

Produced For Personnel of KFOR Multi-National Brigade (East)

# Guardian East

Volume 10, Issue 3

December 31, 2003

**Everybody was  
Kung fu Fighting:**

*The Martial Arts of MNB(E)*

**page 12**



# Message to the troops



## A new year to come By Col. Philip Carlin Deputy Commander

As we close another chapter in our lives (2003), now is a perfect opportunity to reflect upon the challenges that we have encountered, and the perseverance that has led to our accomplishments. Clearly the men and women of Multi-national Brigade (East) have responded in a magnificent manner, which is a tribute to themselves and their leadership.

The New Year will certainly have its own challenges and sacrifices. As we look beyond our own personal needs we become aware of what has been accomplished since July 2003. I suggest each of us take comfort in the fact that we have made a difference to all ethnicities in Kosovo. Enormous strides have been taken allowing for the transition to civil authorities. The number of Internally Displaced

Persons (IDPs) who have returned has risen dramatically, strife between the inter-ethnic populations has lessened, and the families of Kosovo are beginning to realize opportunities for a better future. Let there be no doubt that our work is unfinished, or that the follow-on soldiers of the great 34th ID will be able to complete the difficult tasks during their deployment. What we have collectively performed to-date is to provide hope and direction to all the men and women of Kosovo be they Serb, Albanian, Roma, etc., so that in the very near future they will be able to live in peace, realize increased employment prospects, and enjoy greater educational opportunities. I submit to the men and women of MNB(E), our hard work is not yet complete. We must continue to be diligent until it is time for each of us to redeploy, at which time we can reflect and remember that



## Col. Philip Carlin

we provided our personal total effort, allowing for a better future for all those we touched during our deployment.

I have had the privilege of working closely with many of our soldiers during the last six months in Kosovo, ranging from the CG to the young PFC, and I am truly amazed at the professionalism, dedication to duty, and resolve by all. I, along with each soldier of MNB(E), faced both military and personal challenges both here and stateside. We have met those challenges as the result of teamwork and friendships. Many of us will be reuniting with our families and friends within the very near future and I ask that in the waning weeks each of you continue your devotion to duty, and maintain the high standards that you have exhibited to-date so that everyone can return to their loved ones safely.

I wish each of you and your families a happy and prosperous New Year.

## SEE THE PHOTO OF THE DAY

[www.mnbe.hqusareur.army.mil](http://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](mailto:guardianeast@bondsteel2.aur.army.mil).

**COVER:** Sgt. Rachel Brown, an intelligence analyst with HHC, 56th Brigade, performs her routine with the bo staff at the martial arts exhibition Dec. 14th.

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## Guardian East

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ADMINISTRATIVE SPECIALIST  
**Spc. Sean McCollum**

### About Guardian East

Guardian East is an official publication of KFOR Multi-National Brigade (East) produced to provide command information to service members in MNB(E). Guardian East is produced by the 29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, Army National Guard, Baltimore, Md. Contents of Guardian East are not necessarily official views, nor endorsed by the U.S. government, the Department of Defense, the Department of the Army or the 28th Infantry Division. Guardian East is published bi-monthly using offset press by the MNB(E) Public Affairs Office, Building 1320, Camp Bondsteel. Printed circulation is 3,000.



## **Bucktails**

**Infantrymen of Charlie Company, 1-112th, search to rid area of illegal weapons and ammunition.**

## **A Soldier's Dream Job**

**Spc. Mark Plumer follows his childhood dream and becomes a veterinary technician.**

## **Ukrainian Armed Forces Day**

**Ukrainian forces celebrate their Armed Forces Day Dec. 6.**

## **Cover Story: Battling Arts**

**Comparing the martial arts of Camps Bondsteel and Monteith.**

## **Gunnery Range**

**Aviation Soldiers conduct a Diving Fire Aerial Gunnery Range, implementing techniques used in Afghanistan.**

## **EOD Destroys UXO**

**EOD conducts monthly destruction of UXOs from around the area.**

*Spc. Conrad Picofsky, right, an infantryman with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-111th Infantry, battles it out with Spc. Jeffrey Kovach, of Charlie Company, 1-110th Infantry, in a sumo wrestling tournament recently held at the Camp Monteith Fieldhouse. Photo by Sgt. Jon Soucy.*



***Spc. Aaron M. Zaliponi, an infantryman with Charlie Company, 1-112th Infantry, scans his surroundings while conducting a search for illegal weapons and ammunition in an area near Llabjan/ Labljane.***

# Bucktails

## Keeping an eye on Kosovo

Story and photos by Sgt. Jon Soucy

The Soldiers of Charlie Company, 1-112th Infantry have been given a hands-on example of the old axiom of a needle in a haystack. In addition to their regular presence patrols, the Soldiers have been searching an area near Labljane/Llabjan for illegal weapons and ammunition following local residents' reports of gunfire. Despite having to search for the well-hidden weapons across a large area, the Soldiers have been successful at finding and removing contraband.

(See *BUCKTAILS* page 6)

**(BUCKTAILS from page 5)**

“They’re getting really good at hiding the stuff,” said Staff Sgt. Todd Mead, a squad leader with the company, “but we’ve recovered several weapons and ammunition.”

Areas where the contraband has been hidden include trash piles, underbrush and hedgerows, and a bag of ammunition was even found in the hollow of a tree, said Mead.

