



Falcon Flier

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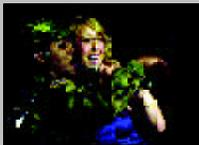
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Staff Sgt. Michael McCord/photo

Paratroopers with the 1st Battalion, 508th Infantry (Airborne) "Red Devils" participated in a NATO exercise known as Rapid Guardian III near Pristina during November.

Jump...

Vicenza "Red Devils" drop into Kosovo during NATO exercise

by Staff Sgt. Michael McCord
Press Section NCOIC

PRISTINA, Kosovo—The skies opened and released their catch, one by one the darkened dots were transformed to billowing green floats as they cascaded their way down to the soft sod of mother earth. Like ornaments on a Christmas tree dangling and swaying with the breeze of an opened door on a frosty morn, the baubles went through another metamorphosis change as their journey to earth came to an end. They became soldiers gathering together their means of transportation. Members of the 1st Battalion, 508th Infantry (Airborne), Vicenza, Italy had made another successful jump into the sticky soil of a plowed wheat field outside the city of Pristina, Kosovo, as part of "Rapid Guardian III," a NATO exercise designed to test the rapid deployment of troops

and ensure peacekeeping operations in Kosovo.

The "Red Devils" commanded by Lt. Col. Michael M. Kershaw, (a veteran of some 108 such jumps) followed their script and took up their assigned platoon assembly areas along the drop zone. The drop from four C-130 aircraft, at an altitude of approximately 400 meters and winds at 10 knots went according to plans.

The 1st of the 508th is a subordinate unit of the 173D Airborne Brigade also based in Vicenza. The 173D is part of the Southern European Task Force, (SETAF).

"The big part that's going for information ops is the public affairs piece to it," said Maj. John Haynes, SETAF public affairs officer. He was on the ground as an observer to witness the event with local media. "This operation looks to be pretty well run with lots of

support available and lots of spectators," he said.

As the sky soldiers began gathering their parachutes on this cold and damp afternoon, Sgt. Steven Gudiel, a 508th Red Devil who never slowed down as he stuffed his gear into his backpack, breathlessly answered, "pretty quick" when asked how the trip down was. A five-year veteran of the U.S. Army, Gudiel wasted no time in transitioning to the assembly area.

1st Lt. William G. Hansen, a member of the 1-508th, detailed his observation of the parachutists. "This operation went pretty well. The weather held out for us, it was a good jump. The winds picked up a little bit but it was nothing the men couldn't handle. Right now the men are rapidly assembling into their battle positions. From there the call will go out and we'll

collect them up and put them on to their follow on missions here in sector. Right now we're helping demonstrate our deploy ability. From here we'll continue the stabilization and peace process in KFOR," Hansen said.

1st of the 508th Battalion Commander, Lt. Col. Michael M. Kershaw, greeted local media from Kosovo and answered questions. "We have in Vicenza, a company, and the initial ready company for EUCOM, (European Command) on 24-hour alert. This both exercises our training objectives to deploy one of those companies and KFOR's objective to demonstrate that EUCOM can reinforce the operation here," Kershaw said. "This is the third of my rifle companies that has come to Kosovo. This has been a good operation with no serious (Please see JUMP, page 4)

TFF Commanding General

Members of TFF give peace as present for the holidays



Brig. Gen. Keith M. Huber

You and I, as members of Task Force Falcon, have answered the call, we must never look back. Our azimuth must be set. The direction must be firm for our resolution to become particular men and women. We are all being watched and observed everyday. What is it that the people of Kosovo and other nations will see when they look upon us? Hopefully they see what I see. The bright burning light that burns within and

all around each and everyone of you. They are witnessing our commitment and determination to live according to a higher standard and to bring democracy to a foreign land that has never known the freedoms that we have or share with each other. This is our holiday gift to a people who have never had freedoms like we have.

And I think I'd prefer to approach it from a broader perspective than simply Task Force Falcon. It really answers the question as to "why are we here?" and who we are as military and civilian personnel serving overseas.

I'd like to first and foremost express my sincere appreciation and respect for all of our men and women who, whether in uniform or in civilian attire, who willingly departed their homes and left family and friends to come to a different country, surrounded by various cultures and different languages, many of which they may or may not understand. And we all do it willingly to provide a service to our nation in an attempt to

make the world a better place for the families of the world.

Every visitor that has been to TFF and had the privilege to interact with you has clearly walked away with a very sincere appreciation and a clear understanding of the sacrifices that every member of this TF: soldier, sailor, airman, marine or civilian are making here. I believe everyone's attention during this holiday season is focused on remembrance of family, friends and gift giving. I submit that those of us who have traveled to far away lands and have been with oppressed people before place our focus on obtaining peace in the world for the family of the world.

Those who are deployed or support someone who is deployed in an overseas location, make a tremendous sacrifice and a contribution to something larger, something more profound than their own personal safety or their own personal comfort.

All of us are drawn to the profession of those who wear uniforms, out of a sense of pride, a sense of quiet respect for the men and women who protect the families of the world, in some very difficult places and situations like Kosovo. We are blessed here within Multi-National Brigade East, within Task Force Falcon to have this opportunity to serve the people of Kosovo, to have this privilege to proudly display what the United States of America stands for. To give the people of Kosovo an idea and concept of what democracy, free trade, and freedom for all people, regardless of ethnic backgrounds, is like. How we portray ourselves to the people of Kosovo and how we treat each other is how people from other lands will perceive us.

I know these are difficult times to be separated from your wives, husbands, children, your parents and even your home. The American people, your fellow soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, civilians and I appreciate the sacrifices that you make. I share these sacrifices with you. I am honored and proud to serve with you here in Kosovo.

Because this is a very special time of remembrance I would ask all of you to focus your attention on the mission at hand, to understand that we live in a dangerous world full of evil people that want to do us and the people of Kosovo harm, if we give them an opportunity. We must be forever vigilant on the alert and always aware of our soundings. Plan and practice what you plan. Force Protection is a way of life.

It is important that we get to know and understand each other well enough, so we can observe the effects of the Kosovo winter environment and the stress that being away from home will bring. I ask each and every one of you to stay in touch with the mental and physical status of your friends, and your fellow soldiers, because everyone will respond to this environment in different ways. We're all working long hours in a very stressful, and difficult situation. With these circumstances we must take the time and care for each other.

It is important that you clearly understand that the mission you do is very significant, it is through our activities, our dedication to duty, our sacrifices that the families of the world are able to enjoy the holidays wrapped in the warmth of family and friends. It is because of your continuous sacrifice that people of the world are able to safely go to work, travel to school and celebrate holidays how they choose, and worship where they choose.

It is our family and loved ones who we are apart from and who we certainly hold dear that is in our hearts during this holiday season. It is the thoughts and prayers of our families and the people of the United States that are with us now.

I'm proud of what you do, of what you represent, and of this opportunity to serve with you.

I hope and pray that all of our families have a safe, secure and a very Merry Christmas. God Bless you all!

Climb to GLORY...To the Top!

TFF Command Sergeant Major

When MWR opportunities knock, take advantage of them



Command Sgt. Maj. Ted Walker

"Communication is essential in everything we do. Without it we could not be efficient in what we do."

Those words were once spoken by a (former) sergeant major of the Army as he visited his soldiers in the field. If you pause and think about it, those words are significant and ring true to anything you may be tasked to do.

More importantly they are crucial, because this task force depends

on you and the job that you do daily. Think about how many times during your career as a soldier that you have been given a task to carry out, and it didn't go as well as you would have

liked. Maybe it was due to lack of communication. As command sergeant major of Task Force Falcon, I am asking each of you (soldiers and NCO's) to communicate effectively. Insure that you are giving information out clearly and that everyone is on the same page. At the same time, if you are the receiver make sure you understand what it is you have been asked to do.

Because I have stressed the importance of communication. I want to be the first one to share some information that I feel will benefit you during this deployment.

It pertains to the MWR programs available to you and what they have to offer. As I have visited with some of you, I know firsthand that you are dedicated and performing your mission well. And while I appreciate your tireless efforts, I can do little to ease the stresses of this deployment. That is where MWR and the role that they play benefits you. In the near future, MWR will be sponsoring skiing trips to Brezovica (please see related story on page 13). This opportunity will be a one day excursion and will allow you an opportunity to get away from the stresses of this deployment, while gaining experiences of Kosovo that are not work related.

Also on the horizon will be other MWR related opportunities such as a four-day pass to Bulgaria. Your MWR offices located in Multi-National Brigade (East) also offer a variety of other activities. I strongly encourage you to go by and visit the MWR offices located at Camp Bondsteel, Camp Magrath, and Camp Monteith. Find out what they have to offer and take advantage of it.

Finally, as I pen this column for the Falcon Flier, we have edged even closer to Christmas. I want you to know that while I miss home as much as you do, I am proud to be serving here with you during such a special time. I encourage you to lean on each other using the buddy system to help stay focused on what it is you do that makes this task force operate. Instead of being depressed about being away from family members and loved ones during the holidays, be proud of the commitment that you are making for your family and our great nation. Also be sure to let your loved ones know that you appreciate the sacrifices that they are making in your absence.

God Bless you and Merry Christmas!

About the Falcon Flier...

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Soldier on the Street

What is your favorite song and why?



Sgt. Toni Ester,
Chaplain's Assistant
HHC, 27th Combat Engineers
(CBS)

"Kirk Franklin's *'He Will Never Put More On You Than You Can Bear'*, is my favorite song because throughout all of my trials and tribulations and pain, I know that God is still there."



Sgt. Grant Beyers,
S-3, TF 1-30 (CMT)

"*'Winds of Change'* by the Scorpions is my favorite because it was made to bring people together."



Spc. Jenny Vega,
Physical Therapy Technician
86th CSH, TFMF V (CBS)

"(George Strait's) *'I Cross my Heart'*, because it reminds me of my boyfriend here at Camp Bondsteel."



Capt. Michael Schauss,
S-1, TF 1-30 (CMT)

"Well, for the holiday season, the Charlie Brown Christmas Album is my favorite, but I guess I'd have to pick Van Morrison's *'Tupelo Honey'* as one of my all-time favorites because it reminds me of someone at home."



