TASK FORCE FALCON

Falcon Flier

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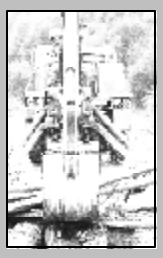

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Task Force Falcon celebrates Veteran's Day with patriotic style

Troops honor past look toward future

by Sgt. Jamie Brown
Senior Editor

CAMP BONDSTEEL - Patriotic songs filled the air, colors were proudly displayed and soldiers of the past, present and future stood tall as Veteran's Day was celebrated by a packed crowd at the Southtown gym here on Nov. 11.

The program, which was organized by Task Force Falcon Command Sergeant Major, Command Sgt. Maj. Marvin Hill, gave soldiers a chance to thank servicemembers of the past for their sacrifices, and to take pride in the job they have done here in Kosovo.

The celebration began with the posting of the units' and nation's colors. This was followed by examples of the Army's past, present and future. Command Sgt. Maj. (Ret.) Leon Maxie, Jr. stood proudly on the stage representing veterans of the Army's past. In his 30 years of service, Maxie served in every leadership position from squad leader to command sergeant major. Sgt. Jeremy Smith, of HHC, 2nd Brigade, 101st Airborne Div., and Task Force Falcon NCO of the quarter represented the soldier of the present. Representing the soldier of the future was Spc. Rance Schmidt, 2nd Bn.502nd Inf. He stood donning the most high tech gear in the Army. This included a AN-PVS 14 monocular night vision device, a Pac-2-A long-range aiming system and a M-4 Carbine weapon.

Hill then read the Veteran's Day Proclamation for 2001. This was followed by Maj. Greg Rawlings who led the Chapel quartet in singing patriotic songs, including "America the Beautiful."

After the music, Task Force Commander, Brig. Gen. William C. David expressed his gratitude to the crowd of soldiers. "The real patriots are in this room right here," he said. "They're ones who raised their hand. They're the ones who express patriotism every day, by doing duty on the observation post, by working on vehicles in the motor pool, by standing watch in an operations center, and a thousand other jobs that are required to make a task force operate."

Spc. Rance Schmidt, 2nd Bn, 502nd Infantry, represents the 'soldier of the future' at the Veterans Day ceremony here.

Later in his speech David, put the current operation in Kosovo in perspective. "Someday at some future ceremony, at some far away place, after you've retired, or after you have gone on to the great beyond, soldiers will gather, they will give pause, they will remember your service," he said.

Following the retiring of the unit colors, and a multi-media slide show from combat camera, which showed Task Force Falcon soldiers performing their missions, the ceremony ended. Several soldiers said they were glad they attended the ceremony.

"It made me feel more like an American," said Pvt.2 John Owen, C Co. 311th Military Intelligence. "It showed more about what's going on in the states, and what we're actually doing here. It made me feel like what we did here meant something."

Spc. Heidi Sisson, a mental health specialist with the 86th CSH agreed that the ceremony was worthwhile. "I thought the program was absolutely marvelous," she said. "It really showed a lot of pride in the country, and the service that military members provide to their country. It made me really proud. I definitely hit home a lot more being away from my country right now."

For the man who organized the ceremony, the attendance was gratifying. "I was excited about the turn out," said Hill. "I was a little bit surprised, but I do know that during this era the patriots are coming out, and our soldiers are looking for an opportunity to wave their flag, and see their colors hit the stage. It was real heart-warming to come in and see all the seats filled."

Hill also said that this ceremony was a great ending to his run as Task Force Falcon command sergeant major.

"Ceremonies are very important," he said. "You get to reinforce some traditions. You get to honor those who have gone before you. We've had a great rotation, filled with touchdowns, and I think that this was almost the victory dance, the dance that you do in the end-zone, this was it."