The infantrymen see this task as an important part of their overall mission in Kosovo since, according to Mead, there are hundreds of thousands of weapons in the region.

“And we’re trying to whittle that number down,” said Mead.

And by decreasing the number of weapons in the area, the Soldiers are doing

something for the future of the region.

“The kids here are the future of Kosovo. Every time a child is hurt by random acts of violence, the future of Kosovo is threatened that much more,” said Mead.

In addition to keeping with the unit’s overall mission as part of Multi-national Brigade (East), the opportunity to search the area for illegal weapons is a morale booster for many in the unit.

“It’s a nice change of pace,” said Spc. Aaron M. Zaliponi, an infantryman with the unit. “Especially when you find something. It’s a big Hooah moment. It’s a big morale booster. And it’s nice getting out and being able to walk around.”

“I feel we’re doing something,” said Spc. Thomas

McElhatten, also an infantryman in the unit, who agreed with Zaliponi. “We’re here to provide a safe and secure environment, and finding these weapons is making it safer.”

The discovery of the contraband is only the first step in the process of removing it from the area. After it has been found, photographs are taken and a detailed description of the item and location is written down. Following that, a chain of custody form is filled out and the item is turned over to the Kosovo Police Service who then destroy the contraband.

And the Soldiers feel their work is an important part of creating a lasting safe environment in Kosovo.

“As long as we can get the weapons out of the area, it’s just one more piece of the puzzle,” said Mead.

**Staff Sgt. Todd Mead, of Charlie Company, 1-112th Infantry, hands out crayons and coloring books to local children in the Llabjan/Labljane area Dec 3. The unit usually has a box or two of school supplies and other things which they distribute to local families while on patrol.**





*Spc. Aaron M. Zaliponi, left, an infantryman with Charlie Company, 1-112th Infantry, searches a vehicle at a checkpoint in an area near Llabjan/ Labljane for illegal weapons and other contraband. The unit set up a vehicle checkpoint and patrolled the area searching for ammunition and illegal weapons after gunfire had been reported in the area.*



# A present surprise

## Unexpected gifts make children and families of Kosovo smile

Story and photo by Sgt. Jon Soucy

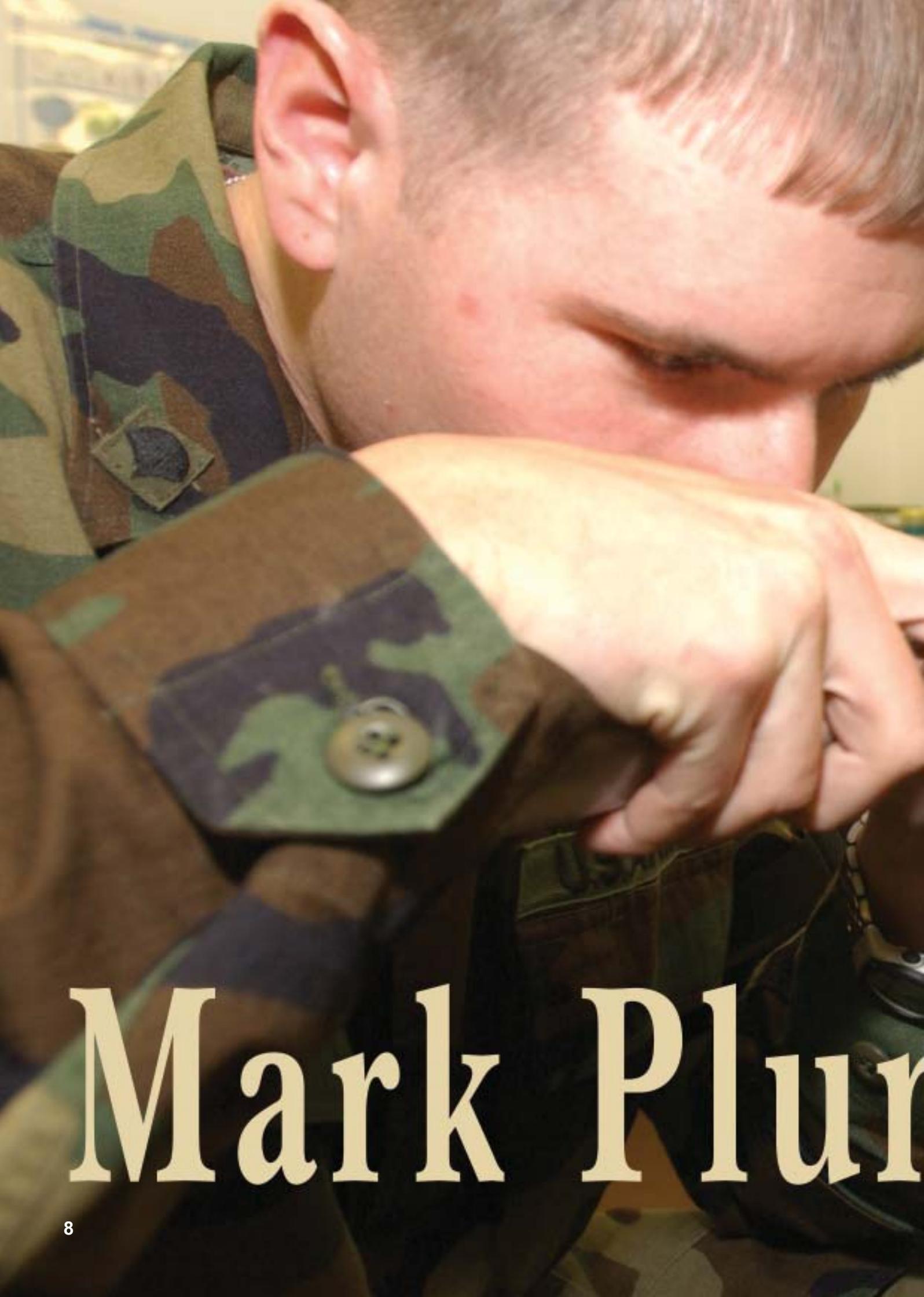
**F**or the Soldiers of Charlie Company, 1-112th Infantry, finding concealed weapons and ammunition isn't the only way they help provide a better environment for the people of Kosovo. Like many units that are part of Multi-national Brigade (East), families and friends of the infantrymen have sent clothing and other supplies to be distributed to those in need in the area.