Staff Sgt. Richard Timberlake,
Supply NCOIC, HHC, 10th
Mtn. Div. (CBS)

"*'Hotel California'* by the Eagles is my favorite, because just like the song says, 'You can check out anytime of day, but you can never leave.'"



Sgt. Sara George,
Track Mechanic
HHC, 1-30th Infantry (CMT)

"*'All My Life'* by K-Ci and Jo Jo, because it explains the meaning of true love and the way it ought to be."

Commentary

'(Please) Show Me The Way'

Song from past reminder of transition, life

by Spc. Taylor Barbaree
Editor

Have you ever heard a song on the radio that reminded you of some period in your life? Such an event occurred the other day for me. As the senior editor and I were laying out the most recent edition of the Falcon Flier, a song from the past blared over my radio.

The pop song, entitled *'Show Me the Way'* and performed by the group Styx, was released over the airwaves in 1991. As I recall, the song never hit No. 1 on any of the U.S. charts. But, because there was such a transition in my life during the timeframe the song was released, it triggered some thoughts from the past.

Just like an encyclopedia is known to have given us post baby boomers (that were not born during the internet era) a refresher course of history. *'Show me the Way'*, reminds me of some events that most certainly changed my life forever.

And as the song played those memories became visible to me once again. First, I thought about my initial Army AIT. At 21-years of age there I was at Fort Sill, Okla., going through training to become a Fire Direction Control Specialist (13 Bravo) or as any 'Redleg' will tell you a Gun Bunny. I have an assortment of memories that I could share with you about my brief stay at the final resting place of Geronimo (that is a memory in itself), but I will spare you (and hope you are still reading this column). Seriously, it was through my experiences at Fort Sill where I learned that serving in the National Guard is not just a part time experience, but also a serious commitment. As my training battery entered the final week of AIT, I began hearing a lot about a place that I had never heard a lot about—Kuwait. And as usual I had questions. Where is Kuwait? Why would Iraq invade, and why would the U.S. concern itself with such an issue? Before I could replay those questions in my mind, I remember something about a formation and our first sergeant saying something about, "a line being drawn in the sand." Then came those words that have remained with me to this day, "Some of you will graduate here earlier than expected and report straight to your unit, which could be headed to overseas." He then paused and said, "this not only affects active duty, but all reservists." After those words, all I could feel was a lump forming in my throat. Could this really happen to me? I mean here I am, a junior college graduate, with a full two-year journalism scholarship waiting for me. Not to mention all those experiences that come with living near a college campus. I then begin to ask myself, "did I join for the right reasons, or was it for the college money." As fate would have it, I graduated from AIT and began my junior year of college at Troy State University. And just as I began my studies to become a journalist, a new era in my life began and my outlook about serving in the military changed forever.

I remember, just as most of you can probably recall, watching CNN as the Pentagon announced numerous National Guard and reserve units being called up to join their active duty brethren overseas.

As days went by, I began noting all the families of military personnel who were being affected. Then one night, the stirring reality of it all hit home. As I worked my part-time position as sports editor of the University's newspaper, a local radio station announced that there would be yet more call up of Alabama Guard units. In the next breath, I remember the disc jockey saying that up next would be a new version of a song that had been released by the group Styx, entitled, *'Show Me The Way'*. The person at the controls also noted that the song was dedicated to the many men and women of our armed forces. As I listened attentively, the song played. I remember the lyrics, but more importantly I remember the families as they talked about how much they missed their loved ones (and in the background the song recanted the words, "show me the way." When the song concluded, the radio station promptly followed with a moment of *(Please see SONG, page 4)*

Sergeant Major does what he does best while serving in Army



Sgt. Maj. Charles Nelson

Spc. Taylor Barbaree/photo

Former Fort Benning Drill Sergeant uses people person skills to help soldiers

by Spc. Taylor Barbaree
Editor

CAMP BONDSTEEL— Shoulders that resemble the look of a linebacker. Arms as huge as tree trunks. A gruff voice that can be demanding, but yet fair and understanding. At 6 feet 1 inch tall, and with a frame like a bear, Sgt. Maj. Charles Nelson has a passion for the Army, just like a grunt loves the infantry.

"I have always said when it ain't fun anymore that would be time to pack it up and head out," the 25-year Army Veteran said with a laugh. "Right now I am having fun. This deployment is a unique opportunity for me (to get to know my soldiers better).

"At the same time serving here gives me a feeling that I am taking back a feeling of accomplishment. One day I can look back on these experiences and say that I helped to make Kosovo better than I found it."

A high self-esteem and belief in an organization he enlisted in as an infantryman in 1976, has enabled him to literally climb to the ladder to success, he says.

"When I first joined I had no idea that I would make it this far. It was a struggle and it took me longer to get here. But I stuck it out and in doing so learned more about the role of an NCO," he said of his rise to the

highest enlisted grade in the Army. "I am really thrilled to be in a position to help soldiers. Most of my career has been about training soldiers to replace me when I decide it's time to go. I attribute being in a position like I presently hold to being able to maintain a positive attitude and never giving up on my goals."

And goals along with organization are what he demands in his role as TFF G-3 Sergeant Major.

"I want this section (G-3) to run smoothly. Crisis management is a big key to that," he said comparing his demeanor to that of a quarterback on a football field. "If I can shoulder the load and keep the small stuff off of the operations officer's back, then he can do his job more efficiently.

"I also want to insure that we are all working together and everyone is on the same note. If one of my soldiers doesn't understand something, I want them to feel they can approach me," he said. "I am person oriented and also very approachable."

Nelson's assessment of being person oriented and approachable is an accurate description of his personality, according to one of his soldiers.

"He makes it a comfortable atmosphere and that allows the rest of us to complete our missions successfully," said Spc. August Jover, schools and ammo NCO, HHC TFF (G-3).

"He is also a role model, because he instills in us to become self achievers just like him."

(JUMP continued from page 1)

injuries. Within one hour of jumping we had assembled our soldiers around the drop zone where we wanted them," he said.

"I think I'm the only jumper here today that's jumped out here before," Kershaw said. "So everybody else is seeing this for the first time. They come out of the aircraft, they have to orient themselves to where they're supposed to be going. They'll pick out the terrain features, the cities, the roads and which way the aircraft are moving and individually each soldier has to figure out the way to go," Kershaw said.

Kershaw's excitement was evident in his tone of voice.

"It's a great exercise for our guys

to go somewhere they haven't been before and put those skills to use. We put a lot of responsibility on our younger soldiers, I mean I'm a lieutenant colonel with 108 jumps. With a brand new private it could be his sixth or seventh jump and we both have to be at the assembly area within an hour," he said.

The conditions were almost ideal for an airborne jump according to the battalion commander—slight winds and soft landings.

More than 150 Red Devils rained down on the soil of Kosovo on this gray afternoon. Leaving little more than boot prints in the softened dirt, the 1st of the 508th moved on to their peacekeeping missions in Kosovo.

(SONG continued from page 3)

silence. I honestly admit, there was not a dry eye in the room of our newspaper. Days after that moment, my field artillery unit was called up for active duty. My feelings however differed from those that I shared with you earlier. In short, I was now ready to go. However, my unit only made it as far as annual training in the pine belt region of Mississippi.

The war was over and we had prevailed, were the words that I read from a newspaper in the Spring of '92

while at Camp Shelby, Miss.

As quirky and unusual as it appears, doesn't it seem funny how a song can stir emotions and aid in changing your perspective on life. For me, the sentiments definitely came out during the course of the 4:35 song. Listening to those families members talking about the commitment that their loved ones had made is something that I will never forget, or be able to justifiably convey.

Hooah run...

Guidon bearer, Spc. Christopher Turner, HQ., A Co., 10th LTF and fellow soldiers make their way down CBS's Cimon Ave. on Thanksgiving morning. HQ., A Co., commanded by Capt. Michael E. Rivera, is a subordinate unit of the 10th LTF. (photo and caption by Spc. Taylor Barbaree/TFF PAO).

Correction...

In the Dec. 4th edition of the Falcon Flier it was reported that Capt. Steven Shipley commanded HQ., A Co., when in fact the unit is under the leadership of Capt. Michael E. Rivera. Capt. Steven Shipley is commander of C Co., 10th LTF. The Falcon Flier regrets the error and is glad to set the record straight.



Safe, orderly, expeditious...

C Co., 58th Avn. dispatching voice of TFF



Spc. Taylor Barbaree/photo

Spc. Marcus Mashack, an air traffic control operator with C Co., 58th Avn. Reg. (Fort Campbell, Ky.) authorizes a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter the use of CBS airspace from the ATC tower.

by **Spc. Taylor Barbaree**
Editor

CAMP BONDSTEEL— When this encampment's assorted family of

rotary wing aircraft are ready to arrive or depart from missions on a daily basis here, there is a friendly voice to assist in the process.

"We authorize the arrival or

departure of numerous aircraft each day," noted Staff Sgt. Mark Hall, a shift supervisor with Fort Campbell, Kentucky's based C Co., 1st Battalion, 58th Aviation Regiment. "We communicate with crews flying (UH-60) Blackhawks, (A-64) Apaches, (O58) Kiowa Warriors and (CH-47) Chinook helicopters. "We simply provide safe, orderly and expeditious flow of air traffic."

According to Spc. Marcus Mashack, an air traffic control operator with C Co., communication is the name of the game for the 17 enlisted and non-commissioned officer element that began pulling missions here during September.

"Even though we never get to meet the pilots face-to-face, we try and build a strong relationship with them," he said. "It's important that they (pilots) have trust in what we are doing. Without it, it would be hard for us to carry on our mission, which is ultimately to insure that the airspace here is safe and secure."

Hall said it's not hard to accomplish their 12-hour shift, which is performed from a tree house-like booth that is 4 by 12 feet in space and is located 45 feet above ground level.

"Morning is our busiest time," Hall said, while operating numerous switches that comprise a keyboard full of instru-

ments. "There are periods of time when there are no missions ongoing. However, it is not uncommon to have 15 movements (helicopters) in 10 seconds. In this job you go from hours of boredom broken up by seconds of sheer panic"

Mashack said the hardest part of the job usually occurs when foreign aircraft request permission to land.