TFF Commanding General

Now is time for appreciation, analysis

Brig. Gen. Keith M. Huber

Two points that I would like to make are one of appreciation, and one of a time of analysis. I have been fortunate to know Brig. Gen. Bill David since July of 1971 when we both entered the United States Military Academy at West Point. I have followed his distinguished career and served with him many times. Most notably the two of us served together in the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). I have a great deal of respect and admiration for him as a soldier, and a very profound appreciation for the gracious way he has assisted me as a friend and professional. I can tell you that this has been the easiest transition that I have ever had in my career from one command position to another, and I believe that is a direct result of the leadership displayed by Brig. Gen. David, his officers and NCOs and how the entire chain of command, and staff has approached this mission.

These are emotional times. The great soldiers of 3 Alpha have dedicated their lives for these past six months to improving the conditions in Kosovo. They have given it every ounce of energy and attention, and you can't walk away from a mission like this, and not leave part of yourself behind. Now they are facing the emotion of their time on watch being complete, and coming to an end. Three Alpha has done a superb job, and I along with the entire 3 Bravo family are very honored to be the next in line to take this watch from them. I know they are very proud of what they have accomplished. I see it in their eyes. I see it during the Transfer of Authority ceremonies at the battalion task force level. The United States Army is justifiably proud of what the soldiers of 3 Alpha have done for the people of Kosovo.

As the soldiers of 3 Alpha prepare to rejoin their families and loved ones, particularly during the holiday season. We are as excited for them, as they are. All of the soldiers from 3 Bravo wish them Godspeed, the very best, and our deepest appreciation for professionalism and how they welcomed us with open arms, and everything that they have done for us, from identifying potential problem areas and how to overcome them, to sharing the excitement of many of 3 Alpha's successes. Everyone does things differently. It doesn't mean it's better or worse, it's simply a different approach to life. So as we prepare to make the transition from 3 Alpha to 3 Bravo my soldiers have learned a great deal from 3 Alpha and the soldiers of 3 Bravo are trained, ready and prepared to take this mission from 3 Alpha at this point in time.

I would ask my soldiers now to focus on the task at hand, to do their analysis at all levels of what they learned during the transition with 3 Alpha, and what is currently the truth on the ground. Because the situation that 3 Alpha faced is not the situation that we will face. Bosnia is not Kosovo. Kosovo in the summer is not Kosovo in the winter. Kosovo pre-elections is not Kosovo post-elections, so we all face a different set of circumstances. We can build very easily on the solid foundation that 3 Alpha left us. However, we may go in different directions, with a different emphasis and a different focus based upon the change in leadership and the change in the circumstances on the ground. The most obvious difference that we're about to face is a change in the weather, and how that will impact upon operations and movement. That is our task at hand now, to be forever appreciative of what 3 Alpha has done, has accomplished, what they have left us as a foundation to build on, and to bid them farewell, and pray that they enjoy their holiday surrounded by family and friends.

Now 3 Bravo needs to very quickly do an analysis of; our situation, what will work for us, and what do we need to do to be successful with our mission here in Kosovo.

Climb To Glory... to the Top!

TFF Command Sergeant Major

Lack of complacency key to mission success

Command Sgt. Maj. Ted Walker

by Spc. Taylor Barbaree
Editor

The key to remaining motivated and focused during a six-month deployment to Kosovo, is preventing soldiers from becoming self-satisfied with their jobs, believes Task Force Falcon's highest ranking enlisted member.

"I believe the success of our mission to Kosovo will (hinge) on our soldiers not becoming complacent," said Command. Sgt. Maj. Theodore "Ted" Walker, Task Force Falcon Command Sergeant Major during a recent interview at Camp Bondsteel.

"I expect the NCO's to prevent this from occurring. We (NCO's) must insure that we all continue to stay focused on our mission (here).

"Really that sounds old hat, but it is so necessary."

Still, Walker, a 28-year veteran soldier and former drill sergeant, understands the toll a deployment can have on the troops.

"It is rough being away from home (especially during the holiday's), but I think our time here will pass quickly," he said.

