

Guardian East

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United in Freedom

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Sept. 11: Experiencing history



By Brig. Gen. Douglas E. Lute

For the World War II generation, December 7th, 1941, is the one day everyone remembers. They know where they were, with whom, what they were doing. They remember the shock, the disbelief, and the consequences that followed. December 7th – the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor that launched America into World War II – is a historic day that many older Americans experienced personally, and remember personally.

On September 11th last year America again suffered a surprise attack, even more deadly than the one on Pearl Harbor over sixty years ago. That’s right: more Americans died in those few hours last year in New York City, Pennsylvania and at the Pentagon than at Pearl Harbor. This time most of the casualties were civilians.

Just as in 1941, the attacks of September 11th launched America into war. But this war is different: this enemy is not a country or a group of countries; this enemy has no conventional army; this enemy isn’t after territory or riches. This enemy aims to destroy the American way of life.

After one year, the war on terrorism has begun to take shape; it is global, unconventional, complex, and will take years. For most of us in the military, the war on terrorism will dominate the rest of our professional lives.

Today we remember the victims and heroes of September

11th. We can perhaps best remember them by recalling our own experiences of 9/11. We all lived that day, experienced it, have our own memories.

The attacks of 9/11 last year personally touched my family and me. We lived then at Fort Myer, Virginia, just a mile from the Pentagon. My wife had flown to New York City on business that day and as traffic stalled on the bridges into Manhattan, she stepped out of her taxi just as the south tower of the World Trade Center tumbled into rubble. The plane that attacked the Pentagon flew directly over our house on Fort Myer, just after our daughter had left for school. I had left my Pentagon office early that morning and was midway over the Atlantic with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs enroute to a NATO meeting in Hungary when the attacks occurred. Once we figured out what was happening, our plane reversed course, picked up a F15 escort, and headed back to Washington.

On the way home we flew over New York City, where the unusual absence of all airplanes and the 5000-foot plume of smoke left us with an empty, helpless feeling. On return to the Pentagon, we toured the site of the attack there, stepping over remnants of the plane, firefighters still hard at work. These personal experiences ensure that I will never forget September 11th.

All Americans have personal memories of that day. I ask that sometime today – on this first Patriot Day – you sit with a friend and share you memories, your thoughts. I think for many of us the full meaning of 9/11 is not yet clear. We understand that this was tragedy and history, but we are still too close to the event to fully grasp it. That is the way it is when we are close to a historical event; it takes time to gain perspective.

I believe the best way to commemorate the victims and the heroes is for each of us to remember 9/11 in the context of our own experience that day. Remember where you were, with whom, what you were doing, what you felt. When each of us remembers his own personal 9/11, we’ll also remember those we honor today.

On the cover: Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. P.J. Farlin
An American flag lies among the mementoes left by German citizens who marched from Ramstein Village, Germany, to Ramstein Air Base on Sept. 14, 2001, as a show of support for the victims of the terrorist attacks in the United States on Sept. 11, 2001, and those who mourn them. Immediately following the march, wreaths, flowers and candles are laid at the base of the sign at the west gate of the base.

SEE THE PHOTO OF THE DAY
www.tffalcon.hqusareur.army.mil

Guardian East

Brig. Gen. Douglas E. Lute	Maj. Gordon Cooper	1st Lt. Dave Williams	Spc. Patrick Rodriguez	
Maj. Mark Ballesteros	Capt. Dave Domingo	Master Sgt. Mark Van Leer	Spc. Kate McIsaac	
		Staff Sgt. Keith Robinson	Pfc. Lisa Forbes	
			Spc. Jasmine Chopra Spc. Rebecca M. Grzyba	

[About Guardian East](#)

Maj. Gen. John R.S. Batiste talks

The new commander of the 1st Infantry Division visited his soldiers deployed to Kosovo Aug. 29-30. This is what he had to say.

GE: *What is your impression of how 2nd Brigade is doing in Kosovo?*

Batiste: I couldn't be more proud of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team. They've done a phenomenal job. To Brig. Gen. Lute and the entire team of officers, noncommissioned officers and soldiers; you're doing a tremendous job. I'm seeing a unit that's disciplined, grounded in the fundamentals of training doctrine. They're doing day-to-day operations right, and at the same time they're training. They are doing it as well here as we would anywhere.

GE: *What is your leadership style, and what is your command philosophy?*

Batiste: My priorities are training, readiness, and caring for soldiers and their families. I trust people. I want a division where there is a climate (in which) leaders are not afraid to innovate, to try new things. It's important for senior leaders to allow their subordinates to experiment, make mistakes and get better. That's how you learn.