The unit currently has about 40 boxes of items, ranging from winter clothing to crayons, and are expecting about another 80 to begin arriving. While on patrol they usually have at least a box with them in their humvee and they distribute items to people as they patrol the area.

"We always have stuff for the kids," said Staff Sgt. Todd Mead, a squad leader in the unit. "And a lot of places up in the mountains don't really see Soldiers much, so we always try and bring things up there where it's really needed."

The reaction from those who live in the area, no matter if the unit is searching for weapons or distributing clothing, has been positive.

"The reception of the people has been fantastic," said Mead. "The families are really poor and they don't have much. But what they do have they offer to us. They treat us really well."



# Mark Plun

# A Specialist's aspiration

**F**ive years ago, when Spc. Mark Plumer, a veterinary technician with the 422nd Medical Detachment (Veterinary Services), joined the Army, he did it to follow a dream and an opportunity to learn a career that interested him since elementary school.

"I could not afford [veterinary] school so I joined the Army as a veterinary technician," said Plumer.

Plumer also had inspiration from a family member to join the Army.

"It was another dream to join the military because my brother was in the Marines," said Plumer. "It seemed he liked what he did and I always looked up to him. I thought it was cool and followed behind him."

Plumer, an Army Reservist from Rockville, Md., who is a volunteer firefighter and a full-time employee with Costco Wholesale in his civilian life, said he didn't follow his brother's footsteps exactly because the Marines didn't offer the job he was after.

While this is Plumer's first deployment, he has helped countries in Central and South America during his unit's annual training.

"It feels good to go out and help other countries," he said.

Plumer's main task here is keeping six military working dogs, worth about \$60,000 each, healthy.

And he has yet to be bitten.

"It is interesting working with military dogs," said Plumer. "They are all trained very well and the ones here all seem to be very nice."

Plumer is responsible for giving them intravenous injections before surgery, checking their vital signs and checking on medications for the animals. In fact, performing actual surgery is the only thing he does not do. He also has a part in helping local livestock in regular Veterinary Civilian Assistance

Program missions.

"It is nice to have this much responsibility because it keeps me busy," said Plumer. "Plus, I know everything will get done."

Plumer has shown he can do other things besides taking care of animals.

"He is very serious about his job and a

responsible person," said Staff Sgt. Sherry Hargraves, food inspector and non-commissioned officer in charge of veterinary services with the unit. "He has also helped with improvements in the building, such as getting a new floor and getting things organized."

From military working dogs to the livestock in Kosovo, Plumer will be here to do his job the best he can.

"Since the first day, he saw what needed to be done and took care of it," said Hargraves.

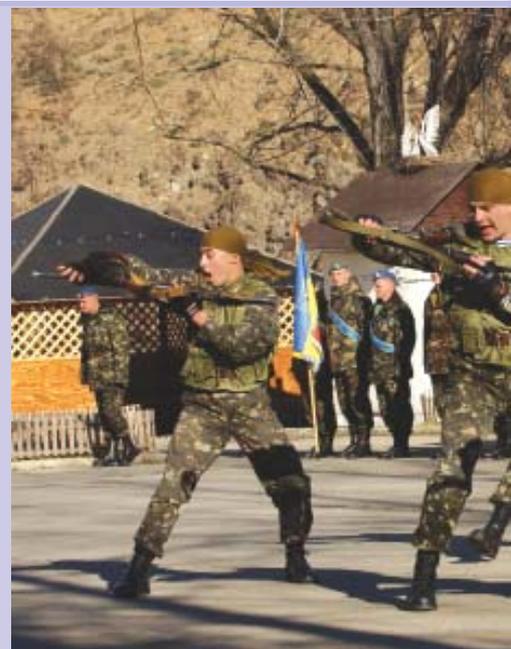
*Unable to afford the school to become a veterinarian, Spc. Mark Plumer joined the Army to achieve his goal. Since then he has learned the field while gaining valuable experience.*

Story and photo by  
Spc. Tim Grooms

mer



*As part of the Ukrainian Armed Forces Day ceremony, the Ukrainian Military Attache from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia presents Ukrainian soldiers with the NATO medal at Camp Breza Vicza.*



*Ukrainian infantry soldiers perform Ukrainian Armed Forces Day celebration.*

## **Twelve years after Ukrainian Armed Forces Day was passed as law, the Ukrainian soldiers of Multi-national Brigade (East) held a ceremony as celebration of their military personnel. Ukrainian Air Force Capt. Dmytro Sotnichenko offers a brief history of those armed forces, and his photos of the event:**

**O**n Dec. 6, 1991 the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian Parliament passed a law naming that date as the day to annually celebrate the Ukrainian armed forces. The armed forces of Ukraine were created for the armed defense of independence, territorial integrity and inviolability of the country.