"I know that this is a given, but we must take advantage of those opportunities to communicate with our families when those possibilities are there for us. Other than that, I believe the 'buddy system' is so important," he said. "This may also be a great opportunity to enroll in college and take advantage of the educational programs offered."

During the deployment, Walker, a Troy State University graduate, noted his role in Task Force Falcon will be honing in on the issues that are important to the troops.

"I am going to do my very best to insure that soldiers are being taken care of," he said. "I think that if soldiers have all the resources needed for a mission, then they will give it their best effort.

"I consider those things to be food, rest, sleeping accommodations and the MWR program," he said. "Again, I know that our soldiers don't expect the amenities of home while we are here, but I believe the chain of command will take great care of our soldiers."

Walker also pointed out the positive's of the deployment.

"Soldiers are doing their best here and I am proud to serve with them. I consider myself a people person, so I am going to try and communicate with them (soldiers) as much as possible. They have really performed well and they have done it with a smile on their face."

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SOLDIER ON THE STREET

What is your favorite Thanksgiving memory?

Sgt. Tracey Otto,
Chaplain's Asst.
TFMF V

"When I was 12, after Thanksgiving Dinner I went ice skating with my cousins on the Mississippi River. The ice broke and I fell in trying to pull my cousin out. We laughed all the way home."

Spc. Daniel Worthy
Finance Clerk
SSB, 10th Mtn. Div.

"During my AIT at Fort Sill. My training battery sang the Army song, prior to eating Thanksgiving dinner."

Pfc. Bonnie Porter
Postal Clerk
CMT Post Office

"My favorite is being able to eat my mom's sweet potato and pineapple dish and also her green beans with bacon. I love those dishes!

Staff Sgt. Stan Siepka,
HHC, 1st Bde.
10th Mtn. Div.

"Before Thanksgiving dinner, I always enjoy playing a game of football."

Staff Sgt. William Bradley,
S-1, TF 1-30, CMT

"My favorite Thanksgiving memory was the first time I cooked the Turkey. I took it out of the oven, and it was just beautiful. I cut into it and realized I forgot to take out the bags from inside."

Pfc. Tiffanie Tribble,
Paralegal Specialist
HHC, 10th Mtn. Div.

"I remember everybody going to my Grandmother's house, and the person in the "hot seat" would have to do the Thanksgiving prayer. One year I knew I was going to be the next one in the hot seat. My mother PCSd and I didn't get the hot seat."

— Compiled by TFF Falcon Flier Staff

Wherever you go there you are...

by Sgt. Jamie Brown
Senior Editor

Here we are in Kosovo. I know many of us would be at home right now if we had a choice, but to look on the bright side of things, this deployment offers many opportunities.

This deployment offers many of us a chance to actually do what we train for. As a National Guardsman I don't always get a chance to do what I do, take pictures and write stories, as much as I would like to. This deployment offers me many interesting things to write and photograph. I love my job, and here I get to do it seven days a week. I believe that every person in this Army has a special gift. Mine happens to be the ability to write stories; if you had seen me rolling around in my battle rattle at Fort Benning you would know why I'm not in the Infantry. For those of you who fix the vehicles, treat the sick, fly the choppers, fix the roads, guard the gates and conduct the patrols I give you my utmost gratitude. Your gifts are valuable to our country and everything it stands for. Thank you for the hard work you will do day in and day out while you are here.

But besides work, this deployment also gives us a chance to grow in a lot of other areas. One is to grow physically. I work out on a regular basis, but after a couple of hectic months preparing for this deployment, and three action-packed weeks in steamy Fort Polk, La., I've almost forgotten what a gym looks like. Soon after we hit ground here, I began working out at the gym with my new weightlifting mentor Staff Sgt. Smith.

Any thoughts I had about knowing anything about fitness disappeared like Nintendos on Christmas Eve. I couldn't believe this guy. He takes vitamins and supplements like they were Sweet Tarts on Halloween, he would rather look at Men's Health than the Sport's Illustrated Swimsuit issue and he always shows up at the gym with a typed workout routine. After an hour in the gym with Smith my muscles were screaming for mercy. There's something humbling about being face down on the gym floor after doing push-ups with a ten-pound weight on your back, and not being able to get up.