"It is definitely different trying to understand so many various languages. I always try to concentrate (harder) on the transmissions between the pilot and me.

"This is a great opportunity for me to learn more about my job," he said indicating that he has only been in his present career field for six months. "When I am pulling my shift in garrison (back at Fort Campbell), I don't have the chance to get to work in a tactical environment and work so many movements. This is a great opportunity."

And what about the pressures of missions involving VIP's such as Congressman, Army dignitaries or even Mariah Carey?

"To be honest, we don't know who is on what aircraft," Hall said. "To us, it is just another movement that we have to handle. What matters to us is that communication is established and the movement is successful."

Fort Drum NCO applies lessons learned from Somalia deployment

by **Spc. Taylor Barbaree**
Editor

CAMP BONDSTEEL— Nearly a decade has passed since the tragic incidents that occurred in Mogadishu, Somalia involving U.S. Army Soldiers.

Yet a day doesn't pass, that Master Sgt. Charles Kirkland doesn't recall the training he experienced first hand in the country that runs parallel to the Indian Ocean.

"During my tenure in Somalia, I was assigned to the 10th (Mountain Division) MP Company as a young squad leader," Kirkland said. "Our mission was to provide Military Police Direct Support to the 10th Mountain Division in coordination with the Humanitarian led efforts.

"Prior to Somalia, our unit trained continuously with elements of the 10th to hone warfighting skills at home and training centers throughout the Army. In previous training opportunities, we always had a clearly defined objective, we could easily identify the bad guy and it was pretty clear what to do with him once we encountered him," he said.

"What I realized when I got to Somalia was that there was no clearly defined, "Bad Guy", everything that moved was a potential threat. In Somalia you couldn't pick the bad guy out of the crowd until he or she started shooting at you, and then they would just run off into a sea of innocent people," he said. "It was unnerving at times to have your vehicle literally surrounded by what appeared to be thousands of people. It taught me as a leader to rely on the basics, trust the training that I had received and in a pinch to think outside

the box."

Fast forward to the present and Kirkland is using those experiences from Somalia and other deployments in a new position he assumed since arriving here. The 18-year Army veteran is presently serving as the Task Force Falcon provost sergeant major. In his role as the TFF provost sergeant major, Kirkland is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the TFF provost marshal's office (PMO) on Camp Bondsteel. The PMO is responsible for all military police reporting within Multi-National Brigade (East). Elements of the PMO consist of Desk Operations, Patrol Activities, Military Police Investigations, Traffic Accident Investigations, Physical Security, K-9 section and protective services. All these efforts are supported by elements of the 504th and 10th Military Police Battalions.

"I am enjoying this deployment immensely because I am doing what I love to do, and that is performing my duties as a military police noncommissioned officer and working with others that love this line of work as well," Kirkland said, mentioning the passion he has always had for being "one of the good guys".

"I grew up respecting those in law enforcement and the army, so the military police was the logical choice for me. I have always held this career field in high esteem," he said. "That is one reason I joined the Army, so I could have the best of both worlds."

Prior to enlisting in the Army at the age of 19, Kirkland was involved in athletics while growing up in the central New York town of Camden, which is located in the foothills of the Catskill



Spc. Taylor Barbaree/photo

Master Sgt. Charles Kirkland, brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to the position of TFF provost sergeant major.

Mountains. Involved in sports, he learned to be competitive while playing basketball, baseball and football. After graduation he sought not only a career in law enforcement, but in the Army as well.

"Being involved in sports taught me how to be competitive and to tap into the abilities of those around me. It also brought the best out of me in order to contribute to and achieve a common goal," he said, comparing his formative

years in athletics to the Army.

"The Army was a perfect fit for me. I like the opportunities that were and continue to be there for me or anyone else that puts forth the effort. I like the discipline of it and I enjoy the challenges."

Kirkland's supervisor, Maj. David M. Kelly, TF 504th Deputy Provost, noted the outstanding job that the 38-year-old has done during the short (Please see **KIRKLAND**, page 11)

Mariah Carey's star glitters as she brings h

by Sgt. Jamie Brown
Senior Editor

Bringing back visions of USO glamour girls of the past such as Marilyn Monroe and Ann Margret, Mariah Carey stepped off of the plane wearing a low-cut camouflage jumpsuit, and her star power never dimmed until she flew away.

Carey, the performer of more number one singles than any other female pop diva, was in Kosovo on Dec. 4 as part of a USO sponsored trip to boost the morale of soldiers here who could not be with their families during the holiday season. Armed Forces Entertainment (Department of Defense) and USO presented this in cooperation with the local Morale, Welfare and Recreation.

Carey arrived at Camp Able Sentry, and after being presented an honorary gortex jacket by Brig. Gen. Keith Huber, Task Force Falcon Commander, the singer and her entourage boarded a (CH-47) Chinook Helicopter and traveled to Camp Monteith. At Camp Monteith the singer dined at the chow hall and took the time to sign hundreds of autographs for the troops there. Looking like a scene out of an old Beatle's movie where fans chase the band, troops flocked Carey trying to get a photo or just a glimpse of the entertainer.

After a short stay at Camp Magrath, where the singer said hello to the troops and even gave out a few hugs, Carey landed on Camp Bondsteel.

In a packed theater, in front of more than 700 soldiers, Carey brought a little Christmas cheer to the troops. Wearing a white dress, Carey began the show with an energetic performance of "Loveboy" her most recent single. She dedicated the next song, an emo-

tional medley of "Never Too Far" and "Hero", to the soldiers. After changing into a blue dress, Carey sang "My All." Then several soldiers joined Carey onstage to decorate two Christmas trees. While the soldiers helped her decorate the trees, Carey led the crowd in renditions of Christmas carols.

After changing into a red outfit (making her outfits for the evening red, white and blue), Carey ended her show with "All I Want For Christmas Is You." It had been a show where Carey interacted with soldiers at every opportunity, even calling up volunteers to show her how to call cadence. After the show, the performer once again took the time to sign hundreds of autographs for soldiers.

Carey said the experience of spending some holiday time with the troops was gratifying.

"I really feel like this year it's very important for us all to try and inspire each other and support each other so it's nice to come," she said. "I thought everybody was in really good spirits, really great, really warm and it was a nice experience."

The soldiers agreed that it was a nice experience as well.

"I really felt it was a morale booster," said Spc. Daniel Jones, 66th MP Co. "It gives us some excitement."

Pfc. Jenae Nesbit, TFF G-2, (10th Mtn. Div.), had the privilege of operating a spotlight for Carey's performance, and also enjoyed seeing the performer up close.

"I'm a big fan," she said. "I feel good. It made my day."



Carey steps off of a Chinook Helicopter at Camp



Sgt. Jamie Brown/photo

Carey shares the microphone with a soldier during her concert at Camp Bondsteel. Carey recruited soldiers from the audience to sing, count cadence and decorate the Christmas tree.



Carey belts out a song during her concert

gives holiday cheer to soldiers in Kosovo



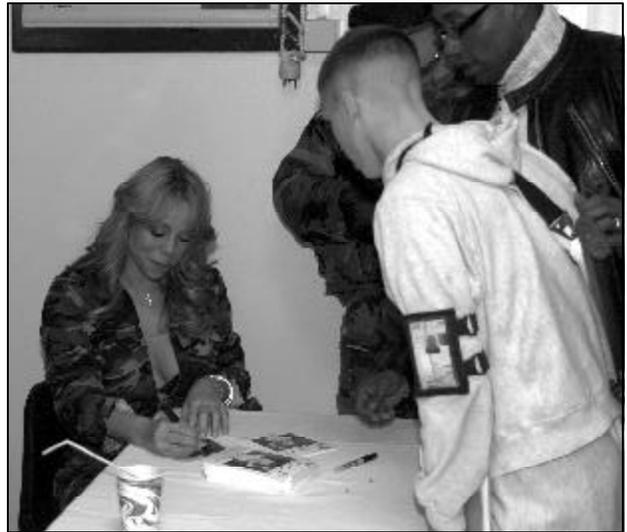
Sgt. Jamie Brown/photo
Carey in helicopter at Camp Magrath.



Sgt. Jamie Brown/photo
Carey gives a soldier a hug during her visit to Camp Magrath.

“I thought everybody was in good spirits, really great, really warm and it was a nice experience.”

— Mariah Carey



Sgt. Jamie Brown/photo
Carey signs an autograph, one of hundreds she signed, during her visit to Kosovo.



Sgt. Jamie Brown/photo
Carey singing her concert at Camp Bondsteel.

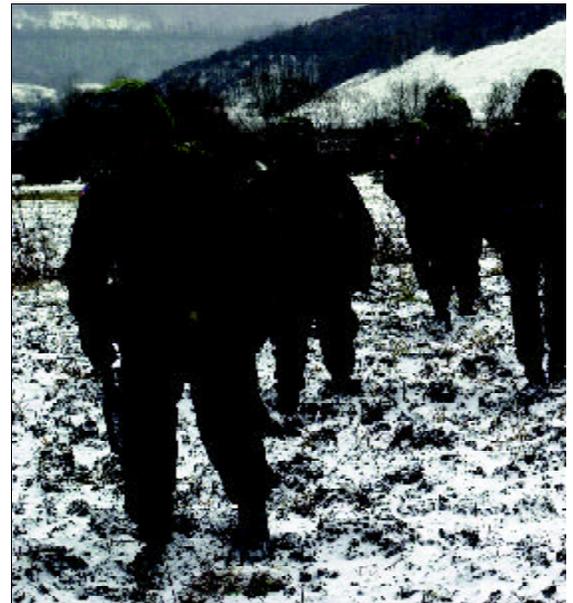


Sgt. Jamie Brown/photo
Carey hangs out with soldiers at Camp Monteith. Soldiers enjoyed getting the chance to see the pop diva in person.