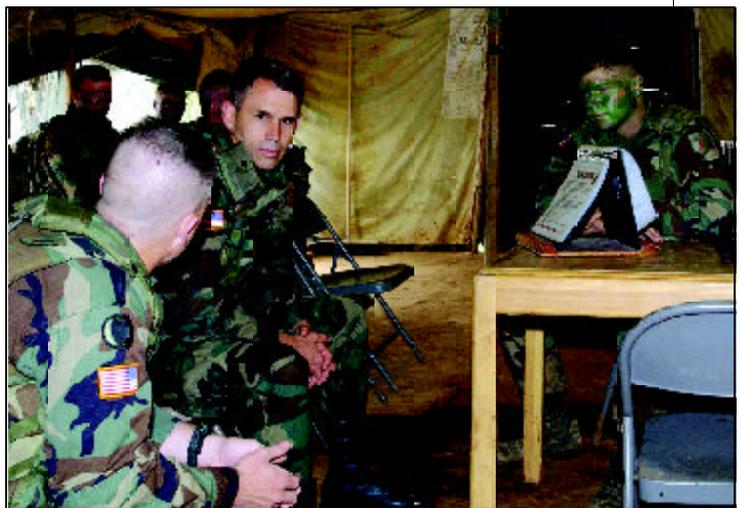
GE: *How has peacekeeping changed since 1999?*

Batiste: In many respects it hasn't changed at all. It's still the same basics, the same principles, the same doctrine that we do so well. ... Every time we do it (a peacekeeping mission), we build on the experiences of those who have gone before us and we get better and better.

GE: *What's the greatest challenge for soldiers deployed in Kosovo?*

Batiste: The issue at the moment is really crime, corruption and getting different kinds of police functions turned over to the right authorities. ... Whatever it takes to support the Balkans, that's what the 1st Infantry Division is going to do. The challenge will be once this mission is over. In the case of 4A in November and 4B in May, we will get them back to the central region, reintegrated and retrained. You've got to remember, our nation is at war and the 1st Infantry Division needs to be prepared to be a part of that in any way we can. ... We have an obligation to be trained and ready. Not knowing what's going to be asked of us tomorrow or next week or next month, we must be a division that is deployable, trained in basic tasks and ready to go. We're forward deployed in a central region, which puts us in a very strategic location, in some cases, closer to the fight than others.

"YOU'VE GOT TO REMEMBER, OUR NATION IS AT WAR AND THE 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION NEEDS TO BE PREPARED TO BE A PART OF THAT IN ANY WAY WE CAN..."



Top: Maj. Gen. John R.S. Batiste, 1st Infantry Division commander, is briefed by Capt. Jim Crawford, commander of Company A, 1-26 Infantry. Above: Crawford and Task Force 1-26 Infantry commander Lt. Col. Wayne Grigsby brief Batiste before a combined-arms live fire exercise that helped soldiers from Camp Monteith maintain warfighting skills during this peacekeeping mission. Left: Batiste on his way to the Falcon 4 range.



Photos by Spc. Patrick Rodriguez

Soldiers sifted through wreckage

"IT WAS HORRIFIC. THERE IS JUST NO WAY TO DESCRIBE WHAT IT WAS LIKE."

On most days, Staff Sgt. Joseph Haskins, Sgt. Amonds Mack and Pfc. Wesley Blackwell all of the 54th Quartermaster Company based at Fort Lee, Va., are on point to process remains at the morgue on Camp Bondsteel — but one year ago today, they walked into the Pentagon and started recovering bodies.

As the only active-duty mortuary affairs unit in the Army, these three soldiers, now attached to the 299th Logistics Task Force, spent more than 15 days sifting through tons of debris and searching for personal effects.

"It was horrific," Mack said. "There is just no way to describe what it was like."

Haskins arrived three days after a plane crash that destroyed a portion of the Pentagon and killed 125 people inside the building and 59 passengers aboard American Airlines flight 77.

"The first thing I saw was the giant American flag hanging from the side of the building," he said.

"It was chaotic. There were all different groups set up to search for victims, provide emergency relief and everything else. You train to prepare for something like this," Mack said. "But it was just horrific."

The building was gutted and everything was ripped from the walls, Haskins said.

"Several of my soldiers had a really hard time coping," he said. "My main goal was to make sure the junior enlisted soldiers were able to handle it.



Photo by Spc. Kate Mclsaac

Sgt. Amonds Mack, Pfc. Wesley Blackwell and Staff Sgt. Joseph Haskins, all of the 54th Quartermaster Company, based at Fort Lee, Va., were some of the soldiers who removed remains from the Pentagon one year ago today. All three soldiers are attached to the 299th Logistics Task Force.

"I had one soldier say she couldn't breathe through her mask when we first went in. I had to help her out of the building and get her to calm down."

"We would spend hours sifting through a huge pile of rubble," Mack said, "and just when you thought you were done — here comes the dump truck with another enormous pile."

"We worked 12 hours on and 12 hours off," Haskins said. "It always seemed that the hours you were working crawled by, but your 12 hours off just flew."

But when the down time did come, the soldiers of the 54th Quartermaster Co. said they stayed grounded by playing spades and dominoes and trying to let off the steam and stress. Coping with the tragedy and trying to get the job done was a tough balance, Haskins said.

"You get your strength from other people," he said. "It's not something you can do by yourself. We relied on each other to keep the morale up. That was the only way we could do our job."