Besides growing physically, there is also an opportunity to grow spiritually as well. The Chaplain's office offers a variety of services you can attend. The free time we have here is a chance to study the Bible, Koran, Torah or whatever holy book you prefer. I have one of those books that helps guide you through the Bible in one year. Okay, I admit that I've skipped a couple of days already, but it's not a bad start for a guy who used to sit in the back of the church and make drawings.

There is also a chance here to develop new interests and hobbies. I met a guy on a previous deployment who liked to build beautiful models of planes out of coke cans. It was his way of relaxing and passing the time. I'm not suggesting that everyone should come up with something so unique, but reading books, playing basketball, pool, horse shoes or running up and down the Northtown hill with your rucksack (if you're especially bored) are all good ways to ease stress.

But one thing that could arguably be the most rewarding is the people that we will meet here. We will all benefit from meeting fellow American soldiers, soldiers from other countries and local Albanians and Serbians. I have already personally benefited from meeting people. Our Albanian translator, the Serbian children, the Missouri National Guardsman that I worked out with in the gym this morning and the wonderfully hospitable British soldiers have already broadened my world in the short time I've been here. Relish your chance to meet new and interesting people, because it will make your life richer, and it's an opportunity that few will have.

There is one thing we should all do while we are here. Call home. Tell your family you miss them and love them. Tell them you're becoming a better person while you are here. And tell them you'll be coming back to them safe and sound.

Winds of Change...

Fort Lewis MP's take over for departing TF 716th during TOA

by Sgt. Jamie Brown
Senior Editor

Task Force 716th Commander, Lt. Col. Brice Gyurisko Sr., right, and TF 716th Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Hayes case the battalion colors during a Transfer of Authority ceremony held, November 4, at the Camp Bondsteel Theater.

CAMP BONDSTEEL— Change is as inevitable as the leaves falling from the trees as summer fades away. And change is what happened Sunday Nov. 4, as Task Force 716th Military Police, Fort Campbell, Ky., gave way to Task Force 504th Military Police out of Fort Lewis, Wash., during a Task Force Falcon Military Police transfer of authority ceremony.

The 716th, led by its commander Lt. Col. Brice Gyurisko Sr. and its Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Hayes, accomplished much during its six-month tour of duty in Kosovo. The 716th completed more than 4,000 missions, received more than 1,600 weapons and destroyed 1,100, processed and detained more than 850 detainees, and over the course of the deployment drove more than 590,000 miles.

Gyurisko was pleased with the way his soldiers performed. "It was a super mission for us," he said. "It was very focused. Military Police men and women, this is what we train to do, whether peacetime, wartime or these types of contingency operations. Our mission is exactly suited for what happens in Kosovo. Law enforcement operations, maneuverability support operations, keeping the lines of communication on the roads open, doing checkpoints, Cordon and searches, interpersonal communication skills meeting with the local people, this is exactly what my soldiers do. We did the job we came for and we had fun doing it."

One of Gyurisko's soldiers, Staff Sgt. David Myers, agreed that the deployment was a success. "It was a good mission," he said. "We achieved what we set out to do."

As the 716th leaves a successful deployment behind, the 504th is just beginning its mission in Kosovo. The commander of the 504th Lt. Col. Katherine Miller said she looks forward to the challenge. "My soldiers are ready for this challenge," she said. "This mission is tailor-made for MPs, they know their job, and they're very well trained.

While the 716th was in Kosovo it was comprised of several units including: the 21st MP Co. (Airborne) Fort Bragg, N.C. 340th MP Co. (Army Reserve), Queens, N.Y., Det. 5, 391st MP Bn., Columbus, Ohio and the 551st MP Co. Fort Campbell Ky.

As Gyurisko waited for the final minutes of his command to pass, he reflected on what his unit accomplished here in Kosovo.

