TASK FORCE FALCON

Falcon Flier

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Task Force Falcon mourns for victims

"These acts of mass murder were intended to frighten our nation into chaos and retreat, but they have failed. Our country is strong. Terrorist acts can shake the foundation of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America."

-President George W. Bush-

The United States flag and Rotation 3A flag grimly hover at half mast as Task Force Falcon soldiers mourn the loss of our countrymen.

Sgt. Matthew Bregande(left) and Spc. Aaron Walberg(right) of the Delta Company 2/ 44th Air Defense Artillery attached to 2-502 Infantry Regiment, conduct a perimeter security check around the KFOR Observation Point in Kodra Fura, Kosovo on August 31, 2001. KFOR soldiers set up the observation point to observe illegal border crossings.

Right: Pfc. Jason Leaverton, a gunner for A. Company of the 2-502nd Infantry Regiment, hands a student needed school supplies for first day of school.

left: Fire fighters at Camp Monteith carry an injured soldier in a simulated mass casualty exercise that was held on August 24.

Finish the race running strong

Story by Brig. Gen. Bill David
Task Force Falcon Commander

[redacted]

The Super Bowl is coming: Are you an All Star?

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

[redacted]

[redacted]

May God bless America during this tragedy

We have witnessed a national tragedy. We are deeply saddened by the senseless loss of life in Washington D.C., New York City, and Pennsylvania.

I am touched by the support that has been expressed to our Task Force by our allies and by private citizens here. Thank you.

I would not guess at how this horrible event will affect the future of our armed forces, our country, or our world. One thing is clear from the example of our leadership at ground zero of this tragedy – our mission and our lives go forward.

As part of a worldwide precaution, we increased our force protection posture. We will assess these prudent measures regularly. While there is no indication that there is an imminent threat here, we must be vigilant. In the coming days, members of this Task Force will need emotional support. This is what a team is for.

God bless the families and friends of those whose lives were lost. God bless America. We pray for justice.

-Words by Brig. Gen. Bill David

Falcon Flier

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How much beauty sleep do you need?

Story and photo by
Spc. Travis Bascom
358th MPAD

Having a hard time catching up on your beauty sleep with the constant loud flapping of CH-47 (Chinook) rotor blades spitting up dust at Camp Able Sentry?

Well, get use to being ugly, because these helicopters are literally the bread and butter of both Task Force Falcon and Operation Essential Harvest.

Both B Company of the 7-101st Varsity Aviation from Fort Cambell, Kentucky and F Company of the 159th Big Windy Aviation from Gieblestadt, Germany are working overtime delivering vital supplies to troops in the surrounding area.

Nearly 75 soldiers and eight Chinooks are involved in delivering essentials like food, mail, mechanical parts, and office supplies, along with an endless list of what a modern day army needs to keep its troops afloat.

"We're the only game in town," said Support Operations Sgt. 1st Class Charles T. Silver, B Company of the 7-101st. "We're the prime means for this theater."

Since the opening of Operation Essential Harvest, the two companies' workloads have increased to around 50 percent greater than what they normally experience.

"Our tempo has increased quite a bit," said Silver.

The 15 ton helicopters have the ability to load shipping packages, called CONEXs, that can weigh closely the same as the CH-47s that carry them.

CH-47s prepare to carry essential supplies from Camp Able Sentry to Camp Bondsteel.

In addition to moving supplies, the CH-47s also transfer personnel throughout the sector. People at CAS who need to conduct business at CBS can drop by the Personal Processing Center (PAS/PAX) on Camp Able Sentry where flight manifests are available.

For the past two weeks flights have been leaving to Camp Bondsteel three times a day every day.

The process to register for a flight is fairly simple. Before the departure time, sign up on the flight roster under Passenger Manifesting (Air).

Since demand is stiff, passengers need to be aware that there is no guarantee that flights will be available. There is also the chance that a flight back will be booked and the passenger will have to seek lodging on the visited base.

With all that the companies deliver they also deliver a cheerful attitude.

"We love doing this," said Silver. "Because that's what we do."

A Co. of the 2-502nd supplies students of Vrbovac/Vrboc with a brighter future

Story and photo by
Sgt. Gary Peterson
358th MPAD

The fear of having their lunch money stolen on the first day of school disappears as soldiers from the 2-502nd Infantry Regiment drive onto the school playground in Vrbovac.

Though the soldiers didn't come to offer protection from playground bullies, they brought another welcomed gift for every student.

"We're handing out school supplies as part of a humanitarian aid project," said Cpt. John Cox, commander of A Company of the 2-502nd Infantry Regiment.

Notebooks, workbooks, pencils, pens, chalk and chalkboards were donated to the all Serbian school in Vrbovac/Vrboc. Each of the 240 students were given a packet containing supplies for their particular grade, first thru eighth.

"A lot of these folks, being as poor as they are, probably would have had a hard time coming up with supplies on their own," said 1st Lt. Kevin Gaunt, the executive officer for A Company of the 2-502nd Infantry Regiment.

Gaunt explained that the students had been using books that were several years old and falling apart. He said that many of the students were even showing up without any books or school supplies.

"It makes you feel good because they are under-privileged, and we're giving them something they wouldn't have otherwise," said Pfc. Jason Leaverton, a gunner with A Company of the 2-502nd Infantry Regiment. "It is kind of cool when they come up and look grateful to you for handing them things."

Cox said that this was just one of the many humanitarian projects that his unit has done for the school.

"We try to do as many humanitarian aid projects as we can," said Cox. "Before school started this year, we had new floors placed in some of the classrooms. They were in bad condition."

Cox said that they had also put in new doors on the classrooms. He said that they also were currently working on trying to get the roof repaired.

"Children are the future here in Kosovo," said Lt. Col. Christopher Reddish, Battalion commander of the 2-502nd Infantry Regiment. "By doing these kinds of activities the children get the benefit of looking forward to a future where they can make a difference."

The Kosovo Protection Corps, TMK, also helped the soldiers of A Company to distribute the supplies.

"I am very happy and grateful that I can get this opportunity to help out Serbian and Albanian kids as equals," said Maj. Bafti Lubishtani commander of TMK Detachment 363. "I hope I can do more in the future."

Reddish said that the TMK's support of this project showed their willingness to assist not only Albanians but also Serbs.