"When we finally returned to Ft. Lee in October a lot of our soldiers went to mental health," Mack said.

"In fact, many people in our unit re-classed their MOS."

One year later, these soldiers maintain mission readiness at the top of Radar Hill in Kosovo, a long way from the Pentagon. But the experiences of last year aren't too far from their hearts.

"Every time I see pictures of ground zero, it

feels really strange," Mack said. "It was rough being there."

"I still think about it often," Haskins said. "A lot of people don't have closure. I pray for them every night. The same thing could have happened to me."

Mack and Haskins said they plan on watching the Sept. 11 television special as a way to remember the day that changed them both.

"Other than that, I am not planning to do much more," Haskins said.

Peacekeeper profile



name: Justin Sisak
age: 23
rank: 2nd Lt.
mos: military police platoon leader
unit: 630th Military Police Company

What is your role in MNB(E)?

Oversee the Strpce area of responsibility and work in conjunction with Polish- Ukrainian Battalion, Kosovo Police Service and UNMIK CIVPOL.

Where were you when you found out about September 11?

I was at the Officer Basic Course in Ft. Leonard Wood, Mo. I was watching the "Today" show and getting ready for work.

Coping with Sept. 11 tragedy

Beyond the deaths of thousands of innocent people, images of towers blazing and wreckage, the grief Americans suffer in terms of emotional well-being continues one year after the Sept. 11 terrorist attack.

So does the healing.

“The expression and levels of grief vary in each person,” said Capt. Daniel Middlebrooks, chaplain for Task Force 1-26 Infantry. “Some may tend to be more expressive, some quiet. Some will move on quickly, and some may have a hovering pattern for a while. The important aspect is that (grieving) is a continuous cycle. It is working through the grief process, not stopping or denying it.”

Capt. Jeffrey Burbank, chaplain for Task Force Medical Falcon, said that participating in memorial services can be a method of coping with grief while at the same time honoring the victims.

The tragedy of Sept. 11 can lead to making positive changes in one’s life, he said.

“In times of suffering, character is formed,” he said.

Capt. David Green, chaplain for Task Force 709th Military Police, said having someone to talk to – a chaplain, a social worker or just a friend – can help a person cope with tragedy.

“One of the biggest mistakes people make is that they choose to go through (crises) alone,” Green said. “They don’t want people to know they are ‘soft’ or affected, but one of the most powerful experiences is to tell others your story.”

“Suffering is part of being human. Telling others your story allows you to unload mentally and emotionally.”

Chaplains cautioned that using hate and violence against innocent people as a means of dealing with Sept. 11 events is destructive.

“There are those that will allow anger and fear to run the agendas of their lives and foolishness of their thinking,” Middlebrooks said. “Some may have used this platform to express their discrimination and prejudiced nature in a destructive way. Are those that blew up the World Trade Center different from those that fight and hurt an innocent person because he ‘looks’ like a terrorist? When it all boils down, attack on the innocent is still attack on the innocent. Wrong is still wrong.”

Chaplains, social workers and mental health professionals are available to provide guidance and encouragement to those struggling with their feelings about Sept. 11.

“Our way of life is different now,” Middlebrooks said. “Our symbols of freedom on the shores of America cannot be guarded by weapons alone but by the will of vigilance. ... You can choose to remain chained to the painful past, or you can (choose) the key of freedom and start living again.”

Peacekeeper profile



name: Waldemar Tomanek

age: 34

rank: Capt.

specialty: information officer

unit: Polish-Ukrainian Battalion

What is role in MNB(E)? I have the responsibility for changing information between my unit and Multi-National Brigade (East).

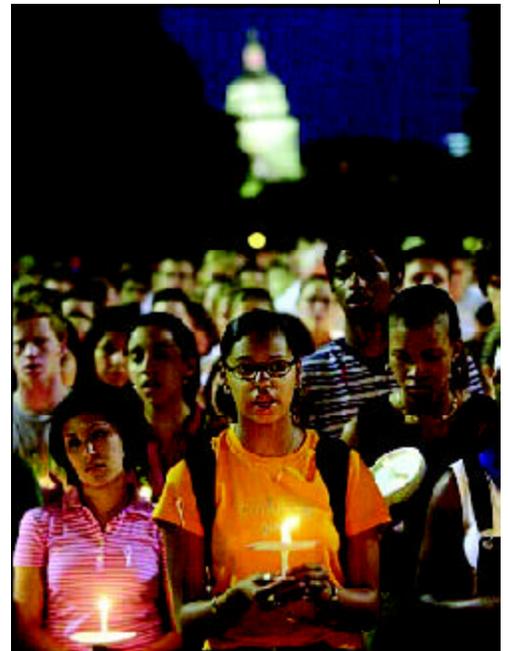
Where were you when you found out about September 11? In Poland, working at my job.



Above: Hundreds of students gathered at Ball Circle on the campus of Mary Washington College in Fredericksburg, Va., Sept 11, 2001, to pray and reflect by candlelight on the day’s events around the country. Below: Carissa Castillo, left, Shena Baker, center, and Perreda Palmer stand with fellow University of Texas students and sing at a vigil held on the south mall on the campus in Austin, Texas, Sept. 11, 2001. Photos from Time, Inc.