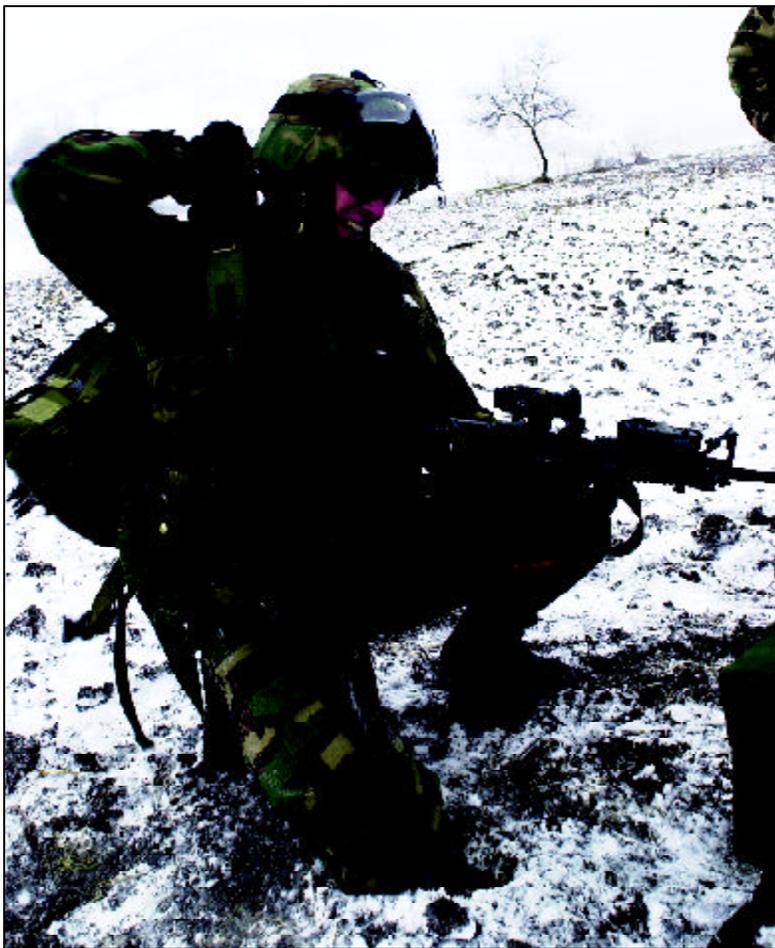
The Best of Combat Camera:

This is a regular section of the Falcon Flier which features some of the best work of Combat Camera.

Special thanks to Combat Camera (55th Signal Company, Fort Meade, Md.) for submitting these photos.



Soldiers from 2-14th Infantry Regiment are patrolling through the main road of T. Jezero in Kosovo on December 2. They are looking for weapons caches and other



Sgt. 1st Class Marshall Emerson/photo

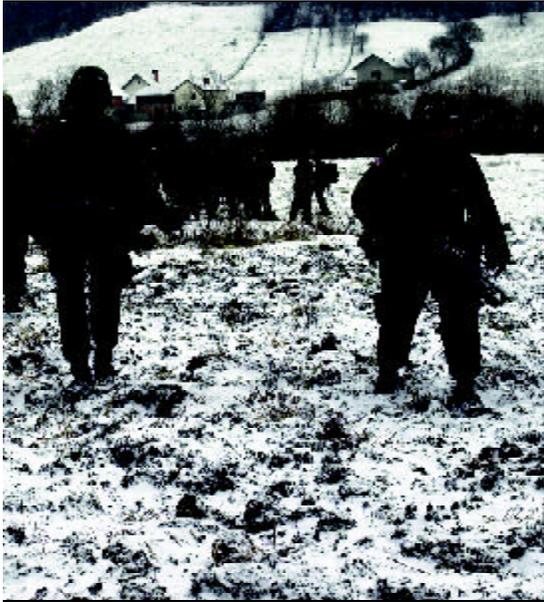
A Soldier from 2-14th Infantry Regiment takes a knee to pull security while his squad is patrolling the hills of the towns of Tupaci and Jezero in Kosovo on December 2. They are conducting a cordon and search of the towns and are looking for weapons and other contraband items.



Soldiers from 2-14th Infantry Regiment conduct a cordon and search of the looking for weapons caches and other contraband items. The 2-14th Infantry Regiment in Kosovo.



Soldiers from 2-14 Infantry Regiment exiting a (UH-60) Blackhawk returning from the towns of Tupaci and Jezero, Kosovo, where they were looking for weapons and other contraband



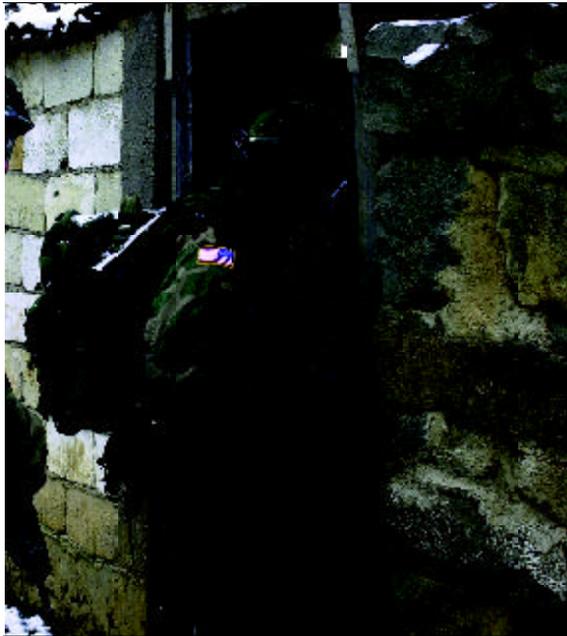
Staff Sgt. Vincent A. King/photo

main road of Tupaci during a cordon and search of the towns of Tupaci and caches and other contraband items.



Sgt. 1st Class Marshall Emerson/photo

Soldiers from 2-14th Infantry Regiment are waiting on the landing zone (LZ), near the towns of Tupaci and Jezero, Kosovo, to be picked up by (UH-60) Blackhawk Helicopters that will fly them back to Camp Monteith, Kosovo on December 2.



Staff Sgt. Vincent A. King/photo

and search of the towns of Tupaci and Jezero in Kosovo on December 2. They are the 2-14th Infantry is attached to the 10th Mountain Division during their deploy-



Sgt. 1st Class Marshall Emerson/photo

(UH-60) Blackhawk Helicopter at Camp Monteith on December 2. The soldiers are in Kosovo, where the soldiers just finished conducting a cordon and search of the other contraband items.



Sgt. 1st Class Marshall Emerson/photo

A crewchief from 1-10th Cavalry Regiment looks out the gunners window while riding in a UH-60 Blackhawk Helicopter that is transporting soldiers from the 2-14th Infantry Regiment on their way to the towns of Tupaci and Jezero in Kosovo on December 2.

Lick it, stick it, stamp it, mail it...

Helpful hints on mailing packages from your TFF Post Office



Spc. Taylor Barbaree/photo

Spc. Marisol Juarez, a postal clerk (129th Postal Co., Fort Bragg, N.C.), with CBS's Midtown post office assists a customer with mailing a Christmas package home.

by Spc. Terry Boggs
Staff Writer

CAMP BONDSTEEL— Take a moment to reflect on all of the things we take for granted here: Electricity, running water, internet service, PX shopping, and of course our postal services. Imagine being in country for six months without any way to send or receive mail. Imagine not getting letters or packages from your loved ones back home, no way to send Christmas gifts to your

children. It would be a very unpleasant deployment indeed. And yet, behind every package, every letter, every bag of mail that is processed in and out of here, is the Post Office worker; the one person that is seldom seen and rarely thought of. Unless, of course, the mail fails to reach its destination or gets mangled in the process.

The people that we have to thank for the difficult task of processing our incoming and outgoing mail are the soldiers of the Task Force Falcon Postal

Office. These men and women, who handle mail for the entire American sector of TFF, are some seriously hard-charging troops. If you need proof, just check out the numbers. 2nd Lt. Allen Sliter, Task Force Falcon Postal Officer, is the best place for such information.

"We process around 450 bags of mail per day," Sliter said. "The truck pulls up, we open it, and the bags just fall out."

Now this may not sound like much mail, but if you consider the "truck" is a 40-foot tractor trailer and the 'bags' are those large, heavy gray ones, it helps you envision the huge volume that comes through here each day. Now here is the kicker; there are not that many people doing it. Sliter said only 31 soldiers handle the mail that comes through each day. That comes out to about 15 bags per person on average. And that is just the pieces that are coming in. Outgoing mail is another story completely.

The point is, and you are sure to agree, that these soldiers work hard. And with the holidays fast approaching, things are getting even more and more busy every day.

There are other problems too; such as the anthrax scare. But, as Sliter put it, there is really no reason to panic about that.

"We have not had any (anthrax) come through at all," he said. "We are always watching out for suspicious mail and we take the precaution of wearing latex gloves".

Speaking of outgoing mail, Sliter gave some useful information on letters and packages that you may wish to send back to the States. According to regula-

tions, you may send as many letters as you like, free of charge. The catch; they have to be 13 ounces or less. This includes video or audio tapes that are used for correspondence with family members or friends, not commercial tapes. So all of those CDs you bought for five marks each; you have to pay to ship.

Anything else, such as boxes or lockers, will cost you. Any package can be up to 70 pounds and 130 inches combined girth. Actual costs will, of course, vary. Plus, each package must be properly wrapped and sealed so it doesn't get kicked back to you. (That could really ruin Christmas back at home.) Every unit has a postal clerk that should be able to tell you how to seal your package.

As far as time to get there, you are looking at 7-10 days for a normal, first class (or priority) letter or package. space available mail, or SAM, usually takes 2 to 4 weeks, but costs less than first class. The down side of SAM is, (just as the name implies), if there is no space on the plane, your box gets bumped. If you are not in any big hurry, however, it really does not make a difference. Your package should be there when you get home, hopefully.

As far as words of wisdom, Sliter offers these:

1) When preparing to depart the country, make sure to turn in your new address to your unit mail clerk. This way, if any stray packages come, they can be forwarded appropriately.

2) Make sure you follow mailroom standards as far as packaging your boxes.

3) The Post Office offers all of the services that you get Stateside, with the exception of Express Mail.