After the breakup of the Soviet Union and proclamation of Ukraine's independence in 1991, the new nation inherited one of the most powerful military forces in Europe. They were equipped with nuclear weapons and comparatively modern conventional arms. Since their independence, the development of the armed forces of Ukraine has been defined by a considerable cut in the number

of military personnel, weapons and equipment. In order to conform to the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty, the Ukrainian Government proclaimed Ukraine's non-nuclear status and established its armaments limits. This helped to form the basic framework for creation of Ukraine's national armed forces.

In carrying out its peace policy, Ukraine has made a historical step by renouncing its nuclear stockpile. They had the third most powerful arsenal in the world, and this fact is an unprecedented contribution to both European and international security.

The international cooperation of the Ukrainian armed forces is very widespread and versatile, comprising relations with almost 70 nations and a number of leading international



*a martial arts routine during the ration.*

*Ukrainian soldiers stand in formation during the ceremony commemorating Ukrainian Armed Forces Day.*

organizations such as NATO, the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the European Union. Considerable emphasis is placed on this international cooperation, and much time is devoted particularly to developing a stable relationship with NATO as it is the lead organization in the international security system.

Two major issues were resolved in the framework of the NATO-Ukraine Charter on Distinctive Partnership, signed in July 1997 in Madrid. It directly favored the strengthening of

external guarantees of Ukraine's national security and created conditions for an active integration of Ukraine into international security structures.

The history of Ukrainian military involvement in peacekeeping operations dates back to July 1992, when the first Special Battalion was sent to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Since that time our country remains an active participant of the peacekeeping process throughout the world.



*Ukrainian paratroopers relax after the Ukrainian Armed Forces Day ceremony by playing Ukrainian folk music on guitars.*

# Martial arts

## Bondsteel

### Style *Vers*

Story and photo by Spc. Sean McCollum

It's not every day that an infantry officer, some intelligence analysts, a weather forecaster, and a civilian get together to practice better ways to beat each other up. Even more rare is the chance to show off these skills to an eager audience.

These five and many others received their chance at Camp Bondsteel's first martial arts exposition Dec. 14, when two classes, one focusing on traditional martial arts and the other teaching military combat, combined to show off their skills.

For the martial arts beginners, the event was not only a chance to showcase what they had learned, but also a test for the next higher level of skill, the yellow belt, said Shidoshi (meaning "teacher of the warrior") Michael Warren, a civilian who works for General Dynamics Corporation and the instructor for both classes.

One of the ways in which the martial arts students demonstrated their skill was with the Bo staff, a six-foot-long, wooden pole. Both Sgt. Rachel Brown, an intelligence analyst with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 56th Brigade, and Air Force Master Sgt. Michael Sema, a weather forecaster with 203rd Weather Flight, twirled, spun, and struck with the slender weapon using their own choreography to music they chose.

"It's a very simple but elegant weapon," Sema said of the staff. "And many things resemble one." Sema said this is useful if he ever needs to look for a weapon in order to defend himself.

The military combat class students also had the chance to prove their skills. During the knife-fighting segment, rubber knives swooshed through the air when they missed their targets or left thin red welts as they connected to the sounds of meaty thuds. Metallic pings rang out while the combatants blocked and parried during fights with the Ninjato, a 36-inch-long metal blade the fighters wielded in each hand.

Besides each class demonstrating their prowess separately, both the combatants and the martial arts students laced up their boxing gloves and fought using the various styles they had learned. Some of this action took a toll on the combatants.

"It was too long," said Sgt. Dale Markowitz, who is nicknamed "Scrappy" and is a white-belted intelligence analyst with the 640th Military Intelligence Battalion, of his two-minute gloved fight against Capt. Robert Hornberger, a much larger white-belted infantry officer with HHC 56th Brigade. "My body still hurts."

"I know that I lived through it," said Sema of his fight with 1st Lt. Thomas Ivanco, an operations officer with HHC 56th Brigade. "I hit him right in the knee, and it took away all my energy and from then I was just improvising."

(See *NINJA* page 21)

*Capt. Robert Hornberger, an infantry officer with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 56th Brigade, swings and misses on Sgt. Dale "Scrappy" Markowitz, an intel analyst with the 640th Military Intelligence Battalion, during their fight at the martial arts expo Dec. 14th.*

# S of MNB(E)

## Monteith

### SUS Style

Story and photo by Sgt. Jon Soucy

**S**pc. Conrad Picofsky stands roughly six feet tall and weighs well under 300 pounds. Yet in the world of sumo wrestling the infantryman with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-111th Infantry can hold his own.

Picofsky was one of many Soldiers at Camp Monteith to don one of the oversized, heavily padded leather sumo suits during a recent Morale, Welfare and Recreation sumo wrestling tournament. In keeping with the spirit of sumo wrestling, the suits are complete with sumo belts and helmets in the shape of the traditional upswept hairstyle that sumo wrestlers wear. But that is where many would say the similarities to the sport end.

In the traditional Japanese sport, athletes compete to knock their opponent out of a roughly 10-foot circle. At Camp Monteith the basics of the sport remain the same with the goal being to knock the challenger out of the ring. But also present is the taunting, teasing and wrestling moves that many would associate with professional wrestling icons such as Hulk Hogan and Stone Cold Steve Austin.