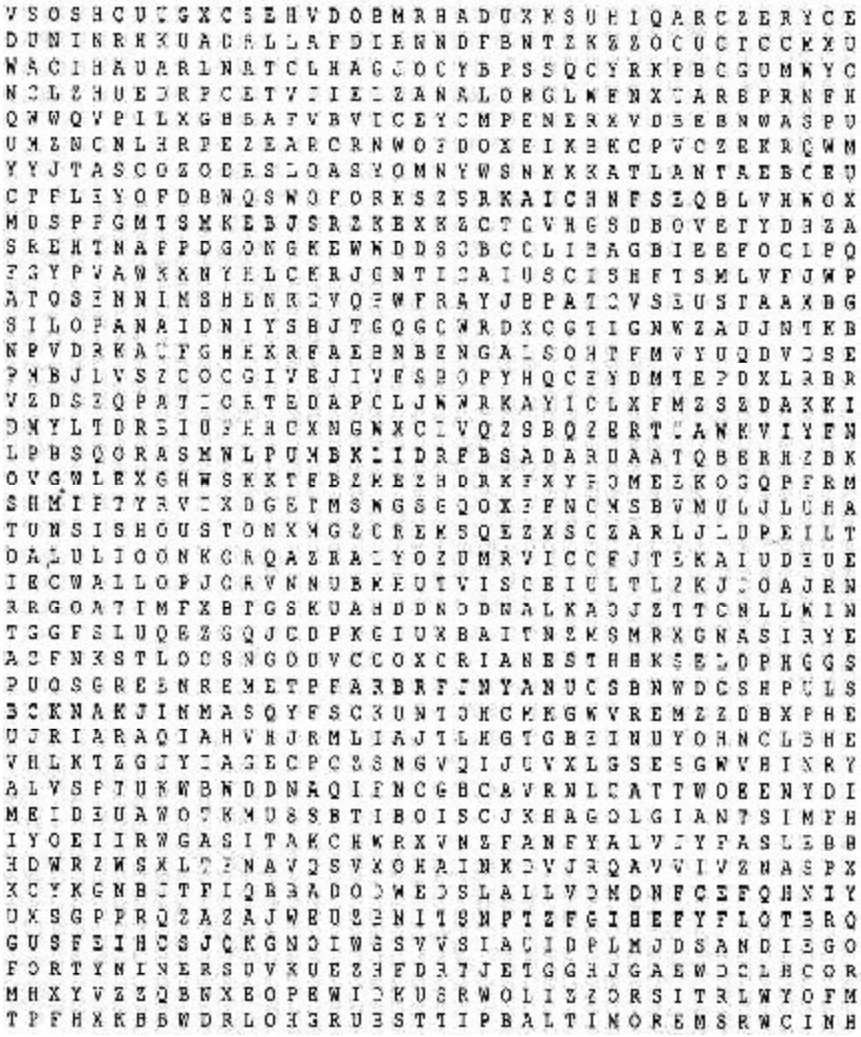
"It demonstrates the TMK's willingness to be a professional organization to rise above an ethnic rivalry," said Reddish.

Sgt 1st Class Michael Dougharty, civil military operations for A Company of the 2-502nd Infantry Regiment, said that Albanians helping Serbians and the Serbians helping Albanians is part of the focus of their mission.

"I call it baby steps," said Dougharty. "It is that first step towards everyone working together."

Cpl. Valdet Zuka, a member of the TMK 363 Detachment, hands out school supplies to children of Vrbobach's school with the help of Pfc. Jason Leaverton, a gunner with A Company of the 2-502nd Infantry Regiment.

WORDSEARCH: GRID IRON MAYHEM



Word Key:

ARIZONA
ATLANTA
BALTIMORE
BAY
BEARS
BENGALS
BILLS
BRONCOS
BROWNS
BUCCANEERS
BUFFALO
CARDINALS
CAROLINA
CHARGERS
CHICAGO
CHIEFS
CINCINNATI
CLEVELAND
COLTS
COWBOYS
DALLAS
DENVER
DETROIT
DOLPHINS
EAGLES
FALCONS
FORTYNINERS
GIANTS
GREEN
HOUSTON
INDIANAPOLIS
JACKSONVILLE
JAGUARS
JETS
KANSASCITY
LIONS
MIAMI
MINNESOTA
NEWENGLAND
NEWORLEANS
NEWYORK
OAKLAND
PACKERS
PANTHERS
PATRIOTS
PHILADELPHIA
PITTSBURGH
RAIDERS
RAMS
RAVENS
REDSKINS
SAINTS
SANDIEGO
SANFRANCISCO
SEAHAWKS
SEATTLE
STEELERS
STLOUIS
TAMPABAY
TENNESSEE
TEXANS
TITANS
VIKINGS
WASHINGTON

FALCON'S FORCE

As a soldier how do you feel about the attacks in the US ?

Sgt. Mathew B. Rodriguez
Medic with the 2-502nd Infantry Regiment

"This is an attack against the military, and it reminds us that we put ourselves in harms way."

Spc. Jessica Rudolfo, UAV operator, A Company 15th MI Battalion

"I was shocked and angry. I can't believe how people would go out and hurt other people like that."

PV2. Elijah Capel
130th Engineer Brigade

"I feel like I have something to defend against, like I'm here for a purpose."

Pfc. Jesse Vautour, infantryman, D Company, 3-502nd Infantry Regiment

"I would like to go to war with whoever did this. But being so far away it feels like we can't do anything about it."

Pfc. Christopher Logue, UAV operator, A Company 15th MI Battalion

"I have mixed feeling about it. It's upsetting and frustrating because here you are; you're supposed to protect people and you can't.."

Spc. Dennis Martinez Administrator with the 3rd Logistics Task Force.

"It makes me proud of what I do for my country. I'm very sad about those that have died innocent."

11th Engineers build bridge in Vrbovac/Vrboc

Story and photos by
Spc. Maria Jaramillo
358th MPAD

A bucketloader lifts and drops broken off sections of the bridge to break it into smaller pieces before hauling it off to the dump truck. The Vrbovac bridge was torn down as the first step in the recontruction of a new one. This was a joint American and Swiss effort to repair a bridge that was damaged in the 1999 NATO occupation.

The bridge crossed over a five-foot creek. Despite its composition of old cement and metal, it had weathered many seasons of rain, snow and traffic. Cracks started to appear around the edges, and one day, as it supported the weight of NATO tanks and vehicles, it collapsed and cut off the only way over the water.