“WHEN I DON’T UNDERSTAND SOMETHING, I REACH UP TO HOLD GOD’S HAND, AND WE WALK TOGETHER IN SILENCE.”

- MAHATMA GANDHI



Everyone was touched

By Spc. Patrick Rodriguez

When a national tragedy strikes soldiers are called on to take immediate action, which leaves little time for reflection. But after a year, soldiers now have the time to reflect on what effects Sept. 11 had on them.

Pvt. Joseph Fagerquist of Company B, 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, stationed at Camp Monteith was in New York during the attacks and enlisted in the Army two days after.

"It was just too close for me," Fagerquist said. "It's one of the reasons I joined the Army. I'm glad that I did. My family is glad. Everybody around my neighborhood is proud of me. Plus, it's a good thing to do for your country, especially in this kind of time."

Fagerquist talked about his plans for today. "I'm going to call my friends," he said. "I'm going to call everybody that lives around me. Of course, I'm going to be a little sad. I don't know how I'm going to be. There is going to be a whole bunch of mixed feelings. I still can't believe to this day that it happened."

Pfc. Ivy Honeycutt of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-26th Infantry, said of the tragic day, "It saddened me, very much so. It changed a lot for me. When I first joined the military, I felt I was doing it for the wrong reasons. I believed that I didn't have a reason to be here. After that happened, it changed my whole outlook on the military."

"It made me feel that I had a lot of pride to serve my country, to protect my country from what happened," Honeycutt said. "This made me want to be here more. I want to be in the military more, to fight for my country and to make everything as right as possible."

Spc. Michael Thompson of Company B, 9th Engineer Battalion, said, "It think it has made me proud to be where I am. To be serving in the military and as an American, showing that through these times we all pull together as a whole, fighting back. I think something that's negative (the attacks) has also had its own positive effects on American citizens."

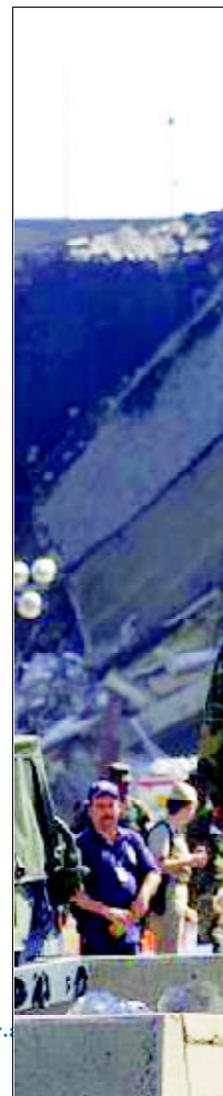
Sgt. Paul Watlington, chaplain's assistant, Task Force 1-26th Infantry, said, "As a whole, it brought life into perspective and clarity to a lot of people's lives. One minute you are at your desk working and the next minute you're gone, or your loved one, your son, your daughter, your mom or dad."

"From a spiritual aspect, which is what I look at it from a lot, life is—are you ready for the next moment to come and do you know where you're going," Watlington said.

Sgt. Jean Desilier, a truck mechanic in Company B, 299th Logistics Task Force, said, "That day just changed a lot of things. Not only for myself but for everybody that is in the military. I don't think force protection will go down; there will always be force protection from now on."

"The feeling of what happened Sept. 11 will always have a special place in my heart," Desilier said. "As a child growing up in New York, I just couldn't believe it. Walking around and being in Manhattan all the time looking up at the buildings. They are such gigantic buildings. When you go to Manhattan they were always there. To me, that space, that empty space, that is the way my heart feels, right now."

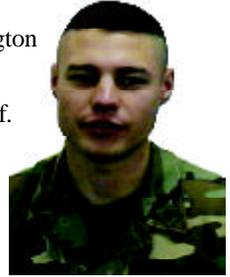
Fagerquist talked about positive changes in the past year. "I think we are going to a whole new level," he said. "Last Sept. 11 changed a lot of peoples' attitudes. It got a lot of people





First impressions

Sgt. Paul Watlington
Chaplain's assistant
HHC 1-26 Inf.



“It was a distant feeling and at the same time it was a feeling of helplessness. Then there were a lot of feelings of anger.”

Staff Sgt. Daniel Davern
415th Civil Affairs Battalion



“At first it made me feel vulnerable. Later on, it just made me real mad.”