“Oh yeah, I was throwin’ him all around,” declared Spc. Adem Kural, an infantryman with Bravo Company, 1-111th Infantry, after his time in the ring. “You were goin’ down,” he said, taunting his opponent, Spc. Alex Antonelli, an infantryman with the same unit.

Antonelli sat in a chair opposite Kural with his arms folded across his chest and a sure-of-himself smile on his face.

“Yeah, but who won?” he asked, in response to the taunting Kural. Kural admitted to the defeat, and mentioned something about a rematch while two other competitors threw themselves around the ring in pinning attempts.

For the Soldiers, the event gave them an opportunity to blow off steam and exert pent up frustrations and extra energies, which was one of the goals of the matches according to Adrian Jones, MWR director at Camp Monteith. And the event seemed to be a success in that regard.

“It’s strenuous,” said Spc. Jeffrey Kovach, an infantryman with Charlie Company, 1-110th Infantry, who wrestled while in high school. “It’s different. And it takes a lot of energy.”

Though it was his first time in the ring, Picofsky emerged from the match victorious.

“I held my ground. I used the powerthrust technique,” he said, describing his tactics in the ring. “That’s a complete charge to the lower torso.”

*Spc. Conrad Picofsky, right, an infantryman with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-111th Infantry, battles it out with Spc. Jeffrey Kovach of Charlie Company, 1-110th Infantry, in a sumo wrestling tournament at the Camp Monteith Fieldhouse.*

# Flying high, diving low



Story and photo by Spc. Rob Barker

One of the most common Army practices is to “train as you fight.” Soldiers of Charlie and Delta Companies, 1-151st Aviation, recently took the slogan to another level when they flew their Apaches deep into Falcon Four Range fighting snow, wind and mountains to conduct a Diving Fire Aerial Gunnery Range.

The range featured silhouettes the shape and size of humans that the pilots attacked from different altitudes and speeds; something new for the pilots.

“We conducted a live fire exercise with the AH-64,” said Chief Warrant Officer Daniel Melogy,

a copilot and gunner with Charlie Company. “We were trying some new techniques we are seeing employed in other theaters such as Afghanistan.”

“It gave us some practical experience in deploying our weapons systems in a way that we do not typically do it,” said Melogy about the diving techniques used in the exercise. “It’s a little above the typical Army standard.”

A lot of preparation went into getting the range off the ground.

“The exercise was a culmination of more than a year of training,” said Chief Warrant Officer Carson Hayslip, a pilot and instructor with Charlie Company. “The best part of the exercise was finally for the pilots to see what we’ve been talking about.”

# with the Apache



*An Apache takes flight in preparation for its turn at the targets during a recent Diving Fire Aerial Gunnery Range at Falcon Four Range.*

The exercise helped the pilots learn some valuable lessons.

“This aircraft is not only a hovering-attack helicopter. It can be used in many other modes of flight, and it can be accurate from all of them,” said Hayslip.

This was not the first range of this kind for the companies, but it was by far the most challenging, said Melogy.

“Since we’ve been in Kosovo we have done four [gunnery ranges], each progressively a little more difficult,” said Melogy who has been in aviation for over six years. “There is a crawl, walk, run mentality about this gunnery.”

Although the experience is vital for all pilots and gunners, the mission is aimed to help the

newer pilots in the unit, said Hayslip.

“It is good for the pilots who have less experience and haven’t been in aviation as long,” said Hayslip. “They can see how accurate the aircraft can fire when you are at airspeed or you are in a shallow dive versus from a hover. They have not experienced that until today.”

While strengthening their attack skills, the Soldiers were also continuing their mission in Kosovo.

“Primarily our mission here is providing a presence, a very visible presence,” said Melogy. “We were able to do that for a lot of people in a very short amount of time. I think that this reassures them, and they know they are being watched out for.”

# Sudden Impact

Early in the morning, just as he does about once each month, Staff Sgt. Phil Herndon of the 717th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company laid strips of C-4 explosive compound neatly on top of an equally neat row of land mines, grenades, and other assorted ordnance.



*Staff Sgt. Phil Herndon, an explosives ordnance disposal technician with the 717th EOD Company, raises his arm after detonating 190 pounds of C-4 to demolish unexploded ordnance.*

Story and photos by  
Spc. Sean McCollum

**H**is demeanor was calm and casual as he carefully completed his task. A few feet away, pockmarks in the ground, evidence of previous months' efforts, collected the recent rain in pools deep enough to obscure the bottom.

"Fire in the hole!" he yelled minutes later from a safe distance at the bottom of a hill.

With those words of warning, Herndon pushed the radio transmitter that activated 190 pounds of C-4, heaving a gigantic cloud of smoke and dirt into the air and leaving a four-foot-by-four-foot crater where the neat pile of unexploded ordnance used to be.

Today all the ordnance was scrap metal. It was safe to handle because the unit had already disarmed it, but Herndon said it couldn't be disposed of by melting it down in a furnace the way scrap normally is because of potential safety hazards. That seemed fine with the members of the 717th.

"Blowing up stuff is definitely fun," said Spc. Michael Roberts, Herndon's teammate, of the perks of working with the unit.