Combat Engineers, in cooperation with the Swiss military, have been working in the village of Vrbovac/Vrboc to get the bridge back up. The American and Swiss NATO soldiers have taken down the bridge, cleaned up the dust and are getting ready to lay a new, stronger bridge that will withstand years of use for the Kosovo people.

The old bridge was 90 feet across, and the American engineers' main job was to take out both the collapsed half of the bridge and the half that was still standing.

"Because it was already broken when we got here, the hardest part about the bridge was cutting it at an angle," said Pvt. Brad A. Gaskins, an armored vehicle launching bridge (AVLB) driver with Assault and Obstacle Platoon, C Company of the 11th Engineer Battalion.

In order to sever the rest of the bridge, the engineers used the AVLB to place a temporary metal bridge so that cars could bypass the creek without getting in the way of the deconstruction.

The engineers then used handheld jackhammers to begin the project. Because of the angle of the collapsed half, they used two people to operate the machine. One soldier needed to anchor the jackhammer while the other drilled through the cement. Using two people on the machine ensured that with the proper safety precautions any possible accidents were avoided.

Not all of the bridge required handheld machinery, and on the half still stable enough to support the weight of a bobcat with a drill attachment was used. The bobcat pierced through the cement in a systematic row until a section was broken off.

A bobcat drills into a bridge to break it ip into sections.

"The bobcat is a lot faster to use, because you have to run hydraulic hoses from the truck to the (handheld) jack and the hoses can only go so far," said Sgt. Vincent M. Adams, a tank commander with Assault and Obstacle Platoon, C Company of the 11 Engineer Battalion.

As each section broke off, it was hooked up to a Swiss crane and lifted to the growing pile of rubble. The Swiss soldiers worked side-by-side with the Americans.

"The Swiss are great to work with. They come in here knowing they've got a job to do and get working and afterwards we can have time to talk," Adams said.

A bucket loader broke the sections further down by lifting and dropping the massive cement slabs against the ground. When the slabs were reduced to manageable chunks, the bucket loader would then move the pile to a dump truck. This kept the area where the soldiers were working clear.

"We are also cleaning up all the trash around the area," said Sgt. 1st Class Karl A. Hunter, the non-commissioned officer in charge of the project, Assault and Obstacle Platoon, C Company of the 11th Engineer Battalion.

When the new bridge is up and the creek is clear of debris, Vrbovac/Vrboc will not only have something that will help safe traveling through their village, but a clean slate to keep their environment clean.

A bucketloader lifts and drops broken off sections of bridge to break it into smaller pieces before hauling it off to the dump truck.

A combat engineer hooks a chain up to a cut off section of the bridge.

Marine LCpl. Pablo Bicca of the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit Special Operations Capable (MEU) provides security for his sector in support of the cordon a
Gusica, Kosovo on September 7th, 2001. The 24th MEU is looking for weapons caches and contraband in support of Operation Joint Guardian.

Sgt. David Leibenguth of the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit Special Operations Capable (MEU), pulls security outside of a house in Gusica, Kosovo on September 7, 2001. Marines from the MEU are in Gusica to conduct a cordon and search, they are looking for weapons caches and other contraband items, including a suspected organized crime leader.

A U.S. M-1097 Modified Avenger Fire Unit sits at the KFOR Observation Point in Koc
September 01, 2001 to observe the Kosovo-Macedonia border. The unit is manned
and Pvt. John Feldman of 2nd Battery 2/44th Air Defense Artillery attached to 2-5(
KFOR soldiers set up the observation point to observe illegal border crossings.

the cordon and search mission in the town of

An American soldier monitors communications form the turret of a High Mobility Multi-pupose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV) supporting the Polish and Ukrainian Battalion's (POLUKRBAT) cordon and search mission in the town of Gorance, Kosovo on August 30th, 2001. The POLUKRBAT is looking for weapons caches and contraband in support of Operation Joint Guardian.

Pfc. Marshall Emerson of the 55th Signal Company, Combat Camera and Pfc. Adam Williams of the Delta Company 2/44th Air Defense Artillery attached to 2-502nd Infantry Regiment, use night vision surveillance equipments to observe the Kosovo-Macedonia border at KFOR Observation Point in Kodra Fura, Kosovo. KFOR soldiers set up the observation point to observe illegal border crossings.

Point in Kodra Fura, Kosovo on
t is manned by Sgt. Kevin Price
ched to 2-502nd Infantry Regiment.
rossings.

Spc. Timme Lunford looks through the thermal night sights of the Tube launch Optically tracked Wireguided(TOW) system to observe the Kosovo-Macedonia border at KFOR Observation Point in Kodra Fura, Kosovo on September 01, 2001. Spc. Lunford is from Delta Company 2/44 Air Defense Artillery attached to 2-502 Infantry Regiment. KFOR soldiers set up the observation point to observe illegal border crossings.

During a mass casualty exercise at Camp Monteith August 24, medics from all camp components organized casualties and ranked them in accordance with Expectant, Delaid and Minimal.

Car and bus collision causes 20 moulage casualties

Story and photos by
Spc. Engels Tejeda
358th MPAD

A car and bus collision resulted in 20 casualties at Camp Monteith Aug. 24. Injuries ranged from burns to lethal head and spinal wounds. The bus burst into flames after its gas tank was ruptured.

This terrifying, but likely scenario, is all part of a mass casualty exercise in which several elements within the camp tested their abilities to respond to such a catastrophe. The units responded as follows:

Under careful management the skeleton of a car was set on fire near gate two. All around lay twenty soldiers, exhibiting burned body parts, symptoms of shock and head trauma, as well as other injuries. Their faces and body parts had been distorted with moulage and they frantically screamed for help or made statements of sorrow such as "I'll never see home again." The accident happened at 1:04 p.m.

A soldier at gate two "witnessed" the accident, and immediately called the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) for Headquarters and Headquarters Company with the 1st Brigade. The EOC immediately notified the camp's fire department, force protection, and the Troop Medical Center.

Camp Monteith's compact size allowed for the firefighters to notice the flames just seconds before the EOC called them. They were ready and in complete protective gear in accordance with their safety regulations. They arrived at the site at 1:07 p.m., only three minutes after the accident happened.

A soldier plays a casualty at Camp Monteith during a mass casualty exercise August 24. The soldiers said the exercise was "extremely realistic.

Once on site, the fire department formed two teams. One team focused on deterring the fire, while the other team began attending to the casualties. The firefighters continued to organize the casualties and provided whatever support necessary to the medics throughout the remainder of the exercise.