Sgt. Jean Desilier
truck mechanic
B/299th LTF

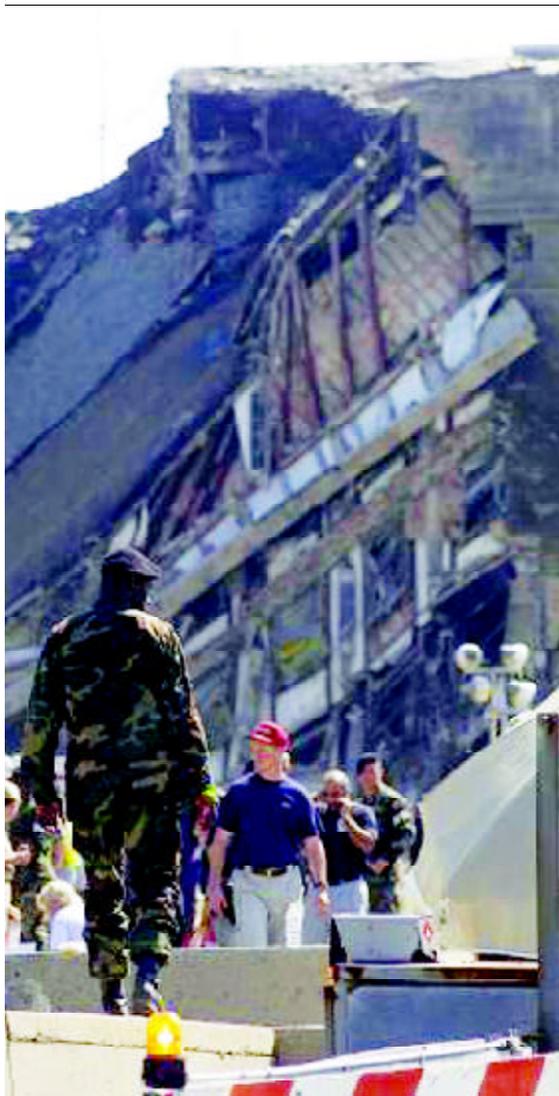


“I just couldn't believe it. As a child, I would look up at the buildings, they are such gigantic buildings. All the memory from then, just hit me. It just couldn't be. Ain't no way that building went down.”

Pfc. Ivy Honeycutt
HHC 1-26 Inf.



“It saddened me very much. It changed me a lot. When I first joined the military, I felt I was doing it for all the wrong reasons. After that happened, it changed my whole outlook.”



TOP: Greg Brown, a professional photographer, took a picture of the twin towers while on vacation in New York City. Following the attacks on Sept. 11, he grabbed any available film and jumped into a helicopter to film the disaster. Brown accidentally created this double exposure of ground zero on top of the pristine towers. Photo from www.TIME.com.
LEFT: A soldier observes the wreckage at the Pentagon days after the attack.
ABOVE: The shattered glass of a window frames the tireless efforts of the workers at ground zero. Photos from Joint Combat Camera Center.



World

Yugoslavia beats U.S. in basketball

Tens of thousands of celebrating Yugoslavs took to the streets of Belgrade on Friday after their country beat the United States 81-78 in the quarter-finals of the World Basketball Championships.

Streets around the central Republic Square were filled with frenzied fans minutes after the defending world champions rallied from a 12-point fourth-quarter deficit to defeat the "Dream Team" in Indianapolis.

The result meant that Yugoslavia play New Zealand in the semi-finals while the hosts go into classification games with fifth place the best possible showing for their efforts.

"This is a dream come true and nothing else matters from now on," said Dejan, a 23-year old student who watched the game on a giant video-screen in the city center.

A noisy but well-behaved 20,000 strong crowd whooped as Yugoslavia's shooting guards beat the Americans in the final few minutes.

— Reuters

Bush seeks help against Iraq

President Bush called the leaders of Russia, China and France today to seek their support as he tried to build an international coalition against Saddam Hussein, but he appeared, in his initial approaches, to have made little headway in convincing them that the need for action was urgent.

— New York Times

Two accused in plot to attack base

A Turkish man and his American fiancée were arrested Thursday night with explosive chemicals and five pipe bombs in their apartment, and they were held on charges of planning a terrorist attack on a major American military base in Heidelberg on or near Sept. 11, German authorities announced tonight.

— New York Times

United States

Bush plans visits to sites of attacks

President Bush, who will mark the remembrance of September 11 by visiting three terrorist attack sites, plans to start the observances in prayer and close them with a prime-time address to the nation.

The White House on Tuesday released details of the president's September 11 schedule, which will take him and first lady Laura Bush from a private morning church service in Washington, to a moment of silence observed at the White House at 8:46 a.m., EDT. That's the exact time that the first terrorist-hijacked jet slammed into the World Trade Center tower in New York. They will go from there to a ceremony at the Pentagon, which also was attacked on that fateful day.

— Associated Press

Florida primary for governor nears

With polls showing them in a near dead heat, Janet Reno and Bill McBride charged into a final weekend of hand-shaking and speech-making before the Democratic primary on Tuesday to determine which will take on Gov. Jeb Bush in November.

Ms. Reno, the United States attorney general in the Clinton administration, began a marathon weekend of campaigning today here with a hearty breakfast of fried mullet and grits at Olean's Cafe. She mingled with the regulars, signing autographs and posing for pictures, before moving on to a farmers' market in her signature red truck.

— New York Times

Military

Stop-Loss 4 releases some soldiers, adds others

The Army announced June 6 a fourth increment to the Stop-Loss program that allows it to retain soldiers in certain specialties beyond their date of separation or retirement for an open-ended period.