The monthly demolition may be a highlight for the EOD crew, but much more is expected of them than one day of making things explode. Herndon said his team has responded to almost 150 calls to disarm potentially deadly unexploded ordnance since their rotation started in July 2003. And those calls don't always come



*Spc. Michael Roberts, left, and Staff Sgt. Phil Herndon both with the 717th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Unit place unexploded ordnance together in preparation for a scheduled demolition. More than 190 pounds of C-4 explosive compound was used, leaving a four-foot-by-four-foot crater on the demolition range.*

when it's convenient.

"It's feast or famine with us," Herndon said of the frequency of calls. "It could be during duty hours. It could be three in the morning."

Another, more obvious stress factor in the job is the constant disarming of explosive materials. For the team members, this doesn't seem to be a problem. The EOD training school, Rogers said, taught him how to handle high-stress situations as well as his equipment.

"I won't say it isn't dangerous, but once you make it through the school, you've been taught everything you need to know," said Rogers. "With all the safety measures we have in place it's pretty safe."

An 8-year EOD veteran, Herndon said he likes the independence of the job and how it lets him help people.

"I can't contemplate trading this job for any other in the Army," Herndon said. "When I'm out there, everything relies upon my judgment. It's kind of like being a doctor. People know that if you break a leg you call a doctor. If you find a bomb you call EOD. And then once you call, EOD shows up and we take care of it."



*Staff Sgt. Phil Herndon of the 717th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Unit carefully places bricks of C-4 explosive compound on top of unexploded ordnance as part of a scheduled demolition of such items.*

# The Art of Song...

Story and photo by  
Sgt. Jon Soucy

**W**hen Johnny Reyes first heard his band, Steel Rod, was offered the chance to go on tour to U.S. military installations worldwide, he shrugged and thought “cool, we get to travel and get paid good.” However, soon after playing the first few shows of their first tour, he saw it as much more than just a good paycheck and a chance to travel. He saw it as a chance to give something back to the service members that attend the shows.

Steel Rod, who recently performed at Camps Monteith and Bondsteel, has been together for three years and in that time has done five military tours to locations as far from their California homes as Korea, Japan, Bosnia and Kosovo. Though they generally play six

nights a week at home in Los Angeles, the band finds it most rewarding to play for those who are serving in the armed forces.

“Once we did that first tour and we saw how much we were appreciated, that was it,” said guitarist Rod Pantoja. “We’ve been given unit patches and coins and people have come up to us and thanked us for playing. That’s not something that happens a lot at home where a lot of the time you’re just background noise for the bar.”

The band, who plays cover songs of “everything from Marvin Gaye to Metallica,” has been humbled by the experience of playing for service members, said Reyes.

“We were here last year around Christmas. We got to leave

the next day [after playing], but [the Soldiers] were here away from home and couldn’t leave,” said Pantoja. “That humbled us very much.”

“We go through rough times to get here,” agreed bass player Shannin Whitney, “but [the Soldiers here] are out doing their thing. Doing their job no matter what.”

And for Reyes, the biggest part of the job is respect.

“I think the level of respect that we get out here is much higher than back home,” said Reyes, who added that it is not only the respect and courtesy that is shown to him and his bandmates, but the respect that the service members carry with them. And that point was illustrated during one of the band’s tours.

Story by Spc. Rob Barker

**I**t is wintertime in Kosovo, and everyone here knows that means temperatures around freezing day in and day out. Some Soldiers at Camp Bondsteel combat the



Photo by Spc. James Croall

*Spc. Carlos Melendez, a postal clerk with the 313th Postal Company, dances with Spc. Juany Rios, a generator mechanic with the same unit during Salsa Night.*

cold by salsa dancing at the South Town Gym. The Morale, Welfare and Recreation supported occasion takes place at least once a month said Renee Favors, MWR program specialist.

The dance also allows Soldiers relief from the strain of being away from home.

“I see these music or dance events as a stress reliever. Soldiers come out and dance the blues away or they just come because they know they are always welcomed in ‘mom’s house’,” said Favors.

“This is a way to relax after working hard every day,” said Spc. Carlos Melendez, a finance clerk with the 313th Postal Company. “It also keeps me in shape.”

Soldiers of Camp Bondsteel participate in the event by doing more than dancing.

“I have some wonderful Soldiers that come out and volunteer for these events,” said Favors. “During the last salsa party my regular DJ got sick, but as always the Soldiers here at Camp Bondsteel answered the call for help. I only had Karaoke Latino music so one of my wonderful Soldiers, Spc. Gian-Karlo Perez, went to his room for his music, and he became our DJ for the night.”

“We were playing in Korea and everyone was partying and drinking. It was kind of rowdy,” said Reyes. “All of a sudden, someone in the bar yells ‘Retreat!’ The place turned silent in an instant. You could here a pin drop. The Korean Anthem was played and the U.S. Anthem was played and everybody stood at attention until it was over. It put a lump in my throat. It was all about respect and something more than the individual,” said Reyes.

The military tours that the band goes on usually last for about 12 days where they play to service members from all branches. While on tour the band has met many different people, including some well-known stars.

“We met Wayne Newton at the airport in Pusan, Korea,” said Whitney. “He said he really enjoyed our show, but I don’t think he really saw us play.”

Although they have had the chance to meet celebrities, for the band, it comes back to the service members.

“Thanks for having us,” said Reyes. “We really appreciate what you guys are doing out here.”



