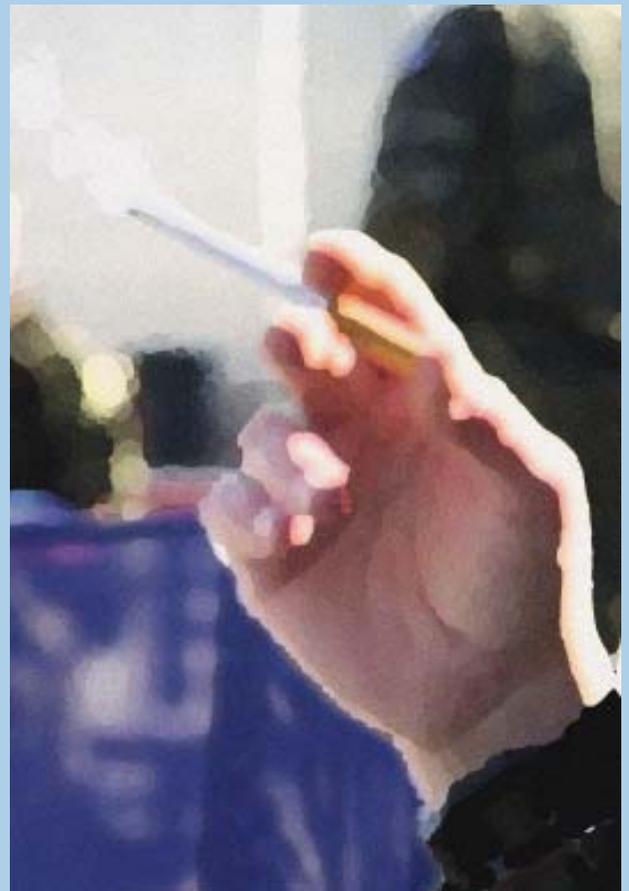
Crisostomo said saving money is the number one reason people sign up, but while the ever-climbing cost of cigarettes and free medication encourages people to participate, he tries to focus on the health benefits once they arrive for the class.

According to the American Cancer Society, smokers who quit by age 35 avoid 90 percent of the risks attributed to smoking. Those who quit at age 35 live eight and a half years longer, on average, than those who don't, and quitting by age 50 reduces your risk by half of dying in the next 15 years.

"Some (smokers) say they knew someone who smoked and nothing happened to them, but the chances are greater they will be affected later on," Crisostomo said.

The average one-to-two pack a day smoker will lose five to eight years off their life compared to non-smokers. That doesn't sound too bad when you're 20 or 30, Crisostomo said, but you might feel differently when you are 60.

It takes a week to break a nicotine addiction. The harder



part is breaking the habit.

"This is a mental and a physical addiction," Gonzalez said. "Medication helps, but if you don't want to quit all the medication in the world isn't going to help you."

Gonzalez said studies suggest that nicotine gum and behavior modification are the most effective methods to stop smoking. But motivation is the most important factor.

"The bottom line is, if the patient doesn't want to quit, it won't work," he said.

Motivation means showing up, and about a dozen people a month do just that. The staff of the smoking cessation program would like to see more, though.

If you've been smoking for 20 or 30 years, said Gonzalez, expecting to quit after a two-hour class and a 20 to 30-minute physician visit is probably unrealistic.

"But most, even after 20 to 30 minutes, are ready to cut back on how much they smoke," Gonzalez said.

Quitting isn't easy, and it is not unusual to see people try several times before they succeed, Crisostomo said.

"If you quit before, and you've started again, you didn't really quit," he said. The staff recognizes that stress is a major factor in most relapses.

"We try to give them other ways to cope," Crisostomo said.

Patients in the Smoking Cessation Program can expect help assessing lifestyle habits and behaviors that put them at risk of falling back into the habit, as well as "trigger points," usually stressful situations that send them reaching for a pack.

The first line of defense is avoidance of situations where you habitually, or are driven to, smoke.

"People will quit, and then they'll be in a stressful situation and go 'Oh, I need that cigarette,'" Crisostomo said.

The second line of defense is finding other ways to cope. Combat Stress specialists teach stress control methods like muscle relaxation exercises and breathing techniques.

Behavior modification means identifying the situations that trigger you to smoke, then changing those routines. For example, if you habitually have a morning cup of coffee and a cigarette, you might change the time and place you drink your coffee, or skip it entirely and develop a new routine, like taking a morning walk instead.

Another method is to develop a system of penalties and rewards.

"Maybe you did experiments in college with rats, trained them to do or not to do something with an electric shock?" Gonzalez said. "Well..."

"No, we're not going to do that here," Crisostomo said.

But the principal is the same. Like Pavlov's dogs, which were trained to drool at the sound of a bell by teaching them to associate the bell with meals, positive and negative feedback can help reinforce positive or negative behavior in humans, Gonzalez said.

And yes, there is a PowerPoint presentation.

"You always get the picture of the lungs," Crisostomo said.

Finally, patients meet with Gonzalez to discuss their personal medical history and options for treatment. If they are eligible, he'll also dispense about a week's worth of any medication prescribed.

"We'll reevaluate the patient at that point, and continue follow-up care. You can't just give patients medicine and expect them to be successful," Gonzalez said.