While the new call will keep about 260 soldiers on active duty who had potential separation or retirement dates between now and Sept. 30, it releases another 370 who had been impacted by previous Stop-Loss decisions.

Stop-Loss continues to retain about 12,000 active, Reserve and National Guard soldiers.

"Stop-Loss is necessary to retain the critical skills needed in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Noble Eagle," said Lt. Col. Bob Ortiz, chief of Enlisted Professional Development, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G1. "The key word is critical. These are skills where we have found a need to retain soldiers to support a myriad of operational requirements since Sept. 11th."

— Army News Service

RC troops to stay on active duty

For the first time since the Vietnam War, the Pentagon will keep National Guard and reserve troops on active duty for as long as two years. About 15,000 reservists — the vast majority of whom are in the Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard — have been notified that their current tours of duty could be extended to up to 24 months. Several hundred Army reservists most likely will be kept on active duty beyond 12 months, as well. More than 76,000 reserve and Guard troops are on active duty in the war on terrorism, having been called up since Sept. 11.

— Stars and Stripes

KFOR

BBC reporter faces Milosevic

The BBC correspondent Jacky Rowland faced a withering cross-examination from Slobodan Milosevic at his war crimes trial yesterday but she insisted that the corporation's coverage of the Kosovo conflict was impartial and objective.

Rowland, who also reported for the Guardian from the former Yugoslavia, told the UN tribunal at the Hague she did not believe bodies in Dubrava prison were victims of Nato bombing, as Mr Milosevic's government claimed in 1999.

"I have strong doubts that all those prisoners were killed as a direct result of the Nato bombing," she said. "If you were hit by a bomb - heaven forbid - I think I'd be able to tell by looking at your body whether that was the manner of death," she said.

— The Guardian

Serbia wants ex-guerrilla leaders

Serbia has asked U.N. officials in Kosovo to arrest and extradite three former Kosovo Albanian leaders to face trial for crimes allegedly committed during the 1998-1999 war in the province.

Justice Minister Vladan Batic said in a statement Friday that Hashim Thaci, Ramush Haradinaj and Agim Ceku — guerrilla commanders during the Kosovo Albanians' fight for independence — must answer charges of terrorism, armed rebellion and genocide.

Thaci and Haradinaj are the current leaders of two political parties in Kosovo, while Ceku heads a local security force composed of former guerrillas.

Although officially part of Yugoslavia, Kosovo has been a de facto U.N. protectorate since 1999.

— Associated Press

Force protection drill tests soldiers

"A QRF (QUICK REACTION FORCE) GUARD BUSTED ME BEFORE I WAS ABLE TO PLANT A THIRD BOMB BY ASKING ME FOR MY ID, WHICH WAS FAKE."

It was a quiet Saturday morning until the base alarm sounded and soldiers headed into bunkers with their protective masks, flak vests and Kevlars as simulated explosions went off.

This was the final day of a three-day mass casualty exercise that began Aug. 29. The exercise focused on troops' reactions to hypothetical emergency situations.

"The purpose was to validate the force protection base support plan," said Lt. Col. David Francavilla, deputy commander of Area Support Group Falcon. "However, we checked base security, perimeter security, internal security such as the dining facility and the tactical operations center."

1st Lt. Gregory M. Ohman, force protection officer for ASG Falcon, orchestrated the exercise. He started the exercise by playing the role of a suspicious civilian who attempted to enter the front gate once in a stolen car, and later in a car with a stolen license plate.

"We picked a scenario that could really happen," Ohman said. "It was an employee that got fired and wanted to get back at Americans because of it."

"We also sent spot reports to the TOC that had fictitious information of terrorist threats or activities to test the dissemination of information."

Tower guards were quizzed on hypothetical situations involving the rules of engagement. In addition, simulated bombs at the north gym and theater exploded. As a result, simulated fires broke out and mock casualties waited for assistance from first responders.

"A QRF (quick reaction force) guard busted me before I was able to plant a third bomb by asking me for my ID, which was fake," Ohman said.

"It was fun," said Pfc. Tyana Franklin, a petroleum laboratory specialist in Company A, Logistics Task Force and a mock casualty for the exercise. "You got to see how the MPs (military police), fire department and the medics react."

Ohman said being able to respond well to adverse incidents is important, but that preventing such incidents is even better.

"You should never see the benefits of force protection," he said. "If nothing comes up, you know you're doing a good job."

Ohman said events in New York and the Washington, D.C., area on Sept. 11, 2001, give force protection in Kosovo new meaning for him.

"We were in the field on Sept. 11, and I rushed home because my dad was supposed to be on TDY (temporary duty) at the Pentagon. I couldn't get through (on the phone) to anyone for about 30 hours – and I admit I was crying my heart out. Finally, I got through, and it just so happened that the Lord was looking down on me and canceled his TDY that morning. He was being shipped back home."

Soldiers at Camp Monteith, Camp Magrath and Camp Able Sentry are expected to participate in similar exercises throughout the month.