"I think we helped make it a little bit better, than we found it," he said. "I think every day these soldiers did make a difference."

And making that difference is what Miller hopes her soldiers will continue with their deployment.

"We have a couple of goals, one is to continue the great work done by the 716th, a lot of super work has been done already, and we hope to continue working with the civilian police on the road to normalization."

The 504th is comprised of several different active and reserve component units including the 66th MP Co., Fort Lewis, Wash., the 209th MP Co., Fort Polk, La., the 2175th MP Co (Missouri Army National Guard), and Det. 6, 391st MP Bn, Columbus, Ohio (Army Reserve).

Miller said having an adequate amount of training time has helped bring her task force together.

"Our task force is comprised of both active component and reserve component elements, so having a year to prepare for this has allowed us to bring all the units together as a team and train on a number of occasions," she said. "Coming here with a unit that's from all over the country might seem daunting, but I've had the opportunity to form a team already, and that gives me a great deal of comfort."

Miller also credits her predecessor, Gyurisko, in helping her task force prepare for this mission.

"He (Gyurisko) has been sharing with me his lessons learned for the past year, ever since we were notified that we were coming here," she said. "Every step of the way he shared his lessons learned. It almost feels like I had a chance to go through it with him at times."

Miller, however is not the only one who is confident about this deployment. Pfc. Destiny Glover, a supply clerk with the 209th MP Co. is equally optimistic. "I'm extremely excited, because this is my first deployment," she said. "I know my company is going to take care of me, and we're going to complete our mission and go back home safe and sound."

New firing range now 'hot' for marksmanship training

by Spc. Taylor Barbaree
Editor

CAMP BONDSTEEL— Task Force Falcon Soldiers of Rotation 3A added another page to to their deployment history book with the opening of a small arm's firing range here recently.

"This range was constructed with the purpose of providing marksmanship training to soldiers stationed at CBS," said Capt. Steve Napier, a British officer assigned to HHC, 2nd Bde, 101st Airborne Div., while noting the convenience of having the range at CBS. "Prior to (this range being built) soldiers had to fire at the small weapons range located at Ferizaj/Urosevac."

TFF Commander, Brig. Gen. Bill David, presided during the opening of the gamut as a contingent of soldiers and local media representatives watched as he cut the ribbon.

"This was a team effort," David said. "I appreciate the assistance from 7th ATC as well as Brown and Root in sharing our vision with us. This range will better enable us to incorporate marksmanship ranges.

Spc. Jonathan Bailey, HHC, *3rd Bde., 502 Inf. Reg. takes aim on the recently completed CBS small arms range.*

training here. It (marksmanship) is our most critical task."

The 10-Lane Firing Point is the 12th range to be completed since the inception of Task Force Falcon. Other points throughout the Multi-National Brigade (East) serve as gunnery and aviation

After the CBS range opened Nov. 7, TFF soldiers were allowed access to the firing point. Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Patton, TF Sabre, was the first to fire on the range. Patton holding his semi-automatic, M-9 Beretta issued sidearm unloaded a 15-round capacity magazine in the downrange silhouette located 25 meters away.

"This is a great feeling to be able to fire right here in our backyard," Patton said.

Spc. Jonathan Bailey, another TFF soldier with HHC, 3rd Battalion of the 502nd Inf. Reg., Fort Campbell, Ky., nailed his target at the center mass location on 30-of-30 attempts.

"I enjoy marksmanship training and take advantage of it every time an opportunity presents itself," Bailey said after firing his M-4 Rifle. "This range provides a great opportunity for us."

Saturday at CBS proves to be meaningful experience for Ferizaj students, TFMF V soldiers

by Spc. Taylor Barbaree
Editor

CAMP BONDSTEEL— School bells normally don't ring during a weekend in Kosovo. However, on a recent Saturday here, TFMF V's dental facility became a makeshift classroom for a group of school children and teachers from Ferizaj.

