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Guardian East

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Scouts:
LAST LOOK
BEFORE LEAVING
page 12

Message to the troops



By Command Sgt. Maj. James McEntaffer

The road to Kosovo for this task force has taken many paths over the last several months. For some it started as early as June of last year. For most Oct. 10, 2003 was the start of this journey.

The Soldier readiness process undertaken in 19 different states is now a mere memory. As we all gathered at Fort Stewart, Ga., this great task force began the process of becoming a team. I am proud to say that this group of Americans has become a team like I never imagined possible. I am honored to be associated with this organization, and salute each and everyone involved for what you do for your nation.

The training in Fort Stewart and Hohenfels, Germany is over and now our real work begins. Be confident in the fact that you are trained and ready!

Be proud in the fact that you are capable to perform a mission that will help maintain peace for a people and culture much different from ours. Be aware of the fact that we are the visitors on the soil of another province and act accordingly. Consistency and fairness are the keys to success. If you strive to treat all people you encounter with the same degree of dignity that you would seek for yourself you will succeed. Be consistent in your actions as you deal with the local population and you become known as someone who is trusted and fair.

Soldiers at all levels will be challenged throughout this mission. To the commanders, I ask that you continue as you have done thus far; providing clear and concise guidance, orders and resources. The Soldiers of this task force have come to rely on and trust you for this. To the front line leaders, this is your mission! You will have more direct contact with both Soldiers and the local population than



Command Sgt. Maj. James McEntaffer

anyone else in the task force. This is a difficult undertaking for you, but I have the utmost confidence that you are up to the task. To the individual Soldiers, my hat is off to you for the effort you have put forth thus far. You have trained hard, survived some less than perfect living conditions, and performed many work details all with the best of attitudes. I ask that you maintain the positive attitude and work ethic demonstrated thus far.

Finally, I stress to all members of this task force, to vigorously maintain your focus on safety! Look after your battle buddy on a continuous basis. Never let your guard down, there is always an accident waiting to happen. Identify it before it finds you. We must return to our families without any serious accidents or incidents.

Be fair, be consistent, and be safe so that we may all return to the States with a sense of pride and accomplishment.

SEE THE PHOTO OF THE DAY

www.mnbe.hqusareur.army.mil



Submissions or story ideas related to the MNB(E) mission are encouraged. Send regular mail to MNB(E) PAO, Attn: Editor, Camp Bondsteel, APO AE 09340; send e-mail to guardianeast@bondsteel2.aur.army.mil.

COVER: Spc. Justin Pashley, a scout with HHC, 1-111th Infantry, gazes out the window of a Blackhawk while being flown to an area near the Serbian border. Photo by Sgt. Jon Soucy.

See page 12 for the story

Guardian East

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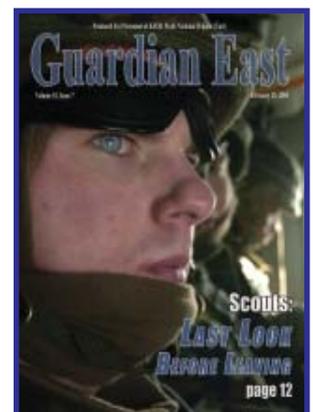
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1st Lt. Sherry Hedge, a registered nurse with the 256th Combat Support Hospital, executes a yoga stretch while teaching her weekly yoga class at the South Town Gym. Photo by Spc. Tim Grooms. See page 16 for the story.



TEACHING DOCTORS TO FISH

While Multi-national Brigade (East) Soldiers provide medical and dental care support to as many Kosovar people as possible, they can't be everywhere at once. That is why close relationships with local hospitals are being further developed to achieve the goal of saving more lives, said Lt. Col. Kevin Drozd, the personnel officer for Task Force Med Falcon.

"Dealing with the medical community you may think locally but you have to think on a worldwide scale," said Drozd, a paramedic and nurse in the civilian world. "Their mission transcends borders."