"Mass casualties are an annual requirement, but it's going to be done quarterly so that each rotation gets an opportunity to do it at least once," Francavilla said. "We're trying to make people more aware, because anything can happen," Ohman said.



Photos by Spc. Rebecca M. Grzyb

Spc. Cory O'Harrow, a team leader in the 630th Military Police Company (left), and Sgt. Donald T. McCarty, also of the 630th MP Co. (right), begin an IV on mock casualty Spc. Phuong Nguyen, a communications specialist for Task Force 2-1 Aviation during the force protection exercise at Camp Bondsteel Aug. 31.



Sgt. 1st Class Kirt Tempinski, operations sergeant for the provost marshal's office in Multi-National Brigade (East) radios for help at Camp Bondsteel, while holding the hand of Pfc. Tyana Franklin, a petroleum laboratory specialist in Company A, 299th Logistics Task Force, Aug. 31. Franklin was a mock casualty in the force protection exercise where soldiers were tested on their reaction in emergency situations.



Photos by Pfc. Brandon Guevara

The Rila Monastery, amid the Rila Mountains in Bulgaria, is one of the points of interest visited by soldiers during the Cultural/Spiritual Fighter Management Pass Program. The monastery houses a collection of valuable old manuscripts, jewelry, carpets and a library containing more than 16,000 books.

Spiritual tour teaches soldiers

By Pfc. Brandon Guevara

The Cultural/Spiritual Fighter Management Pass Program is a tour designed to show soldiers historical, spiritual and cultural features of Bulgaria, including monasteries, cathedrals, traditional Bulgarian meals and a variety of shopping opportunities.

Col. Vernon Chandler, chaplain for the Area Support Group Falcon, said the program was first implemented during this rotation.

“The ASG saw the need, and we began developing the concept for a chaplain sponsored FMPP component this past February, but it was not until the 1st ID arrived that command approval was granted for implementing this event,” he said.

The trip starts out just like the regular FMPP: The bus first stops at Camp Able Sentry, and continues to Sofia, Bulgaria.

After checking into the hotel, getting a briefing and exchanging money, soldiers are ready to go. Everybody going on the cultural tour meets in the hotel lobby. They meet each other and the chaplain who will lead the tour. Every week, a different chaplain leads the tour.

“I think it’s a great opportunity for soldiers to partake in,” said Capt. Bart Horner, chaplain for the 299th Logistics Task Force. “If they partake in the program, they’re able to see a lot more and experience the culture in a deeper way.”

First, soldiers go to the St. Alexander Nevski Cathedral. The first stone of the ca-

thedral was laid in 1882, but construction was not completed until 1931. The inside of the cathedral is a multi-national collaboration. There are gold flakes in the paint from Russia, stained glass windows from Germany, green marble stones from Italy and red marble stones from Brazil. Soldiers learn a brief history of the cathedral from a tour guide and translator who is assigned to the C/SFMPP.

“Our tour guide was very informative,” said Spc. Charlotte Otorubio, a member of 299th LTF.

“A church being as old as it is and still used is fantastic to see,” said Capt. Kevin Bolke, assistant operations officer for Task Force 1-77 Armor. “What I can say is that the inside of the church was beautiful beyond words. The time and detail put into the decoration of the church was fantastic.”

After leaving there, soldiers are taken to the Vodenitzata (Water Mill) restaurant, toward the top of the Vitosha Mountains, where they are treated to a traditional Bulgarian dinner and watch Bulgarian folk dancing and entertainers walking on hot coals.

“The meals were good,” said 2nd Lt. Ronald A. Veldhuizen Jr., of Company B, 299th LTF.

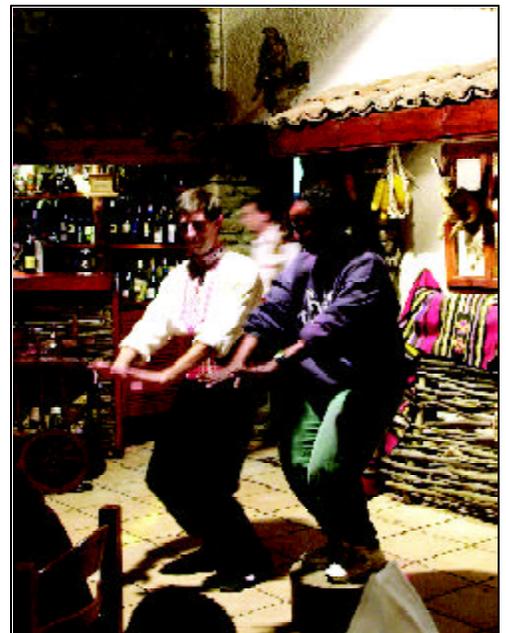
When the dinner is over, the soldiers return to the hotel and are released to enjoy personal time.

The second day begins with a trip to Bulgaria’s second-largest city, Plovdiv. On the way, they visit the Bachkovo Monastery, 18 miles south of Plovdiv.