The purpose of such a visit from the Albanian students, ranging in ages from 7 to 14 (First grade through junior high), was to provide tips for better dental hygiene. The visit to the CBS Hospital for the students of Jeronim De Rada School was coordinated by the TFMF V UMT (Unit Ministry Team).

"This is an excellent opportunity for my soldiers to show off the jobs they perform on a daily basis," said Lt. Col. Tom Borris, OIC Dental Team, TFMF V Dental Clinic, noting the importance of his unit's sometime dual mission while deployed. "We not only take care of our soldiers, but anytime we can lend a helping hand to the local communities we are proud to do it."

After being welcomed to the Camp Bondsteel Hospital by Task Force Med. Falcon Chaplain (Maj.) Scott Weichl, the students were escorted to the adjoining dental clinic where they received instructions on proper dental care. Sgt. Anne Archer, NCOIC of TFMF V's Dental Clinic and Spc. Jasjit Singh, a dental technician, using a mock model of teeth, demonstrated how to perform the basic steps of brushing, flossing and rinsing. During the presentation several enthusiastic children volunteered to help Archer. Eight-year-old Malsore Bega was the first.

"I really enjoyed helping out," she said, holding a dental hygienist mirror that was given to her and the other students to take home. "Everyone is so nice and I made some new friends today."

Archer was also excited to make new friends as well.

"It was great to be able to interact with these children," Archer said. "Normally I assist with pulling teeth, so it was neat to be able to give tips on how to maintain healthy dental care."

Pfc. Fernando Diaz, TFMF V Dental Clinic, also played a part in bringing smiles to children's faces. Diaz introduced children to the state-of-the art facility's high tech dental chairs. From there the students were transported to CBS's Burger King where they were treated to an authentic American treat- the Big Whopper. For the students it was their first experience eating a Whopper.

"It is so big and it tastes real good," exclaimed nine-year-old Rkeze Xhemaili as she munched on fries and a soft drink.

Patrick Okojie, CBS's Burger King manager, said donating the food to the children did more than put a smile on his face.

"I have three children (ages 4, 6 and 15) and a wife at home (Fort Stewart, Georgia)," he said. "So it makes me a little homesick, but at the same time makes me happy and touches my heart.

"We are glad to just be a part of this and help out the local communities."

When dining concluded, the students were taken back to the hospital where they were entertained by Curly the Clown (a.k.a- *Stuart Karmelin*, CBS's G-6 automation). The students also were given gift bags from the local American Red Cross office and Brown and Root before departing for home.

Alban Sefedini, 14, concurred with his classmates.

"Everything today was great," he said, before boarding the bus to head home. "The bus ride from the school, seeing the hospital, eating at Burger King and meeting some nice people. Coming to school on a Saturday wasn't so bad."

Sgt. Anne Archer, NCOIC of CBS's Dental Clinic shares a laugh with Malsore Bega, 8, an Albanian elementary school student from Ferizaj Saturday during a dental hygiene class.

Smiling faces of Red Cross provide a hint of home to soldiers deployed here

by Spc. Terry Boggs
Staff Writer

CAMP BONDSTEEL— Imagine being thousands of miles away from home, in a new country, surrounded by unfamiliar faces and not a whole lot to do in your spare time.

Welcome to Kosovo. Here, as a soldier on a peacekeeping mission, you may find yourself lonely, bored and longing for somewhere to go to in your off hours. You're not alone, and you're certainly not without options. There are many things a person can do while in country; you can go to the movies, work out in the gym, or one of the many assorted activities that are planned for soldiers to participate in. Or, if you're like many people, you can go to the Red Cross. Staff Sgt David Trice of the 1-321st Field Artillery did, and he was pleasantly surprised.

"It was better than expected," said Trice, who recently arrived in Kosovo. "The lady at the Red Cross briefing told us they might have cookies for us. But when we got here, we found cookies, movies and books."

That's not all you will find there, either. There is coffee, pastries and board games, plus a big-screen TV. And you get friendly service too. The best part; it's all free.