So, lick, stick and drop those letters home with the knowledge that your mail will be handled professionally and efficiently. And if you see a postal worker, you may wish to give them a kind word. They really do earn it.

TFF optical team work miracles throughout Kosovo

by Staff Sgt. Michael McCord
Press Section NCOIC

CAMP BONDSTEEL— Imagine if the world around you was always blurry; shadowy blobs of light and dark. Like your worst photographs taken when everything's out of focus. Frequently needing someone to help guide you about in your everyday routines. Then one day the shadows recede. The brilliance of light once again sharply focuses through your eyes. Seems like a near-miracle doesn't it? For members of the 10th Logistics Task Force's Optometry clinic, they have an opportunity to witness this occurrence on a weekly basis.

Capt. Debra McNamara, Optometrist, 10th LTF, attached to TFMF V, 86th CSH at Camp Bondsteel, and two optometry technicians, Sgt. George Hampton and Spc. Sorta Lim, conduct OPTCAP's (Optical Assistance Program) for Kosovo civilians throughout Multi-National Brigade East (MNB-E).



Staff Sgt. Michael McCord/photo

(left to right) Spc. Sorta Lim, Sgt. George Hampton and Capt. Debra McNamara conduct OPTCAP for Kosovo civilians throughout MNB (E).

In little over a month they have traveled to five villages in Kosovo providing eye examinations and glasses

for the local patients. They have seen more than 400 people since their arrival in November. They have fitted 300

reading glasses and prescribed more than 150 donated prescription glasses.

"I think what's most significant about the OPTCAP missions we go on, is providing glasses to older people who have had cataract surgery. The ophthalmologists here do not replace the lens with an intraocular lens, which leaves the patient with a prescription of approximately plus 14.00 Diopters. Unfortunately most of the patients can not afford to buy these glasses because they are very expensive.

A cataract is caused by discoloration and hardening of the lens, which slowly decreases the vision. When the discolored lens is removed the patient is able to get light into the eye again, but their prescription is so high, they do not receive a clear image. Simulating what it would be like to have that kind of vision, McNamara fished through her container of lenses and presented a set of optics which when viewed through could be described as being legally blind.

(Please see OPTICAL, page 12)

New fire truck symbolizes community cooperation

by Staff Sgt. Michael McCord
Press Section NCOIC

VITINA, Kosovo— The two sat there for the world to see. Two billboards of peace and cooperation standing at parade rest. It was tangible evidence of hard work mixed with teamwork, the two latest examples of what it takes to emerge from hardship and bitter memories. Parked in the town square of the Municipality of Vitina was a brand-new fire truck and garbage truck for the citizens of this community. This day marked a dedication ceremony to turn over these much-needed tools to the people.

Maj. Darren Richardson, 4th Civil Affairs Group, U.S. Marine Corps, Washington D.C., and whose civil affairs unit worked closely with local individuals and members of KFOR and UNMIK, has waited for this moment for some time.

“We are having a dedication ceremony for two of the three trucks that our civil affairs team was able to procure for the Municipality of Vitina,” he said. “When we first got here to the municipality, we started meeting with the key individuals. As a result, we found out they had a lot of needs. Two of the biggest priorities were vehicles. They had a maintenance plan and all the things for the equipment, but it was substandard. So we said we’ll put together packages for a fire truck and for two garbage trucks for the humanitarian assistance board that we had in August and we were able to win those through the board.”

Progress takes time.

“We worked directly with UNMIK, (United



Staff Sgt. Michael McCord/photo
Fire Chief Adem Osamana, (center) holds the symbolic key to a new fire truck for the municipality of Vitina. The recent dedication of a fire truck and garbage truck was the result of hard work and cooperation by KFOR soldiers, UNMIK officials and local representatives.

Nations Mission in Kosovo) and the municipal staff here,” Richardson added. “We started this process back in July. It’s taken awhile, but well worth it,” he said. “I think the relations between the people of Kosovo and the soldiers has been very good,” he said.

The ceremony got under way at noon and included TF-132 Commander, Lt. Col. Robert Nye. He introduced municipal officials, both Albanian and Serbian. The officials briefly highlighted the efforts all parties involved with the projects.

Capt. Tyler Sunshine, Task Force 1-32, personnel officer, also handles public affairs for Camp Magrath.

“I believe the people of Vitina will be quite happy today. They’re getting a new fire truck and

new garbage truck. While it might be trite to Americans, it’ll make a big difference in this community. It will make a difference in the quality of life here,” Sunshine said. “The methods used to previously collect garbage were to load it on the back of a cargo truck. The fire truck leaked. I remember a barn burned down in this region not long ago, but with the new fire truck it will improve the quality of life.

“It’s symbolic of the progress that’s been made here. It’s shown they’ve been working together, (K-Serbs, K-Albanians) for community development. Also, KFOR and UNMIK are working to help with this. To me it was cooperation on all sides,” he added.

Smiling like a proud parent, Adem Osmani, Chief, Vitina Fire Department could hardly contain his excitement.

“I am very happy with this new truck,” Osmani said. “It’s a huge moment for me since we have

worked with all these old technical devices. This seems like a dream to me and I’m still waiting to see if I’ll wake up,” he laughed. “I would like to thank KFOR and UNMIK for helping us out here.”

Demonstrating what a small World it has become, and how tragic events such as September 11th are understood the planet over, the fire chief offered his thoughts.

“I would like to take this time to mention the tragedies that happened in the United States and express my condolences to the entire people of the United States and especially to my colleagues who gave up their lives trying to save others in that tragedy.

(KIRKLAND continued from page 5)

tenure of Rotation 3B.

“Master Sergeant Kirkland is the most soldier oriented NCO I have ever had the pleasure to serve with,” Kelly said. “He will do anything for his soldiers while never sacrificing standards. He expects 100 percent from his soldiers and gives back 100 percent in return.

“He is doing a great job.”

Despite the praise, Kirkland points to the soldiers of TF 504th as the key to the operation of the daily missions.

“I am able to do my job here (and do it well), because I have been given all of the resources to make things happen,” he said, discounting the fact that with those resources he brings a wealth of civilian and military education and law enforcement experience to the job as

well. “If you look at those resources you will see that we have an abundant amount of experience that comprise our task force. We have MP’s from every facet of the Army. National Guard and Reservists as well as other active duty assets. They are doing a great job. They are good soldiers.

“That is what makes it all worthwhile,” continued Kirkland. “The soldiers and leaders that I have had the opportunity to serve with. The Army is family and we support one another. I know that I can rely on the men and woman around me and I feel confident they know they can rely on me. When we pull together we can accomplish anything. It’s a win-win situation.”

***10th SSB- Camp Bondsteel Finance Office
Building 1330 B (Admin. Alley)**

Hours: Monday-Saturday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Sunday, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

***10th SSB- Camp Monteith Finance Office
Striker Hall Building**

Hours: Monday-Saturday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Sunday, 12 - 3 p.m.

***10th SSB- Camp Able Sentry Finance Office
Building No. 2**

Hours: Monday-Saturday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Sunday, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Seven fire safety tip’s from your TFF Fire Department

Special to the Falcon Flier

It’s that time of the year to prepare for the holidays. Making your holiday safe is one of the most important preparations of all. It is easy to become caught up in the excitement of holiday decorating and overlook potential fire hazards. Here are some simple precautions that can help make your holiday decorating safe.

1. Holiday lights and cords must be UL approved (or equivalent safety standard). Inspect lights for exposed or frayed wires, bare spots, gaps in the insulation, and excessive kinking or wear before putting them up. It is a violation of Task Force Falcon policy to run cords through doors or

- windows.
2. Indoors, only flame retardant artificial trees may be used. No live or cut trees are authorized in any Task force Falcon facility. Keep trees 36” away from any heat source.
3. Do not overload electrical circuits. Unplug devices when not attended.
4. Decorations will not be attached or hung from lights or fire detection devices, such as smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, and exit signs.
5. Decorations will be nonflammable, and fire retardant. Keep all decorations at least 36” away from any heat source.
6. Decorations will not obstruct exit doors or other means of egress.
7. No candles, or other open flame devices, are

permitted in facilities.

If you have any questions about this, or any fire safety topic, contact your Camp Fire Station or call DSN 4098 and ask for the fire prevention section.

From everyone at the Task Force Falcon Fire Department: ‘Have a happy, and fire safe, holiday season’.

Remember...report all fires!

- Camp Bondsteel Fire Reporting number is DSN 3421.
- Camp Monteith Fire Reporting number is DSN 7911.
- CAS Fire Reporting Number is DSN 1551.

Headquarters Company brings warmth to local school

by Sgt. Jamie Brown
Senior Editor

SOJEVO, Kosovo—A child goes outside to get wood, because the school gets very cold in the bitter chill of winter, and the stove needs wood to provide heat. The child's freezing hands dig through the snow and a pile of frozen wet pieces of wood to find a good one.

Thanks to soldiers of Task Force Falcon, HHC this cold reality will be replaced with a much better one.

The 15 soldiers of TFF, HHC have adopted the Ramadan Rexhepi Primary School (grades K-9) here, and are building a woodshed to house wood for the school's wood burning stove. This is just one of several things they are doing to help this school which has been through much pain in the past few years. But soldiers were focused on the woodshed project as they unloaded lumber, lined up boards and hammered nails with a sense of urgency. Winter is in the air.

"We're building a woodshed for the children here, because the school is heated by a wood furnace," said Pfc. Eric Whitman, HHC TFF. "And we need to house the wood, because it's very cold in the winter for the children to come out and just grab through and dig through the snow. So we're providing a shelter for the wood."

But just because the soldiers were focused on the task to be completed didn't mean they didn't take the time to play, talk and joke with the children. The smiling children took advantage of every opportunity to hug, shake hands and interact with the soldiers. Several children also helped by unloading lumber and pulling nails out of boards.

Children were not the only ones, however, who enjoyed themselves.

"I love it," said Whitman. "It's a big stress relief and I love seeing their smiles. It makes me happy."

According to Sgt. Scott Robertson, TFF HHC, his unit has been involved with the school almost since their first day in country.

"When we first landed in country, at the end of October, the unit from the 101st that we replaced, they brought us to the school, introduced us to the principal, and we felt like this would be a good way to do something that we knew was worthwhile," he said.