The Bachkovo Monastery was built in 1083 by Grigor Bakuriani and is one of the oldest monasteries in Bulgaria. Highlights of the monastery include the murals and paintings, which date back to the 11th century.

Otorubio said there was, “a lot of great artwork as far as the paintings on the wall and the structure of the buildings.”

After leaving the Bachkovo Monastery,



Spc. Charlotte Otorubio of the 299th Logistics Task Force partakes in a traditional Bulgarian folk dance at the Vodenitzata (Water Mill) restaurant during the Cultural/Spiritual Fighter Management Pass Program.

soldiers are treated to a traditional Bulgarian lunch. Following lunch they can explore the Ancient Roman Amphitheatre.

The second century Roman amphitheater was restored and opened in 1980. The amphitheater has 30,000 seats and is still used today for concerts, folklore competitions and other cultural events.

While in Plovdiv, soldiers experience an

'Be strong and courageous'

Many people have been talking about "that day." The common refrain is, "What were you doing when you heard the World Trade Center towers (or the Pentagon) had been hit?" On the first anniversary of that fateful day, let us consider all that has happened over the past year.

At 8:30 a.m. on Sept. 11, 2001, I was attending the chaplain school in South Carolina and looking forward to returning to Europe. The world was the same as it was the day before. I could predict the next year by looking at the training calendar and my experiences from the past. That would all change in 15 minutes.

By 1 p.m., the United States of America was under attack from an unknown enemy and the president was setting the stage for what was to come next. In his speech from a Louisiana Air Force base, President George W. Bush said, "Make no mistake, the United States will hunt down and punish those responsible for these cowardly acts." Thus began the road to Patriot Day, 2002.

Less than a month after the attack on America, we began bombing sites in Afghanistan. This would eventually lead to American military forces deployed on the ground. Now the Taliban government has been toppled, the people of Afghanistan have embraced a new leader, and American servicemembers sustain a war against terrorism.

'DO NOT BE TERRIFIED; DO NOT BE DISCOURAGED, FOR THE LORD YOUR GOD WILL BE WITH YOU WHEREVER YOU GO.'
(JOSHUA 1:9)

Soldiers preparing for KFOR have survived a Grafenwohr gunnery rotation and a mission rehearsal exercise at Hohenfels and have been deployed to Kosovo, all the while maintaining strong force protection measures and anxiously awaiting the call of the commander-in-chief to expand the war on terrorism.

The year has been full of joy and sorrow. We must look to the creator of heaven and earth to maintain this vigilance for the year to come.

When the great leader Joshua led the people of Israel into the land promised to them by God Almighty, he gave Joshua this encouragement: "Be strong and courageous! Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1:9)

I believe many have felt the presence of God during these difficult times. We have a promise that God will be with us. He will guide us and sustain us through all the trials that lie ahead.

As I learned in a painful way a year ago, no one knows what the future holds. I have learned that each moment is precious and we should treasure the things we have.

Through it all, I have a peace that God will never leave me nor forsake me. As we go into the unknown of another year after 9-11, let us remember it is God who knows the future – we should put our trust in him.

PATRIOT DAY

9 - 11 - 02

UNITED WE STAND

interesting combination of past and present. It is home to various art festivals and trade fairs each year. Plovdiv is also well-known for its large assortment of shops, restaurants and outdoor vendors.

"Shopping in Plovdiv was great," Bolke said. "The open-air shopping of downtown was a lot of fun.

"Not only could you find anything you were after, but the prices were amazing. Having the opportunity to shop in Plovdiv also gave us a great chance to be in the middle of the day-to-day life of the locals and compare their lives to ours."

On the third day, soldiers go to the Rila Monastery in the Rila Mountains, 72 miles from Sofia.

"The Rila Monastery is my favorite," said Sgt. 1st Class Traci K. Williams, the ASG chaplain's assistant.

The Rila Monastery was founded in the 10th century by the Bulgarian monk St. John of Rila and was rebuilt in the 13th and 14th centuries. The monastery's treasured historic and artistic monuments include the 14th-century Hrel'yo Tower, the five-domed Birth of the Blessed Virgin Church and the original monastery kitchen from the 19th century.

"Rila is Bulgaria's most famous monastery," Chandler said, "and it is the site where Pope John Paul II visited this past June.

The day ends with another traditional Bulgarian lunch.

"The cultural/spiritual trip has flexibility in its schedule,"

Veldhuizen said. "You can choose not to participate on a couple of days or a part of a day and they'll let you have a few choices during the day for letting you go shop or go see different sites or whatever."



The Bachkovo Monastery was built in 1083 by Grigor Bakuriani and is one of the oldest monasteries in Bulgaria. Highlights of the monastery include the murals and paintings, which date back to the 11th century. Photo by Pfc. Brandon Guevara.

he-ro (hîr'ō) *n., pl. -roes* 1. A person noted for feats of courage or nobility of purpose. 2. Nobly or selflessly brave. 3. Every man, woman, and child who saved lives or lost their lives on September 11, 2001.



In memory of the lives lost

...you are not forgotten.

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Illustration by Spc. Eric C. Martin

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