One example of this evolving relationship can be seen in the blood transfusion

wing of Pristina University Hospital. MNB(E) started working with the university hospital when they donated Camp Bondsteel's excess blood and employed a translator who is also a resident doctor specializing in internal medicine at the university hospital, namely Dr. Ariem Azemi, Drozd said.

Azemi is one of the many medical translators at Bondsteel with degrees in medicine, and he recently brought 29 of his doctor and nurse colleagues to the military hospital for a tour.

"They want to know things from your corner," said Azemi of his and his colleagues' desire to learn about the hospital that he said drove him to translate and guide these kinds of

relationships.

To help achieve that goal, the Soldiers of Med Falcon plan to return the visit to the University. And although nothing is set in stone, some classes are being planned in blood transfusion and dermatology diseases.

"I love to teach," said Col. Frank Robinson, the deputy commander of clinical services for Med Falcon about his upcoming seminar. "The word Doctor means teacher. We do the most by educating patients, students, and other physicians," he said. "We are always learning and often see teachings change because of newer information."

Pristina isn't the only place this type of

relationship is being implemented.

"This goes hand-in-hand with what we're doing in Gnjilane and other hospitals – working with the local population and specifically the medical community in exchanging ideas," Drozd said.

Exchanging ideas is key if effective health care has a chance of being sustained at a grass roots level in Kosovo, he said. Where a medical, dental, or veterinary civilian assistance program can fix an immediate problem, he said, another mission goal is to help local hospitals improve medical procedures so health care can be administered more effectively by the local population.

There is an old proverb about the difference between giving a person a fish and teaching a person to fish, and the long term benefits of doing so. With classes and tours, the Soldiers of Task Force Medical Falcon are teaching local doctors to "fish" better in the medical field, and in the process facilitating a sustainable health care system run by and for the local populace. Story and photo by Spc. Sean McCollum.



Col. Marlin Brendsel, the executive officer of Task Force Med Falcon, leads a group of 29 Kosovar doctors on a tour of the Camp Bondsteel hospital.

Story and photos by Spc. Tim Grooms



Tahir Mikullofci, the brigade commander with the Kosovo Fire and Rescue, performs an intravenous injection into the arm of Spc. Samuel Pearson, a medic with the 1137th Military Police Company, during First Responder training at the KPS Academy.

Spc. Mark Burton, a military policeman with the 1137th Military Police Battalion, smiles as Srdjan Maksimovic, a Kosovo Police Service police officer, rubs iodine on his arm in preparation to perform an intravenous injection.



FIRST RESPONDER

Accidents are going to happen no matter where you live and either the police or emergency medical technicians are going to be the first to arrive, which is why in most countries EMTs and police are certified in performing first aid.

During the past month members of the Multi-national Brigade (East) military police and medical units have been teaching a 40-hour advanced first aid course called "First Responder" to the Kosovo Police Service and Fire Department members at the KPS School in Vushtrri/ Vucitrn.

If it wasn't for Kosovo Forces allowing the use of its Soldiers to conduct the training, the courses may not have happened, said Phil Marlowe, bi-lateral training program manager for the U.S. Department of Justice, since the cost to bring teachers from the United States would have been too great.

The KPS and local firefighters normally only receive about 10 hours of basic lifesaving training, but the course offered by KFOR personnel, designed to help establish an EMT program in the area and modeled after the Army's Combat Lifesaver Course, gives them an additional 40 hours of experience to help improve their emergence response skills, said Staff Sgt. John Correia, a medic with 1137th MP Company.

While the class is based on the Army's Combat Lifesaver Course, the trainers have added a section on handling women in labor, Correia said. The basics of the course include giving intravenous

injections, preparing splints, and sealing open chest wounds, but also includes more advanced skills.

"We added techniques from the EMT assessment program according to American standards, and taught CPR based on American Health Association standards," said Correia.

Because of the limited number of instructors, the class size was capped at 20 students, forcing the organizers to choose a representative group of police and firefighters from around Kosovo to attend the course.

"It will help because from every region we have a guy so they can provide others in their region some training," said Rahman Sefedini, the officer of training education for the department of fire and rescue.