James Peterson, assistant fire chief at Monteith, said that his team handled everything like they were supposed to.

"On any type fire, the fire department will respond," said Peterson. "Whether it be an explosion or any other fire, we will respond... so this is good for my team because during an exercise (like this) you can find out if you can handle the real deal."

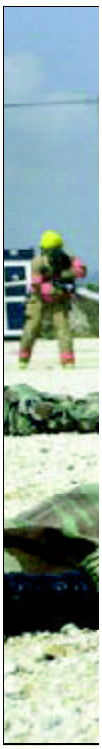
Peterson said his team proved they were able to handle a situation like this. He said that the team consists of three Americans and four local firefighters and that they did the job efficiently.

According to 1st Lt. Lewis Ratchford, anti-terrorist officer at Camp Monteith, the function of all elements relies on the safety and security that is provided by force protection. In the current scenario, force protection was deemed not only an asset, but also an eminent factor.

"If the area (were) not secure, the medics could not go in there and do their job safely," said Ratchford.

A team of soldiers from the Force Protection cell at Camp

MASCAL continued on page 12...



Soldiers pl
participate

ordance with the TRIAGE system: Immediate,

Fire fighters at Camp Monteith participate in a mass casualty exercise August 24. The exercise included the participation of Force Protection, the Fire Department, all support elements, and all medical components at the camp.

Soldiers play casualty at Camp Monteith August 24. The soldiers were part of a mass casualty exercise in which all medical components in the camp participated. In the background, the "autobus in which 20 soldiers were traveling" burns in flames.

Task Force Falcon is re-supplied

Story and photos by
Spc. Maria Jaramillo
358th MPAD

Broken humvees sit baking in the sun, as the needed supplies to fix them stand weeks away. Food rations were slowly sifting down to Meals-Ready-to-Eat. Even worse, there has been no letters from home for what seems to be forever. Yet a little over an hour away, there are warehouses full of food, mail, and supplies waiting to be delivered.

The road crossing the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia border had been closed with civilian-made blockades. These blockades were stopping the transportation of food and supplies from Camp Able Sentry (CAS), the American logistical support camp. Everything from water and dry goods to mission essential repair equipment could not be transported to the soldiers of Task Force Falcon.

Then entered the "not-so-little" Engines that could.

"Our highest priority was the bottled water," said Lt. Col. Darrell K. Williams, the commander of 3d Logistics Task Force, Task Force Falcon.

Back at Bondsteel, the Logistical Task Force worked hard to create the new modes of carrying food, supplies and equipment.

"On a typical day we would probably move anywhere between 10 and 20 truckloads of supplies. With the roads closed, most of our supplies were backlogged," Williams said.

While shutting down the road was an inconvenience for 3d Logistics Task Force, because convoys of supplies were the most efficient way of resupply, it was not a scenario they were unprepared for.

When we were back at the MRE (Mission Rehearsal Exercise) one of the things we placed a premium on was sling-load operation and this is something that we practiced and were prepared for Williams said.

The two-week exercise proved its worth with this real-world situation. Soon CH-47 Chinooks were carrying not only soldiers between the two base camps, but also connexes full of goods that would have been stuck across the border. With the road blocked, the Chinooks' workload tripled, and it was only a matter of time before 3d Logistics Task Force came through with another way to deliver the supplies.

"The CH-47s were used almost immediately, but it took another week and a half to get the trains rolling," Williams said.

When the routes between the logistic camp and Camp Bondsteel were open and free of congestion, convoys of supplies traveled quickly and most efficiently by road. The alternate method of using trains takes about the same amount of time to travel, but the offloading of the connexes at the railhead and then transportation to Bondsteel adds much more time to resupplying the task force.

"When things are functioning normally, taking them by road is actually the quickest way overall, but under these conditions, a train works just fine," Williams said.

The trains arrived at the Brown & Root railhead carrying 64 connexes. After the train docked, cranes and forklifts began lifting the metal boxes off the railway cars and onto the transporters that would carry them to Bondsteel.

This new element to the supply system will help ensure that no matter what the situation may hold, 3d Logistics Task Force is taking care of the Task Force Falcon soldiers.

"We will continue to use a combination of those means to make sure the Task Force continues to get resupplied," Williams said.

A crane lowers a 13-ton connex onto a transporter that will carry it back to Camp Bondsteel.

A forklift takes a 13-ton connex off a railway car. The connex had arrived as part of a re-supply mission by train due to the road border closures in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Task Force Falcon troops provide clothing to families in need

Story and photo by
Spc. Travis Bascom
358th MPAD

Some soldiers with Operation Essential Harvest are collecting more than just weapons in Macedonia. As soldiers of the 490th Civil Affairs unit assigned to Camp Able Sentry handed out winter clothes to people in the town of Miladinovo, residents of the town shared their appreciation with home-grown tomatoes, sunflower seeds and red peppers.

The town, located just east of CAS, has had an unemployment rate of about 80% for the last few years since the closing of nearby factories, according to Trajko Teovski, a member of the village council who helped identify needy families in the area.

"For the last few years the people of the town have been unable to buy clothes," said Teovski. "This will help the families for sure. It is a good gesture."

In an environment where the winters can be harsh, the clothes are greatly appreciated. A mother of two, Jagoda Kolevska, taking home a few sweaters and coats for her family said, "Everything is welcomed. Winters are very cold here."

Throughout the day, families gathered around boxes of clothes, choosing clothes that were needed. Children left with arms full of clothes. The only thing wider than their arms, were the smiles on their faces.

Ana Blaievski, celebrating her eleventh birthday yesterday received winter clothes from U.S. soldiers as an added birthday present.

A teenager, Mirsada Maksuti, added, "This is very good. We are very happy. We are very grateful."

"Everyone seemed very friendly and appreciative," said Staff Sgt. Dominick Aponte, non-commissioned officer in charge of the project. "The project was very successful. All the clothes are gone."

The clothes were donated by church groups and other civic organizations in the United States. People that are interested in helping can contact churches or other charitable organizations back in their own hometowns that may be interested in sending humanitarian assistance.

According to Aponte, items that are most needed are cold weather clothing of all sizes as well as shoes, socks, hats and winter coats. Hygiene items like diapers, toothbrushes, toothpase and soap would also be useful.

All packages can be sent to G5, TFF Civil Affairs, CAS, APO AE 09790.

A child in the town of Miladinovo receives a hand full of clothes to help shelter him from the winter cold.