*Rich Dajani, guitarist for the band Steel Rod, recently performed with the band at the Camp Monteith Field House and the South Town Gym at Camp Bondsteel.*

Perez, the communications chief with the 640th Military Intelligence Battalion, said he enjoys dancing the salsa and meringue because it creates a sense of show.

“These two Latin dances are actually meant to display the beauty and grace of the female partner,” said Perez. “The best male dancers are the ones who make their partners shine.”

The dances are not easy to learn, but it is fun to try, said Perez, and Melendez agreed.

“The hardest part is when you are starting to learn,” said Melendez. “It’s because you think you can’t do it. Once you continue to practice and feel the music in your veins, your attitude changes.”



Photo by Spc. Rob Barker

*Spc. Andrew Merryman, a medic with Charlie Company, 134th Forward Support Battalion, dances with his partner, Spc. Samantha Minkel, a dental specialist with the 256th Comabt Support Hospital, during a recent salsa dance in the South Town Gym at Camp Bondsteel.*

# The Art of *Dance*



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

## This past year: A year of challenges, achievements

By Chaplain (Lt. Col.)  
Bert S. Kozen

We come to the end of one year and the beginning of a new one. New Year's Day is an opportunity to look back on the last twelve months. How have they been for us? Have they been, as in the often-quoted masterpiece, "The best of

times... the worst of times?" This past year has certainly been one of challenges. We have been mobilized, trained, deployed and now are in the final months of our mission. What have we gained from the experience?

These questions may not be easy to answer, especially when we are still being cautioned to remain focused on our tasks and responsibilities. Surely when we get home there will be time for these thoughts and reflections, but New Year's is also a time for such thoughts. I believe that the potential exists for us to gain a new found appreciation for life and its many blessings if we take the moment to reflect on this past year.

Many of us remember the "guard of old" and the questions asked often by our "Regular Army" counterparts. Questions as to our readiness and competence and if we really could successfully perform "real world missions". The Guard and Reserve have demonstrated in very clear fashion that they are not only capable of performing, but in many ways can exceed the standards set by the Army. Our rotation here in Kosovo has helped prove this point once again.

Some still might ask what good we have done here and why this mission needs to continue. All you need to do is look into the eyes of an elderly person able to travel safely on the streets of Gnjilani or the smile on the face of a young child able to go to school in Pozarnje to see the difference

### North Chapel Worship Schedule

**Sundays:** 0800 - Liturgical Protestant Worship

0930 - Roman Catholic Mass

1100 - Contemporary Protestant Worship1

400 - Gospel Worship

**Tuesdays:** 1800 - Roman Catholic Adult Ed. Class

1900 - Roman Catholic Mass

2000 - RCIA

2100 - Contemporary Protestant Choir Rehearsal

**Wednesdays:** 1700 - Roman Catholic Choir Rehearsal

1830 - Gospel Bible Study

2030 - Gospel Choir Rehearsal

**Thursdays:** 1900 - Roman Catholic Mass

2000 - Contemporary Protestant Choir Rehearsal

**Fridays:** 1330 - Islamic Prayer Time

1800 - Shabbat Prayer Time

1900 - Gospel Prayer Time

1930 - Gospel Bible Study

**Saturdays:** 1200 - Contemporary Protestant Choir Rehearsal

1900 - Gospel Choir Rehearsal

### South Chapel Worship Schedule

**Sundays:**

0800 - Roman Catholic Mass

0930 - Nondenominational Christian Service

1300 - Latter Day Saints Service

1930 - Nondenominational Christian Service

**Mondays:**

1200 - Roman Catholic Mass

**Saturdays:**

1930 - Roman Catholic Mass

our presence makes in the lives of these people. Hopefully they are on the way back to an existence of peace and prosperity, but this would not be happening if we were not here.

As we look ahead to 2004 what are our hopes and our dreams? Most of us certainly look forward to returning home to our loved ones, families and our "civilian lives". Just as it was important for us to train and prepare for this mission it is equally important for us to prepare for our redeployment and reunions. Redeployment issues are critical as we return home.

We have changed and like it or not our participation in this mission has effected us, good, bad and indifferent. Some things we will be able to share and need to share with loved ones and friends. Some things we will share with a relative few. Still others will be kept to ourselves for life. We will need to be patient with those around us and ask them to be patient with us. Most of all we need to be patient with ourselves.

The Unit Ministry Teams of Multi-national Brigade (East) are prepared to assist this process through Redeployment and Reunion Briefs. Please be open and receptive to these briefs, the material presented and the opportunity to share common experiences and concerns may make a profound impact on the success of your redeployment. Be patient and understanding towards each other and your loved ones and families.

May this New Year be a time of blessing and hope. May God continue to guide us and direct our efforts for peace and justice in this land and as we prepare to return to our homes and loved ones may we have a deeper appreciation of the many good things that God has done for us and through us in this past year and ask his continued guidance in the year to come. May all of you have a Blessed and Joyous New Year!

## Pvt. Murphy By Sgt. 1st Class Mark Baker



[www.pvtmurphy.com](http://www.pvtmurphy.com)

### *(NINJA from page 12)*

The show also explored the lighter side of martial arts by mixing in comedy skits. One payed homage to Jim Belushi's "Saturday Night Live" skit "Samurai Deli" in which Warren made a sandwich, accidentally placed extra pickles on it and tried to commit hari-kari for his mistake. After much yelling and waving of a samurai sword, a perfect sandwich was made. In another skit, Warren played an out-of-lip-synch master dealing with an impatient student played by Markowitz by booting him in the head.