In other words, don't try showing up at sick call to get a prescription for a box of nicotine patches. They may be approved as an over-the-counter drug in the U.S., but participation in an approved smoking cessation program is the only way the Department of Defense is going to pay for them in this case.

Otherwise it's just you and a plate of cold turkey- an equally valid way to quit, Gonzalez said, but even the toughest cookies can benefit from the coping advice dispensed in the initial class.



First time I quit smoking...

Soldiers share pain and joy of kicking the habit

Story and photos by Spc. Catherine Caruso

If you are trying to quit smoking, Sgt. Josh Quinton, a paralegal in the Multi-National Brigade (East) Judge Advocate General's Office, says he feels your pain. Or at least, he did.

"I tell you, when I first quit...man!" Quinton said. Like most smokers, he quit "about 13,000 times."

"But the last time, the most successful time, was when I had my son," he said. "I didn't want him growing up around it. I wanted to live to see him grow up."

Smoking can kill you? OK, there is no new news there.

But smoking is a military health concern for reasons beyond the obvious future health of troops.

Smoking impacts readiness. Studies show smokers get sick more often and are more prone to training injuries.

A recent study of Air Force recruits revealed smoking was the single most significant indicator of attrition in basic trainees. And they can't run as fast. Just ask Sgt. Tony Devine, an emergency medical technician in the intensive care ward at Task Force Medical Falcon. As a medic, he knew all the risks better than most. But he smoked anyway.

"I guess when you are a medic you deal with death all the time, so you think you're indestructible. That's the mentality," he said. "I was smoking for pleasure, to hold something in my hand. It was a social thing."

Devine quit when he saw the toll his three- to-four-pack a week habit was taking on his Army Physical Fitness Test score.

"When I started, my two-mile run time gradually started to decline, even though I was working harder," he said.

"I started to crave a cigarette at the end of the run, as well, and I said 'that's not good,'" he recalled.

Within four months of smoking his last cigarette, he had shaved a minute and forty seconds off his overall two-mile run, he said.

Devine is not alone. In addition to the direct financial benefit of quitting, the Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine's Web site www.hooah4health.com quotes a 1986 military magazine story that claimed the average difference between smokers' and nonsmokers' two-mile run times was about a minute a mile. Yet nearly a



Sgt. Joshua Quinton, a paralegal with the MNB(E) JAG office, quit smoking because he didn't want his son growing up around it.

quarter of all Americans smoke, Center for Disease Control statistics indicate. Military members are about in line with the national average, the site states.

“And now I save all that money,” Devine said, estimating he spent about \$1,500 a year on cigarettes.

Caring for smokers is also expensive. According to the American Cancer Society, up to one in five smokers die of a chronic progressive lung disease, like emphysema (a disease which debilitates victims by reducing their ability to breathe for years before it finally kills them.)

The American Cancer Society also claims smoking doubles your risk of heart attack, and cites cigarettes as a major risk factor for a lengthy list of cancers. None are cheap illnesses to treat, nor are they much fun to have.

The surgeon general, in a 1988 report, said smoking was a factor in one of every six deaths in the U.S.

On the other hand, there was also good news: in 1985, half of all American adults who had ever smoked had quit.

The American Cancer Society offers statistics that say it’s never too late to quit. According to data published on www.cancer.org, smokers who quit by age 35 avoid 90 percent of the risks attributed to smoking. Those who quit at age 35 live eight and a half years longer on average than those who don’t. Quitting by age 50 cuts your risk in half of dying in the next 15 years.

The most common reasons for not quitting are probably fear of withdrawal and weight gain. But Devine and Quinton both said withdrawal symptoms pass fairly quickly.

Quinton described himself as “more easily irritated than usual” for about a week. He distracted himself from cravings by drinking water and thinking of his son, his reason for quitting in the first place.

Devine felt a little shaky for a few days, but replaced cigarettes with physical activity.

“You get tempted, but you just have to find other things to keep you occupied,” he said.

In his case, gum and Tootsie Rolls served as cigarette substitutes for the first few days. He said he gained a couple pounds, but felt so much better.

“You can get over the physical addiction to nicotine in about a week, maybe a week or two,” said Spc. Patrick Crisostomo, a licensed practical nurse and NCOIC of the smoking cessation program at Task Force Medical Falcon. “The hardest thing is the habit.”

To break a hardcore smoking habit, here are a few more tips: brush your teeth, or sip water with or without a straw.

Keep your hands busy – carry something to fiddle with, like a



Sgt. Tony Devine, an emergency medical technician in the intensive care ward at Task Force Med Falcon, knew it was time to quit when he started to crave cigarettes at the end of a run.

string of beads, coins or marbles. Get something to chew on- hard candy, lollipops, gum, crunchy vegetables and even toothpicks.

Do more PT: brisk walks, pushups, running up and down a flight of stairs are all ways to get a craving out of your system.

The society recommends reducing cravings by eating several small meals a day to keep your blood sugar level stable. As a last resort, it suggests taking 10 slow, deep breaths. Hold the last one while striking a match and stubbing it out in an ash can as if it were a cigarette.

Scenes of Kosovo



Master Sgt. Phillip Gilbert, HHC, 201st LTF, gives a local boy a sled ride in the village of Jezerce.

Photo by 1st Lt. Roman G. Esqueda, HHC, 201st LTF