Robertson said adopting the school has been good for the soldiers and the school.

"The first time we came here we could tell this was going to be something that we would thoroughly enjoy," he said. "From what the principal has told us, right behind us, where we're building the shed, there was a tank in placement. There's a building off to the



Sgt. Jamie Brown/photo

Sgt. Scott Robertson braces boards as workers from TFF HHC build a woodshed for students of the Ramadan Rexhepi Primary School in Sojevo. The woodshed is just one of the projects soldiers of the HHC have undertaken to help the school.

left here that was bombed during the war. One of the first units that got here, the engineers, cleared two anti-tank mines from the playground that the kids play on today. The school actually, was in terrible shape. The windows were all blown out, and all the furniture was thrown out and burned. The school has come a long way, but they have a long way to go."

The principal of the school, Ekrem Hasani, agreed that his children's lives have been improved by the soldiers of Task Force Falcon.

"We are very grateful," he said. "This is not the first time that we are getting help from them. When the first soldiers came to Bondsteel, our school had a very special support. We were a village that was very badly harmed. The cooperation started with the cleaning of the fields from the mines and the repairing of the school, and continued with help for the teachers and clothing and school supplies and then the repairing of the school inside. And in this cooperation we work together, soldiers and teachers. But the greatest help that we've had is the moral help for the children, and to the people that live here, their parents. I think that all the supplies are good for us, but the moral help is the greatest."

Besides building the woodshed, the members of

TFF HHC have other plans for helping the school.

Family members back home have begun sending dental hygiene kits, clothes, toys and school supplies to give to the children. And there are other projects on the way. "We've got big plans for the future," said Whitman.

"We are also currently making a yearbook for the kids, and this is something that you can tell they're very excited about, because they've never had it," said Robertson. "We're building the woodshed, and we're also going to be building wood shelves for the kids. Here their custom is that you take your shoes off before you go in the door, so you don't dirty up the carpet. So we're going to make shelves so the kids will actually have some place to put their shoes."

All this hard work has its rewards according to Robertson.

"Personally some of the benefits for me are: number one it gets you away from Bondsteel and the same old same old every day," said Robertson. "Number two, it's great to be around kids, because I have three kids myself. It makes you reflect on home a little bit. And it makes you appreciate what you have back home, when you see the suffering these people have been through."

(OPTICAL continued from page 10)

"The last OPTCAP we went out on there was this little lady who needed a plus 13.00 Diopter lenses on each eye in order to see. She had been without lenses for the past two years because she didn't have enough money to buy glasses," McNamara said. The optical team fitted this lady with corrective lenses and her life was instantly changed. "I can see clearly for the first time in two years, the lady cried." McNamara explained that the lady was so happy she hugged us and cried and shook our hands about 10 times.

"When you're improving someone's vision, everyone's appreciative because it's such an important part of life. We receive a lot of positive feedback from the soldiers as well as the civilians that we help," said McNamara.

Everyone develops a problem with their near vision once they reach the age of about 40. "In America we go to Wal-Mart to get reading glasses, but here they have to accomplish their daily tasks with blurry vision. Most of these towns do not have any optical care at all," said McNamara.

"It makes me feel good, outside of helping soldiers, to be able to help the local nationals,"

said Hampton, a military eye specialist and NCOIC of the optometry clinic. "My number one job is assisting the doctor during these missions and making sure she can get her job done," he added.

Because of the unique situation here in Kosovo, the optometrist and her team are in short supply of plus lens glasses. We have boxes of lenses that we have been going through daily, but many of them are not the right type of prescription for this population. "We always need high plus prescriptions or reading glasses," McNamara added.

NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO START THINKING ABOUT DRIVING ON BLACK ICE

BLACK ICE :
- IS AN INVISIBLE COAT OF ICE ON ROADS
- OFTEN FORMS ON BRIDGES AND IN SHADED AREAS
- FORMS BETWEEN 30 - 35 deg F

THE ONLY WAY TO DEAL WITH BLACK ICE IS TO DRIVE CAREFULLY AND SLOWLY IN WINTER CONDITIONS

Soldiers set to ski on snowy slopes

by **Spc. Terry Boggs**
Staff Writer

BREZOVIKA, Kosovo- Skiers, wax up your skis! The much-anticipated Grand Opening of the Brezovica Ski Resort will take place soon. The ski lodge, which is situated in the upper part of the Sara mountain in the Sirinic Valley, is scheduled to open on December 19 to all KFOR military personnel and KFOR civilians throughout the Kosovo region. MWR will be sponsoring one-day trips to this Winter Wonderland, with ski equipment rental and lessons available for a small cost.

"This arrangement has two purposes," said Major James Crews, Public Affairs Officer for TFF. "First, we are providing the troops with a way to enjoy a day off. Second, we are trying to help stimulate the local economy. It is a good one-day get-away. The soldiers can ski, snowboard, inner tube or just sit around and watch T.V. in the day room inside the lodge."

According to Crews, civilian clothes can be worn, but Kevlar helmets and flack vests must be worn



Staff Sgt. Michael P. McCord/photo

The Brezovica ski resort sits high on a mountain.

while on the bus en route. There will be a room provided to store your gear once you get there, and you can leave your weapon with your unit.

There is also a restaurant there so everybody can enjoy a hot meal on

a cold day. This will be good news to everybody who is tired of eating MREs or walking to the chow hall in the freezing cold. The restaurant's menu contains a diverse selection of dishes from different places, including

soups, sandwiches and hot dishes.

The food prices are moderate as well, ranging from 1.3 DM for fried trout, to 9 DM for the smoked ham of Dalmatia. (For those who like to try new things.)

Then there is the skiing. For the avid skier, there are plenty of snow-covered slopes to challenge your athletic abilities. For the people that don't participate in this sport, there are lessons offered (also at a small cost) and recreational activities (such as a television and movies) in the day room.

So, whether you are yearning for an exciting day in the snow, or a quiet, relaxing day away from the military, run, don't walk to your nearest Finance Office and grab some Deutsch Marks (or Euros after January 1). Then head to the MWR and sign up; these trips are on a first come/first serve basis so don't wait too long. Happy trails!!

Prices are as follows: Lift pass: 15 DM, Ski school: 10 DM per class, Ski rental: 10 DM, Day room: 15 DM, Total including day room: 50 DM. Additional prices, information and a restaurant menu can be found on the TFF Website.

Get your learning on at the education center

by **Sgt. Jamie Brown**
Senior Editor

Tuition is free, counseling is free, but not doing it can be expensive. Getting an education is something soldiers can do while stationed here in Kosovo that can pay dividends long after this deployment is over.

There are Army education centers at Camp Bondsteel (2), Camp Monteith, Camp McGrath and Camp Able Sentry. According to Russell Smith, the education services officer for Task Force Falcon, there are a wide range of programs offered to soldiers.

There are two learning centers here on Bondsteel with computer labs where soldiers can do their Army correspondence courses. The computers are on the milnet so there is access to the military sites. "They can do educational stuff, of course they can get on their e-mail, but it's basically for educational purposes," said Smith. "Some of the courses we have are based on the internet so they have to go through that." The computer lab is open from 7 a.m. until midnight.

The education center also offers a testing program. This allows soldiers to take a CLEP or DANTES exam to get college credit for things they already know. "If you know it well enough to go into that class and take the final, then you'll do well," said Smith. "You have to have the knowledge before hand." It's also possible for soldiers to get college credit for military experience, and the education office can help soldiers with that.

Soldiers can also take a basics skills development program called the FAST (Functional Academic Skills Training) Class. "It's really so commanders can get soldiers up to speed to be able to work better at their jobs," said Smith. "The soldiers take a pre-test. Maybe their GT scores are low so they come into that class and they go over a review of all the math and all the English skills that they

don't have, and then they take the post test and based on that then they can take the AFCT (Armed Forces Classification Test), and try to raise their GT score. Some of them have to do that for reenlistment, some of them have to do that for certain MOSs that they want to go towards."

There are also NCO development courses offered through Central Texas College. They are one-semester hour courses that are free. There are about 20 of these courses, which are offered in a cycle. According to Smith, Sergeant Majors or First Sergeants usually teach those courses and they cover topics such as, writing the NCOER, preparing reports and sexual harassment.

The education center also has head-start language classes teaching Albanian. These are also free to the soldiers. It's a 20-hour class. These classes run mornings and nights, and the education center can also do unit classes.

The service that most soldiers are interested in, however, according to Smith is the college courses offered here.

There are three contracted schools here. The University of Maryland provides a live instruction, and holds five terms a year, which are generally eight-week semesters, according to Smith. The next term starts Jan. 14.

"We have sixty-seven classes scheduled so far," said Smith. "We'll be adding some more. Part of my problem is that I almost run out of classroom space. Last term we had 1,100 enrollments. That was pretty good. We expect to top that this time." According to Smith, the semesters are compressed into eight weeks. One semester hour is 16 hours in the classroom. Traditionally classes are twice a week three hours a class.

There are also distance education programs, and Chicago city colleges is the contracted school. They provide the video-

tape, Internet, CD Rom or e-mail based courses. According to Smith there were more than 500 enrollments with them last term.

"Those are very popular with soldiers who have shift work, where they can't go to class on a regular basis, because it's an anytime, anywhere type program," said Smith. "You can sign up today and you have 10 weeks to complete it. Most courses have maybe three tests. It depends on the course. We give testing four times a week here for that program. We also go out to the base camps to give tests."

The University of Oklahoma has also just started offering a graduate program on Camp Bondsteel. There is one graduate course scheduled for January, and the topic is international terrorism.

"It's a one-week compressed schedule," said Smith. "The class goes all day Sunday and then Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday nights for one week. Of course people have to read books before hand, and they have to write papers after the class is over. It's good elective credit. It would be a good transfer course."

If a soldier is interested in taking college courses, there are several things he or she should do, according to Smith.