Marlowe said the classes won't end here, though.

"As long as I get the quality of students like I got in this course and previous courses, I can continue to put these programs on," he said.

The final test of the course was to properly administer an IV in a live subject. At one point during that process, Spc. Samuel Pearson, a medic with the MP unit, was acting as the patient when he looked up at Tahir Mikullofci, one of the course students and the man with the needle, and asked jokingly if Mikullofci had ever put a worm on a fishhook since the two tasks are similar.

Mikullofci looked at Pearson, and through his interpreter responded, "No."



Staff Sgt. John Correia, a medic with the 1137th Military Police Company, talks to students at the First Responder course about how to check a casualty for wounds.

IMAGES OF 5A



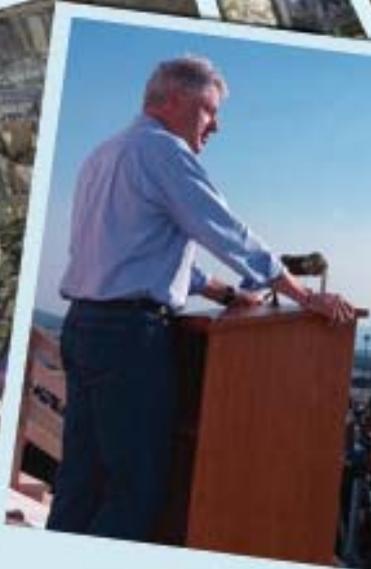
4B-5A TOA



ALMOST



NEW THEATER



CLINTO



MADE IT



5B ARRIVES



PACKING UP



UNITED STATES KOSOVO FORCE



GROUNDHOG DAY



ON VISIT

Compiled and Designed by Sgt. 1st Class Rob Bishop

LEARNING THE TRADE

Story and photos by Spc. Tim Grooms

When a Medical Civilian Assistance Program comes to a Kosovo village it usually means a chaotic day with lines of people waiting patiently to receive treatment or needed medicine. Yet, weather can play a role in the outcome.

Greek soldiers of the 506th Mechanized Infantry Battalion traveled to Bablak/ Babljak to take part in a MEDCAP for people of the village who can't make it to Ferizaj/ Urosevac to see a doctor. Unfortunately, due to sheets of rain and gusts of wind that kept people indoors, the day proved to be a slow one with only three patients visiting instead of the usual 25 or more, said 1st Lt. Charalampos Koumaras, a doctor with the 506th.

Although the weather limited the number of visitors to this MEDCAP, the Greek doctors have helped many people in past ones, which are held at least once each

month in towns or villages that are not within close proximity to a health center.

This is a learning experience for both the doctors and area residents since the doctors become familiar with the ailments of their patients and travel the region, and the patients get a chance to meet their doctors and learn they can rely on their medical care, said Koumaras.

"We're trying to have local doctors do most of the work so residents learn to trust them," said Koumaras. "We ask the director of the Health House in Ferizaj to have young doctors come with us that are going to work in the area for many years."

Whether he treats three or 25 patients, Koumaras said he feels he has done something important after participating in a MEDCAP.

"This makes you realize there are people that don't have the same opportunities as in our countries. After helping, it makes you have a warm feeling and feel like a better person," said Koumaras.

Although MEDCAPS are not permanent, they are appreciated by the people who are able to go.

"There are many poor families in the villages," said Dorsim Ramadan, a doctor from the Ferizaj/ Urosevac Health Center, "and by giving free medicine to families that need it makes them very happy."

As the day came to a close, the doctors helped the few patients that braved the weather. Although the weather kept many local residents away from this MEDCAP, the patients who were able to attend got to meet a local doctor that hopefully gained their trust and will be helping them for years to come.



Dr. Dorsim Ramadan from the Ferizaj/ Urosevac Health House examines a young resident of Bablak/ Babljak while 1st Lt. Charalampos Koumaras, a doctor with the Greek forces, watches to make sure he performs the task correctly.

Koumaras explains to Ramadan what pain medicine to give to a patient who was complaining of an aching knee.



SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Scouts look at how they changed Kosovo and how it changed them.

Story and Photos by Sgt. Jon Soucy.

See page 14 for the story.



Sgt. Michael Austin, a scout with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-111th Infantry, gazes out at Gnjilane/ Gjilan as he returns to Camp Monteith in a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter after a mission conducting a routine presence patrol near the Serbian border.

SUBJECT TO CHANGE

The choppy sound of rotor blades slicing the air became louder as the UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter came closer to its destination. Swirls of snow and dust were launched airborne from the rotorwash as the aircraft gently set down on a hilltop clearing, the side door was thrown open, and several Soldiers hopped to the ground, running in a hunched-over position toward the nearby woodline. As the last Soldier settled into position, the aircraft lifted skyward and another Soldier pulled out a map of the area to confirm their location.

As one of their final patrols while in Kosovo, scouts from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-111th Infantry, were airlifted to an area near the Administrative Boundary Line to perform a routine presence patrol that

covered roughly 1700 meters of steep hills and other varying terrain. The opportunity gave them the chance to look back over their time in Kosovo and some of their accomplishments.

“I think we’ve done a good job, as far as with what we’ve been tasked to do,” said Staff Sgt. George Robinson III, a senior section leader in the unit, of the unit’s time in Kosovo. “We’re doing a job that needs to be done.”

Though the changes may not be immediate and widespread, members of the unit said they felt they have made a difference in the area.

“In the big picture, no, I don’t think that [we’ve] made any change,” said Robinson. “In the smaller picture, on an individual basis, [we] have made some

changes.”

One area the scouts said they felt they made an impact was the school system in Gnjilane/ Gjilan.

“One thing that we’ve done is [mend] the link between the KFOR [Soldiers] assigned here in Gnjilane/ Gjilan and the school system here,” said Robinson. “We’ve made a pretty good in-road, I think, into getting back to knowing who’s who in the school system.”

In addition, family and friends have collected and sent school supplies, clothes, and other items, which the scouts distributed to area residents in need of them, said Sgt. Michael Austin, a team leader with the unit.

Though members of the unit said they felt they made a differ





ence during their time in Kosovo, they said they also had to undergo a few changes themselves. One change was from their combat mission to their role here as peace keepers, said Austin.

But for Austin, that transition was an easy one to make.

“My civilian job once was a police officer,” said Austin. “So it was kind of easy. It’s all peace-keeping.”

Once the patrol reached

their pickup-zone, another hilltop clearing, they heard the sound of inbound helicopters. The aircraft landed with the same swish and swirl of snow and dust, and the scouts ran with the same hunched gait toward it. Soon after, the helicopter took to the air and began the return trip to Camp Monteith. One of their final missions was over and soon the Soldiers would be in another aircraft with another

destination – home.

“I can’t wait,” said Austin.

Scouts with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-111th Infantry, hunch down to protect themselves from the rotorwash of a departing UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter as they prepare to head out on a presence patrol near the Serbian border.

1st Lt. Sherry Hedge, a registered nurse with 256th Combat Support Hospital, executes yoga stretches while teaching her weekly yoga class at the South Town Gym.

Do you

1st Lt. Sherry Hedge, a registered nurse with 256th Combat Support Hospital, is a relaxed, fit woman, and she has dedicated her free time to helping others here reap the benefits of what she has learned.

With an Associate's degree in health and fitness and a Bachelor's degree in nursing, Hedge has all the skills needed to teach aerobics and yoga classes here.

"I have been doing Yoga for about three years and aerobics for almost eight," said Hedge.

While being deployed from home, Soldiers can become stressed and yoga is a way to help relieve that tension.

"Psychologists will give yoga as a prescription to people that have high stresses," said Hedge, "which helps with sleep, thinking, posture, and a positive attitude."

Hedge uses a type of yoga called Hatha Yoga, which is the most widely used version according to information from www.yogayoga.net. Hatha Yoga uses postures and conscious breathing in combination with mental focus to develop awareness, strength and flexibility.