A soldier with the 21st Military Police prepares to enter a locked building in the town of Gumniste/Gumnishte Saturday, September 1. The soldier was participating in a cordon and search orchestrated by the 3-69th Armor Regiment.

Cordon and searches keeps Kosovo safe

Story and photos by
Spc. Engels Tejeda
358th MPAD

Soldiers of the 3-69th Armor Regiment searched 103 structures during a battalion level operation in the rural town of Gumniste/Gumnishte, Kosovo.

The town is located north of Cernica/Cernice, an ethnically mixed city that was recently locked down for approximately four days due to suspected race-related grenade attacks. Maj. Michael J. Johnson, operations officer with the 3-69th Armor Regiment, said that during the lock-down in Cernica/Cernice, some intelligence was collected pointing to the possibility that contraband was hidden in Gumniste/Gumnishte. As a result, virtually every structure in the town was searched September 1.

The Speed and Power soldiers searched all locations in the town where they believed the contraband could be found. Such structures included family houses, drinking water wells, and parts of the woods surrounding the farms in the area.

"We detained one individual for possessing an illegal pistol," said Johnson. However, they did not find any significant contraband during the search.

The operation required the participation of several units within the task force including A Company of the 3-69th Armor Regiment; B Company of the 3-7th Infantry Regiment; 1st Platoon of the 21st Military Police Company; EOD; two canine units; an air support unit; contributions from UNMIK Police; and Psychological Operations.

"We were able to plan, rehearse, and execute the mission with no problems," said Johnson about the 15-hour operation.

In addition, the soldiers said that the search did, if nothing else, serve as a deterrent of future illegal activity in the area.

"If needed, we will search everywhere," said Johnson.

Soldiers with the 3-69th Armor Regiment search for hidden metals, e.g. granades and other weapons, while performing a cordon and search mission in the town of Gumniste/Gumnishte. The soldiers searched 103 structure to include houses, wells, and parts of the woods in the rural town Saturday, September 1.

MASCAL continued:

Monteith was on the scene instantly. In joint efforts with military police, force protection participated in crowd and traffic control, the collection of all sensitive items possessed by the casualties and provided security at the accident site and the camp's gym where the casualties were initially taken after the accident.

"We keep track of all the sensitive items (collected) from the soldiers," said Pfc. Peter Alsis, infantry soldier with A Company of the 3-7th Infantry Regiment. "We take their weapons, inventory them and guard them."

When a secure area had been established, the medics arrived on site.

At 1:16 p.m., the first ambulance arrived at the accident scene.

The senior medic on site reported to the Troop Medical Clinic an estimated number of casualties, and at 1:20 p.m. a "mass casualty" (MASCAL) situation was declared. All line units were informed and asked for support. Medics with 3-69th Armor and 3-7th Infantry Regiment who were not in sector were to report and assist the medics of C Company of the 3d Logistical Task Force.

Meanwhile, at the accident site the medics that arrived on the first ambulance began the triage process at once, classifying the casualties as:

A. Immediate, or casualties with injuries that must be treated within an hour, or could result in death. An example would be a chest wound.

B. Expectant, or casualties with injuries that are most likely lethal, For example, when 85% of the body of a casualty is burnt.

C. Delayed, or casualties whose injuries have the potential to be lethal, but that can wait until patients with immediate injuries can be helped, injuries such as fractures.

D. Minimal, also called the "waking wounded" classification refers to casualties with small non-lethal wounds.

The first ambulance departed the scene at 1:32 p.m., by which time two other ambulances had also arrived on site. A support vehicle also arrived at the same time to transport the casualties with minimal wounds. By 1:45 p.m., all casualties had been transferred to the camp's gym where a team consisting of doctors, physician assistants and medics began treatment.

After receiving initial treatment, casualties needing additional care were to be transported by air to Camp Bondsteel. However, because of existing real missions, air transportation was not available for the exercise.

At the darkest hours, chaplains provide the last hope for those who are at extreme risks. During the current exercise, the chaplains were to be informed so that they could provide services for casualties.

Because of the seriousness of such services, the chaplains would not have actually engaged in performing the rituals, but would have simulated them.

Capt. Amy Jensik, company commander with C Company of the 3d Logistical Task Force, opened the after action review (AAR) with a short statement. First, she congratulated all participating units for a "great job," then she introduced her executive officer 1st Lt. Mike Watkins, who went through a step-by-step process, allowing for discussion, comments and questions to be asked by each participating element.

"The purpose of this is to find out how we can do better," said Jensik in her opening remarks. "I know that everyone involved, be it a litter carrier or a medic, (has) something to say about how to make this better in the future."

A few areas where improvement can be made were identified. These included command and control on the scene for medics and improvement along the lines of communication for all parties involved.

A few strong areas were also identified. According to Maj. William Keith Baxter, physician with 3d Logistical Task Force, "in any situation like this you are going to have some confusion. But the important thing to know is that (had any) of the patients that came through today (been real), we would have been able to save them." Baxter said that he also noticed that the exercise helped him to identify whether or not his team has enough supplies to handle a MASCAL.

Pfc. Bennitta Williams, medic with the 3d Logistical Task Force, said that the exercise was very realistic and important.

"It was good training. In case we have a real MASCAL, we'll know what to do, and we'll be prepared," said Williams. "We did a good job and we had real good actors, so it was very realistic."

Over 60 soldiers participated in the exercise. Jensik and Watkins spent more than a month planning the event aiming at designing an exercise that their medics could receive adequate training and at the same time other camp participants could test their ability to respond as one element to a MASCAL emergency.

Lt. Col. Dawrell Williams, commander of the 3d Logistical Task Force, summarized the exercise as follows:

"What I saw today was a lot of hustle – a sense of emergency, and most importantly a lot of teamwork. This is a model that needs to be implemented at all base camps here … (Based on today) I would feel very comfortable in the people in this room to save my life."