Comedy aside, for most participants the night was an adrenaline rush that overcame the nervousness of being students who had been training for only four months – a drop in the bucket in martial arts years.

"Everybody was nervous, but we didn't let it get to us," said Brown.

"It's very exhilarating," said Sema. "Right now my heart's going, my mind is going, I'm prattling on endlessly. You can tell I'm flooded with adrenaline."

"It went great," said Markowitz. "I feel good. I thought I did well. I got my belt. I had a good time, I hope everyone else had a good time."

## Reserve and Guard receive unlimited Commissary benefits

The Department of Defense recently announced with the president's signing of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004, effective immediately, the following members and their dependents will be permitted unlimited access to commissary stores:

- Members of the Ready Reserve (which includes members of the Selected Reserve, Individual Ready Reserve and Inactive National Guard) and members of the Retired Reserve who possess a Uniformed Services Identification Card.

- Former members eligible for retired pay at age 60 but who have not yet attained the age of 60 and who possess a Department of Defense Civilian Identification Card.

- Dependents of the members described above who have a Uniformed Services Identification Card or who have a distinct identification card used as an authorization card for benefits and privileges administered by the Uniformed Services.

"Instructions have gone out to all continental U.S. stores informing them that reservists now have unlimited shopping and telling store managers how to welcome members of the National Guard and Reserve to the full use of the commissary benefit," said Patrick Nixon, deputy director of the Defense Commissary Agency. "Commissary shoppers will begin to see banners saying 'Welcome Guard and Reserve to Full Time Savings,' along with other events recognizing these new full-time shoppers."

## Documents found with Saddam point to regime network

By Jim Garamone  
American Forces Press Service

BAGHDAD, Iraq – Intelligence from the capture of Saddam Hussein already is making Baghdad a safer place.

Army Brig. Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, commander of the 1st Armored Division here, said documents found with Saddam have allowed his forces to attack cells of former regime figures and make significant inroads against the financial network supporting the groups.

"What the capture of Saddam Hussein revealed is the structure that existed above the local cellular structure – call it a network," Dempsey said during an interview with press traveling with Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Air Force Gen. Richard B. Myers. "We now know how the cells are financed and how they are given broad general guidance."

Dempsey said Saddam did not exercise control of the cells as Americans would define it. Rather, the cells were provided funds and given a broad mission. "We still believe their actions against us are conducted locally, and with very little guidance from above other than 'impede progress,'" he said.

The general said 10 to 14 of these cells have operated in Baghdad, and that the 1st Armored Division has been successful against six. "The remaining challenge is about eight cells and that network that sits above them," Dempsey said.

The intelligence find clarified the set-up of a group called "Mohammad's Army." These are the people with the most to lose if a new Iraq arises, he said. The group is a loosely affiliated enemy consisting of members of the former regime's intelligence service, some religious extremists and former military personnel. "They had positions of advantage in the former regime, and they'd like them back," Dempsey said.

The find allowed division soldiers to attack the network above the cells. "Just in the last 24 hours (the soldiers) chipped away at that network above them to the 60th percentile," Dempsey said.

Dempsey said the cells themselves differ from neighborhood to neighborhood, and in some parts of the city the cells are larger than in others. In Baghdad, a city of 5.5 million people, the general said he figures there are 1,000 cell members the division is fighting. "That's the scope of the problem," he said. "I'd say 100 of those, maybe 200, are passionate about it, and the others are just taking advantage of the situation for money or whatever."

Communication between the network and Saddam was really one-way, Dempsey said, with people reporting to the deposed dictator via courier. The general said the intelligence that allowed the division to attack the network was minutes of a meeting with a list of names of those present. He said those apprehended were high-ranking military officers in the former regime.

Figuring out this linkage between a network and the cell structure "has been my life for the last seven months. This is what it's all about," Dempsey said. "We have plenty of combat power — it's trying to figure out where to apply it. If you sense some enthusiasm on my part, it's because we are getting closer and closer over time, which is what it takes."

The general said there has been an uptick in human intelligence – tips from Iraqis – since Saddam was captured. "We can't understand what it was like to live for 25 years, not trusting your neighbor because of the regime," he said.

There also is no question that Baghdad is safer now than in the past, he said. "But my charter from the president is 'safe and secure.' I'm not ready to declare it secure yet, but we're moving in the right direction," the general said.

## How has the past year changed your life?



**Spc. Amanda Lopez**

"It has made me more independent and very secure." Lopez is a processing clerk with the 628th Finance Detachment.



**Spc. Doug Everhart**

"I realize how much I miss my wife and family. Also, once you see how others live, we, as Americans, complain far too much." Everhart is a talk radio telephone operator with Alpha Company, 2-112th Infantry.



**Spc. Paul Cook**

"This was the best year of my life. Definitely the most interesting." Cook is a cashier with the 628th Finance Detachment.



**Spc. William Drugg**

"Over this past year, I've learned a lot of different customs and how people in other countries live." Drugg is a driver with Charlie Company, 2-112th Infantry.



**Spc. Reinaldo Alvarez**

"It made me more serious and open minded. I got to experience many different cultures." Alvarez is a driver with the 173rd Airborne Brigade.

# Scenes of Kosovo

**As the sun sets, Mt. Ljuboten, known to Soldiers as “Big Duke”, is silhouetted in a view looking southwest from Camp Bondsteel. Photo by Maj. Gregory Tine.**