Yoga requires flexibility, which most new students, especially men, don't have the first time they try the exercises; it is something students develop over time.

"I've tried to reiterate and guys are finding this out – you don't have to be a gymnast, and that is why you go to the class to learn that," said Hedge.

Furthermore, according to Hedge, the first few times trying the exercises the person may lose balance, or not be able to attempt the stretch until they learn the technique because it is extremely difficult in the beginning.

Hedge said she also feels music is a big part of aiding with the exercises for both aerobics and yoga. She said there are 12 different music CDs she uses in addition to ones her students bring.

While stretching and listening to music are part of the process, Hedge also hands out information for the person attending to get an educational background on the practice.

"Every class I give handouts about yoga — what it is, why you do it and how it benefits you in so many different aspects," Hedge said. "So I am educating the class with these different education handouts on the benefits of yoga and they have learned so much."

Hedge keeps herself in tune mentally with the yoga practice and her body in shape with aerobics.

"I got into aerobics because it was part of training for my degree and I love to dance," said Hedge. "Also, it keeps cardio up."

So if it is improving the mind or the body, Hedge is here to share her knowledge and passion during her off-time to improve fitness, and through music and stretching, relieve the daily stress with the power of yoga.

"Come out and try one or two of the classes and have fun with it," said Hedge.



yoga?



To students from students

Story and photos by Spc. Sean McCollum

Maj. Dan Carroll, the outgoing Inspector General for Headquarters and Headquarters Company 56th Brigade, wrote home one day to the children of the Holy Name of Jesus School in Harrisburg, Pa. In his letter, he told the kids how lucky they were for the little things they have that he saw Kosovar children do without every day.

“I had sent them pictures of a school we had visited. Kind of old and beat up. I talked to them about the hardships that the kids faced and they should not take for granted all the little things they have at home. For example buses to be able to take them to school and that kind of thing.”

Touched by his letter, the students of the third and sixth grade turned their gratitude into a class project, sending over 15 boxes filled with hats, gloves, socks, pens, paper, candy, and other things to make life easier. Carroll recently brought these boxes to the Skenderbeu Primary School in Jezerce along with pictures of the classes that sent them. The people in the pictures in some cases were younger than the recipients.

Other than the immediate results, Carroll hopes that more will come out of this giveaway than warm feet and full stomachs. Acts of kindness like this, he said, could set an example to be followed by the recipients.

From the MOMS club

Story and photos by Spc. Tim Grooms

During the military's time here many Soldiers have done their part to help the local population in terms of having supplies sent from home to be donated to people in need.

Maj. Edward Beck, a logistics officer with 28th Division Artillery, and his wife, Linda Beck, organized having supplies sent here from Pennsylvania to be handed out to families in the Multi-national Brigade (East) area of operations.

Beck said the idea originated when his wife told him that the youth fellowship group at their church, Calvert United Methodist in Harrisburg, Pa., wanted to send care packages to Soldiers. Beck said they had everything they needed here but it would be nice if they could collect clothing for people that needed it in Kosovo. So the youth fellowship decided to collect school supplies, and the local chapter of the MOMS Club International, a non-profit charitable organization to which his wife belongs, handled the clothing.

“My wife and other members of the organization sent out e-mails and started collecting clothing,” said Beck. “The response was overwhelming. They collected a total of 22 boxes and our garage was full and we had to collect donations to have the boxes shipped to Kosovo. It took about a month for everything to get here.”

He worked with the Red Cross and Civil Affairs to distribute the supplies to families that needed them most.

“I thought that it was nice that Major Beck could attend the humanitarian aid deliveries,” said Capt. Lori Bast, team chief with the 448th Civil Affairs Battalion. “His family and friends were the ones that sent the clothes and he was able to see that it makes a difference.”



Maj. Angela Stewart-Randle, the inspector general for the incoming Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 34th Infantry Division, hands new socks to a child at the Skenderbeu Primary School in Jezerce. In addition to socks, the children received candy, water bottles, and stationery furnished by the outgoing Inspector General, Maj. Dan Carroll.