Chaplain's Corner

Faith + Obedience = Righteousness

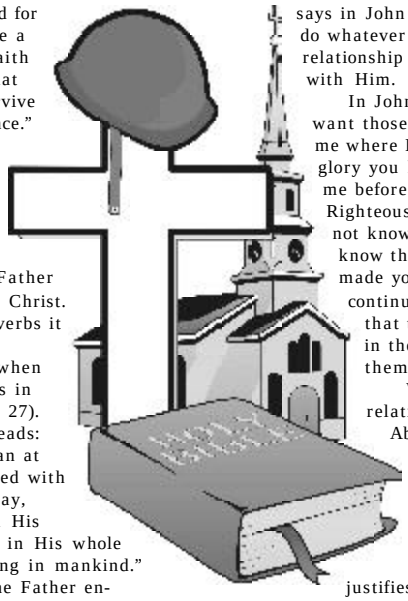
Story by Cpt. Windie Chaleka
11th Engineer Battalion Chaplain

As I was growing up during my childhood I used to hang around my father most of the time. He even took me to his work place several times to watch him work. My dad was a hard-working person throughout his entire life. Sometimes he would test me to see if I was loyal and obedient to him by giving me a little work of pushing some 25 pounds bags of corn and beans and stack them in a straight row.

This relationship between my father and I developed into a friendship that made it impossible for me to separate myself from him. During lunch hours we would sit down in that big warehouse with a grinding mill which he used to operate and told me some very interesting stories about his life as a teenager. He shared with me some of the things which I still remember, of which he never shared with some of my family members.

Why? Because of that closeness we had. This caused me to have confidence and trust my dad. Whatever he told and taught me I took to heart and I cherished it.

My father wanted me to have faith and confidence that he was really a caring father to me, and this is why he spent much time talking to me. Finally, he told me that I was his best child among all the ten children in the family. On 17 February 1995, my father went to be with the Lord at the age of 107 years old. Before he died, his last words to me were, " Son, I leave you your youngest brother and the entire family in your care just as I have cared for you when you were a little boy. I have faith and trust in you that the family will survive under your guidance."



In the Scriptures we can see the similar picture of this kind of relationship and closeness between God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. In the book of Proverbs it states:

"I was there when He set the heavens in place" (Proverbs 8: 27). Proverbs 8:30,31 reads: "I was the craftsman at His side. I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in His presence, rejoicing in His whole world and delighting in mankind." This is why God the Father entrusted and put everything under the rulership of His beloved son Jesus Christ. We also can read this in the books of Psalms (2:7), and in the New Testament; Colossians.1:15-20; Hebrews.1:2-6; and Hebrews.5:8,9. Jesus learned obedience from what he suffered, and once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him. Jesus says in John 15:14 "You are my friends if you do whatever I command." This is the kind of relationship that Jesus wants us to have with Him.

In John 17:24-26 it reads: "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. Righteous Father though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."

We can see the same kind of relationship between God and Abraham, when God called him to give him a blessing. In Romans 4:3, "Abraham believed and obeyed God and it was credited to him as righteousness." However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.

This is what God is looking for in everyone who comes to Him.

Decane Monastery squelches ethnic tensions

Story by
1st Lt. Mark Jacobsen
358th MPAD

The Balkans is a land of contradictions, and Kosovo is certainly no exception. However, as local ethnic tensions fluctuate it is refreshing when a breath of reason squelches the flame of hate and sets an example for the rest of humanity. Visoki Decane Monastery is such a place.

The 14th Century Serbian Orthodox Monastery is situated in the heavily wooded foothills southwest of the city of Pec/Peje and under the care of MNB (West). In 1998, gangs of Serbian paramilitaries prowled Decane's streets hunting for victims. The monks of Decane provided a safe haven for local Albanians, placing themselves and their monastery in danger from the pawns of the nationalistic delusions of Slobodan Milosevic.

According to an article by the Seattle Times, these monks were responsible for saving the lives of over 150 Kosovars. Kosovars— Albanians and Serbs and Romas. At first it was the Albanians, hunted by Serb paramilitaries. Then it was the Serbs and Romas— caught in the vacuum as the Serb forces withdrew, leaving the city open to the wrath of the KLA.

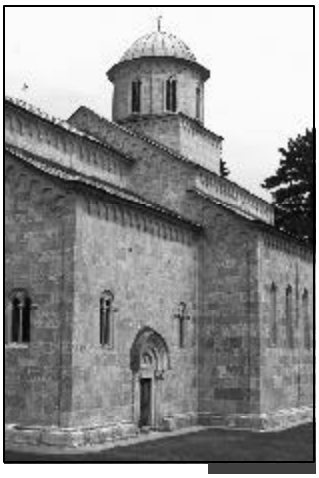
This is one of many Fresco Paintings in the Decane Monastery

"Without them," said 58-year-old Albanian painter and art teacher Nimon Lokaj, "my whole family would be dead," he said in Seattle Times article.

A long time before Milosevic lost power, the Decane Monastery openly denounced him and his policies to remove Albanians from Kosovo. Yet the relatively recent ethnic war in Kosovo and the ambitions of a Balkans mad man is but a tiny segment in the history of the 600 year old sanctuary.

The Decane monastery was built between the years 1327 and 1335 by the Serbian medieval king St. Stephan of Decani. It is the largest and best-preserved medieval monastery in the province of Kosovo and in modern Serbia. The structure suffered damage from Turkish occupiers a few hundred years ago, but colorful and intricate 14th century fresco paintings still cover the inside walls and ceilings of the well preserved structure. Pristine examples of medieval stonework are evident in the footstones of the floor and the massive stone columns that support the roof from the inside of the structure.

Of particular significance to those of the Serbian Orthodox faith are the holy relics of the monestary. The preserved body of King Stephan, the hand of St. Nicetas, the Goth, killed by heathens in the 4th century and the jawbone of St. Gregory of Nyssa from the 4th century.



The Decane Monastery has provided a safe haven for local Albanians and Sebians alike.

Currently there are around 30 monks maintaining the site, which ideally needs a staff of over one hundred. Grounds maintenance, bee keeping, tending crops and receiving guests occupies much of the monk's time. Wood-carvings and icon paintings are sold to supplement the meagre operating funds that sustain the sanctuary.

Those wishing to arrange a visit must call the MNB (West) Public Information Office at (KPN) 389 268 6329 in advance.

Engineers penetrate minefield in Engineer Qualification Tables

Story and photos by
Spc. Maria Jaramillo
358th MPAD

Moist red mud covered the boots of the engineer as he knelt down. He had paced his steps and this was the place for the next hole. His breathing grew steady as he placed the explosive into the completed opening. Once it was placed, he stood up and paced back through the "minefield." Thirty minutes later, the scene was set and after a personnel check, he slowly reached into his pocket for the trigger.

Two combat engineers attach an auger to a C-truck. The auger was used to drill holes to simulate small explosions for the Engineer Qualification Tables.