1. Sit down with a counselor and try to come up with a plan. "They can come in now to look at schedule, talk to a counselor and make a plan," said Smith. "It's always good to have two to three choices in case something does get filled or it doesn't work in their schedule. It's fairly easy for us, because all of these schools require a basic core. At least half the soldiers we see have never taken a college course before, so it's really exciting for us to see them come in here and say 'What's college all about, I don't know anything about it?' And when they start to take it, and when they start to become successful, they say 'wow I can do this. I never thought I could do this.' That's what makes it rewarding

for us. So we offer a lot of the basics: English, Mathematics, History, Philosophy. I tell everybody to take English. It's the one course people want to take last, but it's the one they should take first, because if they want to go up in rank and position, they're going to have to write, and the better they write, the better they'll do in other coursework, and the better they'll do in their Army career."

2. Pick out the class or classes you want to take. "All you have to do is come in here, we have a schedule posted," said Smith. "Please look at it on a regular basis. See if a particular class agrees with your schedule."

3. Fill out a tuition assistance form. "Then we pay 100 percent tuition assistance," said Smith. "So it costs the soldier nothing. Except if you've never taken a Maryland course before there's a one-time \$30 enrollment fee. Oklahoma has a \$25 enrollment fee. The soldiers do have to buy their own books. I type up a tuition assistance form, which is a contract between you and the Army and the school. The soldier signs it, the commander or first sergeant signs it, and then they give it to the school and the school person signs it. The only obligation to the soldier is they have to pass the course. If they fail it for personal reasons, they have to pay the money back. If they don't finish the course, abandon the course they have to pay the money back. If it's a military reason, that's not their fault, then the Army does not ask for their money back. Soldiers don't need to try to take on too much. I don't want to see them have to pay the money back."

4. Take a placement test. "These schools do have placement tests, because we want the soldier to take the course that is right for them," said Smith. "It only takes about half an hour. If you're going to take math or English, you have to take the placement test. We don't want you to take a course that's too hard or too easy."

(Please see EDUCATION, page 15)

Wash your hands

Hygiene prevents sickness

by Spc. Molly Jones
Staff Writer

CAMP MONTEITH—The soldiers here know they need to wash their hands before going into the dining facility, or they'll be turned away, but they might not know all the reasons behind the madness. The onset of infectious and communicable diseases could easily be transmitted throughout the camp just by not washing your hands on entering the dining facility. The simple act of washing your hands, which people forget to do, can keep you from contracting unthinkable diseases from the little mice that run around camp trying to stay warm, the birds here that we all know and love to get away from and from our sick roommates and co-workers. "Washing your hands is the number one preventive measure that everyone can take to halt the spread of germs," said 1st Lt. Edward Hairston, Physicians Assistant for TF 1-30.

Those cute little mice we see every once in a while are only there trying to come in from the cold, but they can cause many diseases. The deadly Hanta virus is a disease advertised at the Troop Medical Clinic. The virus can be carried by the mice scurrying around camp, and is present in their urine and feces. The mice are not infected with the disease, but are carriers of it. Humans are thought to become infected when they are exposed to contaminated dust from the nests of the mice, their droppings, and even the droppings of the fleas on the mice. That could easily be hidden within dust and inhaled when stirred during cleaning.

Initial symptoms of the disease resemble influenza, or the flu, which is common this time of year. The disease begins abruptly with fever, chills, severe muscle aches, headache, nausea and vomiting. A dry cough may be present. For a very short period, the infected person feels somewhat better, but this is followed within a day or two by an increased respiratory rate caused by a seepage of fluid into the lungs, sometimes resulting in death. If you think you have been exposed, contact your TMC immediately.

Another disease that can be contracted by small rodents is leptospirosis, but cats, dogs, and pigs can also carry the bacteria. The bacteria can pass through abrasions in the skin. Leptospirosis is usually a short illness that produces a variety of symptoms that begins with fever, headache, chills, and nausea. Later, symptoms can include jaundice and skin rashes, which aid in the diagnosis. Although this disease can be easily treated with antibiotics, soldiers should still think twice before petting stray dogs and cats.

A disease very similar to the Hanta virus is histoplasmosis, which can be contracted from the birds that flock to Camp Monteith on a nightly basis. Histoplasmosis exists as a spore in their droppings. When dried, the spores can be released into the atmosphere and inhaled. In most cases, the symptoms are mild and most commonly occur as a respiratory infection similar to the cold or flu, but are rarely fatal.

With the close quarters most soldiers are living in, germs can be spread very easily. Most soldiers here at Camp Monteith are or will be experiencing sore throats and coughs. These symptoms could simply be the common cold or flu due to allergies, or the drastic climate change from the outside temperature to the hot rooms where heaters are constantly run, "which even I am guilty of doing," said Hairston. To decrease the risk of contracting this illness from sick roommates, slightly open the windows at night rather than letting the rooms get stuffy. The air circulation in the rooms is the most important factor in ceasing the continuation of the illness, which can lead to upper respiratory infections such as strep throat and pharyngitis. "Once again, washing your hands is very important to do very often. Since many of us cover our mouths to cough, the germs can spread this way very easily," said Hairston. Now, does anyone want to enter the dining facility without washing his or her hands?

A Co., 1-508th sweeps border during weapons search

by Spc. Bill Putnam
Staff Writer

STUBLINA, Kosovo—Crashing through the brush on a steep hill side like a billy goat, Pfc. Earl Limos bent over to try and catch his breathe in a remote spot located near the Kosova-Serbia border.

Climbing these hills isn't easy, and lugging the platoon leader's radio doesn't make it any easier. He didn't say anything but the expression on his face said it all: this is hard work.

Limos is in Co. A, 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment. They jumped into Kosovo from their base in Vincenza, Italy, Nov. 28 to demonstrate KFOR's ability to rapidly deploy forces into this region.

A few days later his platoon was out sweeping the cold, densely wooded hills for weapons caches.

What they found after hours of slipping and sliding over hill and dale was a destroyed house and evidence of people preparing for the winter.

After being dropped off just outside of the small town near the boundary, 2nd Platoon, A Co., 1-508th, moved off into the hills.

After walking down the first of many hills and crossing a stream they found a horse corral.

"(The wood cutters) keep their horses in here while they're out cutting wood," Sgt. Darren Hiller, a team leader in the platoon, explained. "It keeps them from having the horses constantly tied up."

From there they climbed, slipped, and slid all over the hills of a long, narrow valley that ran along the boundary.

The house they found seemed to appear out of nowhere. Like many of the trails they found that day, the house wasn't on the map.

Hiller said it looked blown up. Grass grew over the house's stacked-rock foundation, and red-



Spc. Bill Putnam/photo

Pfc. Earl Limos, a radiotelephone operator in 2nd Platoon, Co. A, 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, looks walks through the woods near Stublina on a weapons cache sweep recently.

clay roof tiles were scattered around the yard.

"It looks a little old to be blown up," Pfc. Jesse Nelson, an infantryman in the platoon, said.

After marking the position on the map, they started their sweep again.

The rest of the sweep went smooth and uneventfully. Off in the distance they heard a chain-saw. They stopped a few times to figure out where it was coming from but couldn't, the numerous hills distorting the sound.

The last time they stopped, the sky off to the west was a dull red and pink color: time to head back. Walking through the woods was something no one relished.

As it the sun set off to the west, the sweeping unit headed to their pickup point near Stublina.

After a long, uneventful day that made them all sore, the sweep was over.

How to beat the 'G.I. Blues' during the holiday season



Spc. Molly Jones/photo

Staff Sgt. Rolando Loya, C Co., TF 1-30 likes to play pool and visit with friends to enjoy the holidays while away from home.

by Spc. Molly Jones
Staff Writer

Elvis probably didn't have us in mind when he sang "Blue Christmas", but it is certainly fitting for all of the soldiers of KFOR. We're all away from home this holiday season, and there is cause for much sadness, but we have to remember that the holidays are supposed to be a time of happiness. "Our families back home don't want us to sit over here and sulk by ourselves in our rooms," said Capt. Jill Henderson, 83rd Medical Detachment (Combat Stress). "There are plenty of things to keep us active and to keep a sense of community."

"I hate the fact that I'm away from my wife at Christmas, but I decided beforehand that I wasn't going to let that get to me," said Spc. Michael Phillips, TF 1-30th S-3 Radio Teletype Operator. "You just have to be completely absorbed in the mission. I try to keep a

positive attitude, I mean, there's no sense in being miserable for six months. So, I like to make everyone around me happy, too."

We have to remember to keep a positive outlook and stay active. There is so much for us to do that was not accessible to previous rotations such as improved MWR facilities like the gym and the theater, and as always, the chapel has events scheduled on a regular basis. "These are great places to congregate and fellowship with other soldiers and to have a sense of involvement," said Sgt. James Gonzales, 83rd Medical Detachment.

Staying involved is a great preventative measure for warding off the holiday blues, but whether deployed or not, the season can still come with stress. The holidays tend to be a time of year for increased spending, and many soldiers feel as though they should spend more on loved ones back home to compensate for the separation, but this will only cause more stress down the road, emphasized Gonzales.

Another way to cope with the holiday blues would be to not interrupt the current schedule. In other words, if it works for you to not know what day it is, and let all of the days run together, that's fine. "Whatever works best for the soldier," said Henderson.

"There is a lot of hope wrapped up in December," said Henderson. Just because it is a time to celebrate and be happy doesn't mean everyone is happy. We all need to be aware of what is going on with the people around us and support each other, explained Henderson.

"People need to know that if they're going to be around me, they're going to laugh and have a good time. It's not possible to successfully make it through a deployment with a bad attitude. So turn that frown up-side-down!" Phillips said with a big smile.

Chaplain's Corner

Make memories as you celebrate this holiday season

by Chaplain (Maj.) David M. Scheider
TFF Chaplain

What are your favorite holiday traditions? Some of you have families enjoying Chanukah together in the synagogue and around the family table. Others will end the Ramadan fast. There will also be some who celebrate Kwanza. A fairly large percentage of the Task Force will remember Christmas celebrations.

I grew up in an Army family my entire childhood. Over the years we moved many times and several years we lived near grandparents when Dad went to either Korea or Vietnam. No matter where we lived, we observed traditions. They served to anchor us and to help us children find an identity. I suppose these observances took the place of a neighborhood or community to help us feel at home.