Maj. Dan Carroll, the outgoing inspector general for HHC, 56th Brigade, talks with the administrators of the Skenderbeu Primary School in Jezerce. Carroll was at the school to donate socks, candy, stationery, and other items to the children.



Beck gives clothes to a resident of Ferizaj/ Urosevac. The clothes are part of 22 boxes of supplies he had sent from home to hand out in Kosovo.



Maj. Edward Beck, a logistics officer with 28th Division Artillery, smiles at a young child after giving him some clothing from the donations he had sent from Pennsylvania.

Farewell to Kosovo

By Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Bert Kozen

This will be the last Guardian East article submitted by the Unit Ministry Teams of KFOR 5A. As it is with life, the end of this deployment and mission brings not only an end but also new beginnings. The men and women of the various units that comprised KFOR 5A came from many different states and backgrounds. They brought with them different talents and gifts, but with one common purpose to make a difference in the lives of the people of Kosovo. As we prepare to pass on this mission to KFOR 5B it is appropriate to look back at these past months with prayer and reflection.

While we were here in Kosovo we marked a number of major religious events including the Islamic celebrations of Ramadan, Id Al-Fitr and Id Al-Adha; the Jewish festivals of Yom Kippur, Rosh Hashanah and Hanukkah; and the Christian Seasons of Advent and Christmas. In addition we celebrated a number of significant national holidays and remembrances including September 11, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, New Year's Day, Martin Luther King's Day and President's Day. When you add to all of these the vast number of personal events (e.g. birthdays, weddings and anniversaries, graduations, hospitalizations and the deaths of loved ones and friends) it is clear that this mission has required a substantial part of all of our lives.

All of this leads us to ask the question what has this time meant for us? Hopefully, for one, we have a much deeper appreciation for our own lives and nation. We may not have the perfect form of government and our own personal situations may be far from ideal, but we can certainly be grateful to Almighty God for all he has bestowed upon us as individuals and as a people. May we make better use of our resources and blessings and try not to waste and abuse the bounty we are called to manage. Secondly, as we have come to know the people of Kosovo may we be strengthened in the conviction that all people are indeed equal, regardless of race, creed, ethnicity or political affiliation. We have tried to share our practice of religious tolerance and ethnic pluralism with the people here, but we must always remember to live these principles at home. Thirdly, we have been reminded that people although living in far distant lands from each other are not that different. We have the same desires, dreams and needs (love, peace, justice, security, freedom, etc.) and we are all children of God.

It may be coincidental, but quite appropriate, that our Transfer of Authority (TOA) takes place on Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the Christian Season of Lent. The word Lent comes from the old English and is best defined as "springtime". Spring is a time of rebirth, growth and life. During the Lenten journey Christians are invited to reflect on their lives and recognize certain

"sinful" tendencies that they would be better off without. This conversion process can be unpleasant at times, but it also reminds us of the necessity of growth and change if we are to enjoy a healthy life.

What lessons we take from this mission will surely impact on the future of our lives and our careers, both in the military and in the civilian sector. Hopefully they will make us better soldiers, citizens and people of faith. We may never see some of the people that we have become close to during this time again, but that does not mean that they will not be a part of our lives. We may never have the opportunity of visiting Kosovo again, but that does not mean that this land and its people will not remain a part of our lives. Personally I truly desire to one day visit the Balkans again and enjoy its beauty, history and rich culture as a civilian and tourist. I also pray that as many of us as possible continue to stay in touch and if that is not possible physically to at least keep each other in thought and prayer.

Congratulations on a successful mission, best wishes for your future endeavors, and may God bless all of you and may he grant you a quick and safe return to your homes and loved ones.



**Chaplain (Lt. Col.)
Bert Kozen**

About a boy

Story by Spc. Rob Barker

Sometimes prayers are answered by wishing upon a star, or dreams come true by a blessing, and sometimes miracles are even performed by the United States Army. Such is the case when it comes to three-year-old Kosovar, Clirim Dushica.