The explosion that thundered over Camp Bondsteel was the 11th Engineer Battalion Combat Engineers completing their Engineer Qualification Tables (EQT). They had to penetrate a "minefield", place C-4 explosives and create large road craters that would block the way of illegal traffic throughout Kosovo.

As the engineers carry out the KFOR peacekeeping mission, they are often working outside their normal mission requirements. They can be found building bridges, guarding churches and working hard to improve Kosovo from the inside out. Their qualifications at Explosive Ordnance Disposal Hill ensured that they are full-bred ready-for-anything combat engineers that can come through in any situation.

"In the event that we would have to transition into high-intensity conflict, we are able to make sure that we would do a great job when we train in a real world situation such as Kosovo," said Capt. Jeffrey B. Murphy, company commander of A Company of the 11th Engineer Battalion.

The lack of light didn't stop the engineers. Until 10:00 p.m., while many other soldiers were hitting the rack, their explosions could still be felt shaking the ground and buildings.

"One benefit that we have here is that we are able to explode up to 200 pounds of demolitions on this range," Murphy said.

Because of the magnitude of explosive power, the safety of the soldiers was taken very seriously. Before each explosion, personnel were accounted for and everyone was a safe distance away before pulling the blasting cap.

Spc. Mark Gonzalez guides the auger to the drilling spot. Larger explosives would later be dropped into the newly-made holes to create large craters.

"You stay focused on what you're doing, the explosive that you're working on. You also make sure that everyone else is in the back and away from the explosives," said Pfc. Fernando I. Barron, a combat engineer with A Company of the 11th Engineer Battalion.

Though the mud is now settling and rotation 3A is on its final stretch before heading home, the engineers are ready for anything.

551st Military Police join forces with the Russian 13th Tactical Group

Story and photo by
1st Lt. Terence Sinkfield
551st MPs

Just like a scene from the movie "Red Heat," American MPs join with Russian forces to defeat a common enemy, weapon smugglers.

During the month of August, the 551st Military Police Company joined Russian forces on patrols in Kosovo. In an effort to perpetuate multinational relations and maintain a safe and secure environment for residents of Kosovo, the Russian 13th Tactical Group commander, Lt. Col. Karageychev, invited units from the United States Army Military Police to patrol jointly with them throughout the Kamenica/Kamenice area of responsibility. The commander of the 551st Military Police Company, Capt. John D. Tucker, selected his first platoon to participate in this particular mission.

First platoon had the opportunity to patrol with the Russians on five separate occasions in August. Most of the patrolling occurred on the weekends, and the American soldiers will remember and cherish those particular weekends as enriching and unforgettable.

Under normal circumstances, United States army military police autonomously establish presence throughout the Russian area of operation. Just like any maneuver unit, the Russian 13th Tactical Group is the primary land manager while all support elements, like the Military Police, operate independently unless specifically tasked to assist the maneuver unit.

The joint patrol requested by the Russian maneuver unit consisted of a squad of six American Military Police soldiers in two-armored Humvee's joined by a squad of eight Russian soldiers in an armored personnel carrier. Each unit provided interpreters to assist with communication gap between the two squads.

On the five different patrols, the soldiers performed various tasks that support the overall mission in Kosovo. Together, the Americans and Russians searched both local nationals and civilian vehicles at hasty checkpoints, conducted walking patrols through numerous villages, and provided widespread presence in the Kamenica/Kamenice area with the speed and dominance of their vehicles.

Throughout the experience, the soldiers of first platoon were constantly exposed to new approaches and techniques for peacekeeping. While broadening their tactical knowledge, the soldiers learned about the capabilities of the Russian Army. A few received an opportunity to ride in the armored personnel carrier that gave insight on the conditions and technology that Russian soldiers deal with on a daily basis.

American military police patrol leaders Staff Sgt. John Schmitt and Staff Sgt. Curtis Harris responded positively to the experience. They both agreed that this unique experience would help the unit develop new training and organization to facilitate joint operations in the future. The general consensus among these two patrol leaders was that we should do these types of operations more frequently and more soldiers should receive this outstanding opportunity.

Overall, the joint patrolling was a huge success and popular among the soldiers. This was a very effective method for keeping the Kamenica/Kamenice area safe from criminal activity and for building international relations between United States and Russia. The Military Police Platoon unit still operates independently in the Russian sector, but will continue to seek joint operations in order to build on this established relationship.

551st MPs join Russian counterparts at their base.

Night turns to day as the 1-41st Field Artillery illuminates

Story and photos by
Spc. Engels Tejeda
358th MPAD

When the mission rehearsal was complete, the first order was given and the "Dawgs" of C Battery of the 1-41st Field Artillery began to play magicians using machines to illuminate the darkened skies.

The forward observing team announced that the area was ready for illumination and, upon receiving this information, the Fire Direction Center (FDC) gave the preparatory command: "one-two stand by..." addressing the gun that was about to fire. "... One-two: FIRE!"

The earth trembled as a 155-millimeter illumination round blazed across the sky and lightened up nearly 1000 square-meters of territory below. During the rest of the night the same process took place over and over again until the message to those attempting to smuggle contraband between Kosovo and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonian was clear; that KFOR was nearby, watching.

These "Bright Skies" missions are the main objective of the 1-41st Field Artillery since its arrival to Kosovo in mid May. Capt. Ronnie Brown, commander of C Battery, explained the objective behind the missions.

"The purpose is to illuminate the area (targeted) so that maneuver units can interdict the smuggling of arms between Kosovo and Macedonia," said Brown.

Since its arrival to Kosovo, C Battery has conducted over 15 Bright Skies operations, firing more than 500 illumination rounds, said Brown. The battery supports the entire Task Force, thus far, it has fired in support of the -7th Infantry Regiment, the 2-502nd Infantry Regiment and Task Force Arieta – the former Spanish/Italian mission in Kosovo.

The missions, in conjunction with many other orchestrated by the Dawgs' sister batteries at Camp Bondsteel, have led not only to the previous apprehension of smugglers and contraband, but also to the current deterrence of such illegal actions.

"I think we are always successful," said Brown. "Because even if we don't catch anyone, the message gets across: that we are watching."

In addition to deterring illegal activities, the Bright Skies have yet another effect; that of giving the soldiers of the C Battery of the 1-41st Field Artillery the opportunity to play a different role than what they normally train for. Spc. Calvin Ellis, training noncommissioned officer in charge with C Battery of the 1-41st Field Artillery, explained that it all brings light to a new experience for the entire battery.