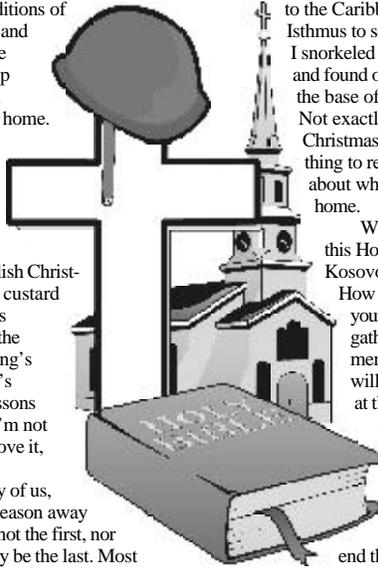
As a child, my favorite of all holidays was Christmas. I confess that it had much more to do with my greed to get presents than welcoming the Baby Jesus' birth. No matter where we lived, the tree went up. After Dad placed the Angel at the top and hung the lights, we meticulously trimmed it with ornaments collected over the years from many exotic places. Mom would make hot chocolate to reward us for our "hard" work. I don't want to make it seem like a scene from Norman Rockwell, but it was a family thing at its best.

Now that I am older, some of the

Christmas traditions of my childhood and my wife's have blended to help our kids feel a sense of being home. We have added a few British touches to suit her origins. I now love English Christmas cake, hot custard over Christmas Pudding, and the Cambridge King's College Choir's Service of Lessons and Carols. (I'm not sure the kids love it, yet.)

For many of us, this Holiday Season away from home is not the first, nor will it probably be the last. Most of us remember that the first time away from home for the Holidays was the hardest. It seems less of a concern later. I guess we all learn to adapt.

My first Christmas away from home was when I had barely turned 19 and was a missionary in Panama. Nothing is as meaningful as being with family during the holidays, but much to my surprise, the day turned out well. I spent the morning with some friends on the Pacific and then took the old train



to the Caribbean side of the Isthmus to see other friends. I snorkeled in the afternoon and found old cannonballs at the base of a Spanish fort. Not exactly a classic Christmas, but still something to remember and about which to write home.

What will you do this Holiday season in Kosovo or Macedonia? How will you and your new "family" gather to make a few memories? There will be a great feast at the Dining Facility. We will have a visiting Rabbi for Chanukah. The Muslim community will end their Ramadan

fast. The Archbishop for the Roman Catholic Military Archdiocese will celebrate midnight mass and Christmas mass. There will be a collective service on Dec. 21, at 7 p.m. at the North Chapel (CBS) with three choirs for a service of lessons and carols.

Perhaps my favorite holiday story is about American soldiers in a POW camp during WWII. One of them had a plain candle that he had been hoard-

ing. He planned to eat it as a special treat on Christmas Day. Obviously they were starving. On Christmas Eve, one of the soldiers gathered the group and they shared their memories of the holidays. Eventually one remembered Church services and some of the prayers and scriptures. Others shared their memorized verses. They worshiped, huddled together. Finally the one with the candle went to his bunk and pulled out the little stash. Returning to the group, he lit the candle in the darkness. Soon the darkness retreated to the light of the candle and the warmth of the worship. Their hearts were filled as they remembered that for Christians, this is the time of year to celebrate that the Light of the World came to dispel the darkness and to dwell in the flesh among us.

One of the gifts I plan to give my family this Christmas is to let them know I will have a great time. I will go out of my way to be happy and to celebrate the Holiday season. I know that this will please them greatly. I will also let them know I look forward to next year being with them to celebrate the old and comfortable traditions.

I hope that all of you have a happy and blessed Holiday Season. No matter which Holy event you commemorate, we share the common bond of spiritual things that give us meaning to this life. We all celebrate that we are not isolated from God. We joyfully give thanks that God loves us and blesses us.

CBS Worship Service

Peacekeepers Chapel (North)

Sunday

8 a.m., Episcopal/Lutheran
9:30 a.m., Roman Catholic Mass
11 a.m., Collective Protestant
12:30 p.m., Gospel Service

Monday

7 p.m., Women's and Single Soldiers' Bible studies

Tuesday

7 p.m., Catholic RCIA

Wednesday

12 p.m., Roman Catholic Mass
6:30 p.m., Prayer Service
7 p.m., Bible Studies

Thursday

7 p.m., Choir Rehearsal (Gospel)

Friday

12 p.m., Muslim Prayer Service
7 p.m., Gospel Joy Night Service

Saturday

6:30 p.m., Stay Faithful Marriage Bible Study

South Chapel

Sunday

8 a.m., Roman Catholic Mass
9:30 a.m., Collective Protestant
11 a.m., LDS Service
4 p.m., Gospel Service

Monday

7 p.m., Collective Protestant Choir Rehearsal

Tuesday

12 p.m., Roman Catholic Mass

Wednesday

7 p.m., Bible Study

Thursday

7 p.m., Bible Study

Friday

8 p.m., Jewish

Saturday

11 a.m., Seventh Day Adventist Service
7 p.m., Choir Rehearsal (Gospel)

CMT Worship Service

Sunday

9 - 10:30 a.m., General Protestant Service
11 a.m. - 1 p.m., Gospel Service
1:30 - 2:30 p.m., LDS Worship
7 - 8 p.m., Catholic Mass

Monday

7 p.m., Chapel Movie Night w/ Discussion

Tuesday

7 - 9 p.m., Gospel Worship Practice

Wednesday

6:30 - 7:30 p.m., Gospel Worship Practice
7:30 - 9 p.m., Bible Study

Thursday

6 - 7 p.m., General Protestant Practice
7 - 8 p.m., General Protestant Bible Study
8 - 9 p.m., General Protestant Worship

Friday

12 - 1 p.m., Muslim Service in Annex
7 - 8:30 p.m.

Saturday

11 a.m. - 12 p.m., Seventh Day Adventist Worship

Sector Worship

Protestant

Saturday
2 p.m., Debelde
4 p.m., Binae Church

Sunday

Camp Magrath, 10 a.m.
Zintinje Church, 11:30 a.m.
Klokot, 2 p.m.
Mogila, 3:30 p.m.
Vrbovac Church, 4:30 p.m.
Vrbovac, 7 p.m.

Latter Day Saints

Sunday
Camp Magrath, 2 p.m.

Roman Catholic

Monday
Klokot, 2 p.m.
Vrbovac, 4 p.m.
Camp Magrath, 7 p.m.

Other Activities

Sunday
Movie Night- 11 p.m.
Tuesday
Bible Study, 8 p.m.

(EDUCATION continued from page 13)

We want one that's just right for you. They might as well do that now, while there is plenty of time instead of doing it the day of, because, we're going to be doing that up there too of course, that's going to delay them an hour."

5. Register for classes. Register

for the next term, which begins on Jan. 14, starts Jan. 5 at 7 a.m. in the Camp Bondsteel Theater. Registration will last for 10 days. Education center representatives will be there doing counseling and tuition assistance. Smith advises soldiers to remember that

getting the tuition assistance form does not guarantee you a spot in the class; you must also register for that class. Class schedules are located now in the education center, and on the Camp Bondsteel computer system public folders in the CBS education center

folder.

If you have any questions about the education services here, drop by the either of the education offices at Camp Bondsteel, North Town and South Town. They are open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Dog Day afternoons...

MP K-9 Cops walk the dog during force protection missions



Spc. Taylor Barbaree/photo

U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Jody Grove gets a hug from Buddy at day's end.

by Spc. Taylor Barbaree
Editor

CAMP BONDSTEEL— Their work may have gone to the dogs, but for a group of TF 504th MP's they wouldn't settle for anything less.

"I enjoy what I do, because it is different from anything else that I have ever done in the Army," explained Staff Sgt. Ian Pitcavage, about his job as a dog handler with TF 504th. "I have been working with K-9's for more than four years. The opportunities that I have had have been endless. I have worked with numerous law enforcement agencies. The uniqueness of working in this position is that I am able to make decisions about (how I do my job).

Pitcavage said there is also the reward of the relationship that comes with working with man's best-known friend.

"There is a special bond there," he said, of his relationship with his 108-pound, 3-year-old German Shepherd named Rex. "Especially in an environment like this because I have an opportu-

nity to spend more time with him."

Pitcavage said he has been working with Rex for more than a year.

"Rex deployed with me here from Fort Riley (Kansas) and we will go back home together at the end of this rotation," he said, adding that Rex' primary mission here is to detect unexploded ordnance.

Staff Sgt. Kenneth Throckmorton, TF 504th Kennelmaster said the handlers and K-9's (six of each) are not only

used for bomb detection, but for other force protection issues.

"We have used them (dogs) to detect drugs, during border missions and also during weapon searches," he said. "They are an asset to us and what our overall mission is here, which is to provide a safe and secure environment."

To work in the field of law enforcement, Throckmorton said the dogs as well as their handlers go through numerous training programs.

"It is just like anything else, these handlers and their dogs are trained and trained on how to perform their jobs. That is where the trust is built," he said. "Our time together usually begins after PT each day. We come in and feed them, exercise them and clean their kennels. We are

"It is just like anything else, these handlers and their dogs are trained and retrained on how to perform their jobs. That is where the trust is built."

— Staff Sgt. Kenneth Throckmorton,
TF 504th Kennelmaster

then ready for assignments to come through the PMO (Provost Marshall's Office). Throckmorton said during the course of the day the Dog Working Section, as they are often referred to, will do a number of force protection related missions.

Aside from German Shepherd's the K-9 officers of Task Force Falcon are also the Belgian Malnoise breeds.

The DWS however not only consists of handlers from the Army, but the Air Force as well. Staff Sgt. Jody Grove, U.S. Air Force, is also attached to the DWS during rotation 3B.

"The handlers (as well as their dogs) come from different installations back in the states," explained Master Sgt. Charles Kirkland, TFF Provost Sergeant Major. "So the first time they worked together was at Fort Polk during the MRE. They have really pulled together for this deployment."



Spc. Taylor Barbaree/photo

Sgt. Kevin Criss, a dog handler with TF 504th, and Baron, a German Shepherd police dog, inspect a truck as part of force protection measures.