A year and a half ago the child swallowed a caustic substance, which damaged his throat making it impossible for him to eat or drink except through a tube that has been inserted in his stomach. He has been to doctors in Kosovo who told his family they can perform the surgery here, but with only a five to ten percent chance of survival, said Clirim's father, Lulzim, a bus driver on Camp Bondsteel.

The Army stepped in four months ago when two Soldiers from the 640th Military Intelligence Battalion began working with The Shriners Burn Center in Boston, Mass., which will offer the surgery for free, and a Kosovar family living in the Boston area to get Clirim to an American medical facility that offers a better chance of survival.

"I met Lulzim Dushica and we conversed about our children like most parents do," said Sgt. 1st Class Edward Hendricks, a senior intelligence analyst with the 640th and one of the Soldiers helping the Dushica family. "He told me about his child needing medical care that was just not available in this region. Like any other parent, I said this must be fixable."

"When I heard about the situation, I thought all children deserve a good start," said 1st Sgt. Cheryl Slevin, the second Soldier helping the family and the 640th's analysis control element non-commissioned officer in charge. "Everyone deserves the same opportunity to live a normal life."

After realizing the severity of the situation and agreeing they should work to fix the problem, Hendricks and Slevin decided with the Dushicas that the only place to get the quality medical help would be America. The Soldiers contacted the hospital and tried to find a family that would accept the Dushicas into their household during Clirim's surgery and recovery. Hendricks searched the internet for an Albanian support group in America and found the Albanian American Council, headquartered in New York. He emailed them, and within a day had a reply that Selami Kasollja and his wife, an Albanian family living in Roslindale, Mass., were willing to take the family in during the time of surgery.

From there, Hendricks and Slevin continued working to get Clirim to America and the help he needs. Hendricks said he expects the paperwork and transportation, either military or civilian, details to be completed soon and to have the child on his way to America shortly after.

"I can't express the emotional feeling I feel, or express the thanks," said Lulzim. "For me, this is a feeling of having my own child born for the second time. It is another life saved by the U.S. Forces."

"While our country can and does have a nationwide influence, the most permanent impact any of us can have is the personal impact," said Hendricks. "That takes place one person, one family at a time. Establishing relationships tears down

barriers. Fewer barriers contribute to fewer misunderstandings. Fewer misunderstandings contribute to Peace."



Photo by Spc. James Croall

Clirim and some family members pose for a photo with the Soldiers who may save his life, 1st Sgt. Cheryl Slevin and Sgt. 1st Class Edward Hendricks.

NASCAR showing appreciation to military

By Sgt. Rael Tirado

ORLANDO, Fla. (Army News Service, Feb. 13, 2004) – Service members will be honored at the Daytona 500 pre-race ceremonies Sunday and others were guests of honor in the NASCAR Café during a military appreciation night Feb. 10 at Universal Studios.

Many of the service members were from the Army Reserve and National Guard from the central Florida region and were treated to food and a special guest appearance by Bobby Allison, a racecar driver in the Motorsports Hall of Fame. He appeared for an autograph and photo session. Al Bauer, President of Worldwide Racing and a Navy veteran, helped organize the event with NASCAR Café.

Bauer said he came up with the idea when he talked with a local deputy sheriff of Orange County who told him there were 75 sheriffs called up for active duty.

"I was amazed that many people were called up," said Bauer. "We have to do something to make people more aware. That's how it got started."

Sgt. Nancy Rodriguez, an automated logistical specialist with the 824th Transportation Detachment, brought her 3-year-old daughter to the event.

"It's a good event and we don't get to go out often to events where you can bring children," said Rodriguez. She was deployed for nearly a year and served in Kuwait while her daughter lived in California with her grandmother.

"My mother would show her a picture of me everyday, so she would remember me," said Rodriguez. Her favorite racecar driver is Jeff Gordon.

Kevin Beary, sheriff of Orange County, attended the event to salute the service members. He said 53 officers from his sheriff's office have been called to active duty.

"We are so proud of them, they have gone all over the world to take care of business," said Beary. In his office they have held Christmas parties and other events for the family members of the officers that have been deployed.