"It's a truly unique experience," said Ellis. "(Field Artillery) is trained mostly for destruction and volatile force. Now we are doing peacekeeping missions."

In addition to conducting Bright Skies, the Dawgs also share other duties within the task force. They are in charge of providing protection at Camp Monteith. Two sections of the battery, which rotate on a seven-day basis, provide operation control with the 2-502nd Infantry Regiment, conducting traffic control point operations and providing security for a local church. And yet another section is in charge of "Hot Platoon" duty – meaning that a number of soldiers are on guard in case fire power is needed out of the camp itself.

The multiple duties assigned to the battery results in a demanding atmosphere for the soldiers. And like all other troops on deployment, the Dawgs too face certain challenges.

"The biggest challenge for my soldiers is that they are a young team, and it's their first time away from home," said Sgt. Kenneth Goff, gunner with C Battery of the 1-41st Field Artillery. "They tend to stress (easily). So you got to give them time to themselves," he said.

Goff said that he normally recommends to the soldiers to take time to "do something to keep them busy." He recommends, for example, that the soldiers use the camp's facilities like the gym and the Morale Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Center.

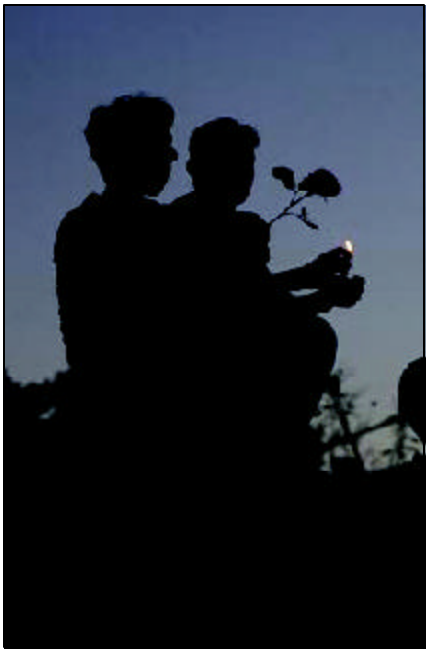
Staff Sgt. Fritz Dorcen, fire direction NCOIC, and Spc. Mathew Crandall, fire direction computer specialist, both with C Battery 1-41 Field Artillery, process information on a Bright Skies mission.

Despite all challenges, however, the battery's 1st Sgt. Phillip Manville said the soldiers have done "outstanding so far."

"I got no complaints," said Manville. "These soldiers have been doing multiple missions and we've had tremendous success. I'm very proud of them."

Night becomes day during a Bright Skies mission August 24 near the Former Republic of Macedonia and Serbia proper borders with Kosovo. Soldiers of the fire support team with C Company 3-7th Infantry Regiment, observe the sector.

Kosovo locals show their support



Children in the city of Gjilan/Gnjilane, Kosovo, burned candles in honor of those who passed away in New York and Washington D.C. as a result of terrorist attacks.

A Kosovo resident attempts to explain to her young child what had happened in the United States and why he was to pray with her for the victims of terrorist attacks in America.

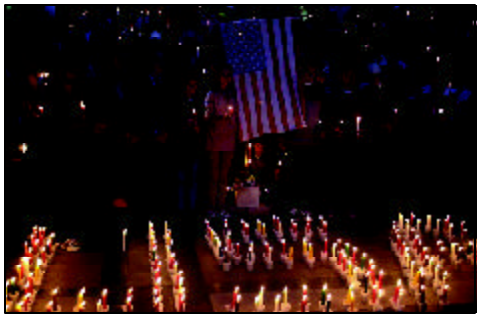
Story and photos by
Spc. Engels Tejeda
358th MPAD

Less than twenty-four hours after watching an attack unfold on television by suspected terrorists on the cities of New York and Washington D.C. Sept. 11, residents of the city of Gjilan/Gnjilane, Kosovo, gathered to express their sorrow.

Citizens of Gjilan/Gnjilane displayed signs supporting the United States and waved American flags echoing the sentiments of people across the world after the twin towers of the World Trade Center collapsed. The Pentagon was also attacked a short time later in the same manner when commercial airliners flew into the structures.

"I heard about the attack and I cried, because these soldiers are like my family and I know that they are sad," said a local woman with tears in her eyes.

Joining her were hundreds of other concerned citizens standing in front of a sign that read: "Respect for the victims... America Keep On... We are with you in the war against terror... Citizens of Gjilan/Gnjilane Municipality."



Local residents of the town of Gjilan/Gnjilane, Kosovo, gathered at the town's theatre for a candle-lit vigil in memory of those who lost their lives during the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington D.C.

Less than a mile away from the gathering, lies an American camp where a U.S. flag hung at "half-mast" honoring those who lost their lives the previous day.

"The first thing I did was call my wife," said 1st Sgt. Edwin Garcia with C Company of the 3-7th Infantry Regiment. "When I saw the attack on the Pentagon I thought 'we are at war; somebody is attacking us and we need to do something about it.'"

While expressing their sorrow and concern for their fellow Americans at home, officials with the Kosovo Force (KFOR) said that their mission in Kosovo remains the same.

"Our mission here has not changed," said Maj. Randy Martin, Task Force Falcon spokesman. "We have taken prudent steps to protect our personnel and our installations. Any person who seeks to take advantage of these acts risks facing an appropriate response."

Some of the Gjilan/Gnjilane residents began to parallel the terror the U.S. faced the previous day, with the terror that American soldiers have deterred in Kosovo.

"We are sorry... and we want to thank you for preventing what happened in your home... from happening (here) everyday since (1999)," said a local woman, as she joined hundreds of peaceful marchers.

"I think they are trying to show that they care about us," said Pfc. Robert Mullins, a combat engineer with B Company of the 11th Engineers.

"It was very emotional (for all of us)," added Garcia in regards to the civilian gathering.

The locals said that the attacks had "no impact" whatsoever in their confidence in the American troops.

By the end of the day, hundreds had lit candles and offered their prayers for the American people. In front of an American flag, soldiers laid flowers side-by-side with their neighbors in Gjilan/Gnjilane, where members of the local community had used lit-candles to spell the letters "USA".

U.S. soldiers serving in Kosovo stand before a sign made by the local community expressing its condolences to the U.S. troops in regards to the recent tragedy in New York and Washington D.C. While the soldiers say that their mission in Kosovo will not change, they admit that the support the local community has shown during some of their nation's darkest hours "strikes right to the heart."