Staff Sgt. J.W. Weathersby, a recruiter in the Orlando area, had a table with recruiting pamphlets and accessories to hand out.

"It was a great turn out. It's nice to see people thanking and saluting our soldiers," said Weathersby.

A local radio station broadcast live from the location and football players from the Arena Football League's Orlando Predators shook hands with the soldiers.

As the evening went on many people leaving the theme park stopped by the event just to talk to Soldiers and gives their thanks.

Soldiers see barracks improvements after deployment

By Sgt. 1st Class Marcia Triggs

WASHINGTON (Army News Service, Feb. 10, 2004)

– More than \$65 million is being spent on improving single Soldiers' barracks while they are deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan.

Soldiers from Fort Riley, Kan., who served in Iraq, came home to freshly painted barracks, properly working lighting and plumbing fixtures and new tiles or re-carpeted floors, said Lt. Col. Wesley Anderson, the director of Public Works at Fort Riley.

About 5,546 Soldiers will see \$2.4 million in improvements at Fort Riley. That number includes Soldiers who have already returned from overseas deployments and others who are scheduled to return in September, he added.

Other installations undergoing improvements are Fort Campbell, Ky.; Fort Carson, Colo.; Fort Bragg, N.C.; Fort Bliss and Fort Hood in Texas.

Fort Hood is making the largest improvements by upgrading the electrical systems in the barracks, said Donald LaRocque, the Public Works program manager for the Installation Management Agency.

"Soldiers now have audiovisual equipment, computers and microwaves. The Directorate of Public Works is going to increase the current capacity so that Soldiers can plug in more equipment without blowing the circuit breakers, LaRocque said.

Improving the living conditions for single Soldiers has been a work in progress for DPW officials, but it has been accelerated in most cases to take advantage of empty barracks, LaRocque said.

"Units will be rotating on a regular basis while we're at war, and we can get a lot done in a year in an empty building," LaRocque said.

In most cases the changes were cosmetic and include having a cleaning crew come in, painting and hanging up pictures.

More than \$8 million in new furniture was purchased for the Soldiers who reside in the older barracks at Fort Campbell, said Col. James Duttweiler, the post director of Public Works.

Soldiers who return from serving in the second rotation of Operation Iraqi Freedom and the fifth rotation of Operating Enduring Freedom will also see significant improvements done to their barracks when they return home, LaRocque said.

SECTION Q N' A:

SOLDIER

What is your job and what do you like most about it?

Spc. Thomas Gerrish

*Job: supply specialist
"I help out the Soldiers by getting them mission capable and that makes me feel good."*



Photo by Spc. Sean McCollum

Spc. Thomas Gerrish, a Supply specialist with the 192nd Military Police Detachment, does some reps with a 50 pound weight at the North Town Gym.

Sgt. Darryl Collins

*Job: finance clerk
"I like making the Soldiers happy. Everyone likes to send mail to their families."*



Photo by Spc. Rob Barker

Sgt. Darryl Collins, a finance clerk with the 641st AG Postal, takes outgoing mail from a Soldier of Camp Bondsteel.

Senior Airman Allen Thill

*Job: forecaster
"I give weather for all of Multi-national Brigade (East) and it's satisfying giving pilots weather they need to complete their mission."*



Photo by Spc. Tim Grooms

Senior Airman Allen Thill, a weather forecaster with Detachment 2, 401st Air Expeditionary Wing, speaks to a customer about the weather forecast for Camp Bondsteel.

Spc. Betta Yokopenic



Photo by Sgt. Jon Soucy

Spc. Betta Yokopenic of the 448th Civil Affairs Battalion prepares to fire a German G3 machine gun with the help of a German soldier while soldiers from the two countries share Range Falcon Seven and sample each other's weapons.

*Job: Civil Affairs economics team
"Why I like it: I like to help people."*



Scenes of Kosovo

Skiers take a break before hitting the slopes of the Brezovica ski resort. Photo by Maj. Gregory Tine.