"We're not in competition with MWR" explains Kathleen Butler, Red Cross team leader for the CBS Red Cross. "Our job is to smile, give people a cup of coffee, a place to sit and talk, loan them a movie or book… I guess you can call us an oasis away from the military world.

"We're civilians; you'll see our teams are culturally diverse, men and women of different age groups. We do that on purpose; the way they pick our teams is very thought out. This way we reach more people".

Of course, the primary function of the Red Cross is still insure the delivery of emergency communications,

(Please see RED CROSS, page 7)

CBS Red Cross team leader Kathleen Butler presents a coffee mug to Staff Sgt. Eric Johnson, HHC, 10th Mtn Div.

"Chawgs of War" assist in bringing peace to Pasjane

by Spc. Engels Tejeda
358th MPAD

Lt. Kris Mitchell, first platoon leader with C Company 3-7 IN, plays with Serbian children in Pasjane, Kosovo. Since his arrival to the sector, Mitchell and his soldiers have "worked tirelessly" to build the confidence of the local Serb population in KFOR.

While the rest of Kosovo appeared to make progress towards a peaceful state, the ethnically pure Serbian town of Pasjane continued a virtual war with its neighboring Albanian town of Vlastica; and soldiers of C Company, 3-7 IN were tasked with reinstating peace in the area.

In November 2000 a grenade attack was reported in Pasjane; two months later, a "shooting in the fields of the town" was also reported. Serbs blamed Albanians of Vlastica for the incidents. During a protest in early 2001, they said that the Albanians had used the only road connecting the towns as an escape route when they committed the crimes.

At the protest, the United Nations Mission in Kosovo Police was forced to disperse the crowd, and the Serbs perceived this action as an attack on them, and a victory for Vlastica.

At the time, the 2nd Battalion of the 6th Infantry Regiment (Germany) controlled the sector. As tensions between the towns intensified, the 2-6 IN decided to close the road connecting the towns in an effort to prevent further turmoil. Soldiers out of Red Base — a small KFOR outpost located in the outskirts of Pasjane – were tasked to provide security along the route and the two towns.

The series of events had virtually destroyed any confidence the Serbs of Pasjane had in UNMIK-P; and to a lesser degree, it had left a wound in the relationships between KFOR and both towns.

In May 2001, the 2-6 IN transferred the sector to C Company 3-7 IN. The main task for the "Chawgs of War" would be to regain the trust of a people that were still recovering from an era of turmoil, and to use that trust to create a peaceful future.

From mid-May to early July, the "Chawgs" third platoon worked "around the clock," with leaders from the towns to try and regain their confidence. In mid July, third platoon transferred the sector to first platoon, and the road connecting Pasjane and Vlastica was reopened July 25, 2001.

Over the next few months under the leadership of Lt. Kris Mitchell, first platoon would finish the work that third platoon had started; and by late October, the soldiers would see the result of their work, as Pasjane appeared to make "a one-hundred percent turnaround" and re-establish a fruitful relationship with KFOR.

Mitchell said that the success of the mission in Pasjane could be attributed to several factors, stating specifically that the time at which his team arrived to the area was "almost perfect." He said that the success also had a lot to do with how his platoon, and his company in general, has been working with the town.

"When we arrived here the people of Pasjane didn't trust KFOR, they didn't trust UNMIK-P," said Mitchell. "Today its completely different… everyone in this town knows us by our first name; everyone feels that we are working to help them."

Mitchell said that a key to establishing trust with the community was "treating them as people; not as you are a 'Serb' and I'm a 'soldier.'"

Today, more KFOR-coordinated projects are underway at Pasjane than in any other Serb town in the area. These projects include the opening of a fully operational clinic, the building of three bridges, and several school projects including a soldier-taught English class for kids.

As the "Chawgs of War" prepare to finish their rotation in Kosovo, they say they feel their mission has been accomplished, for they have nurtured the opening of a road between two divided cities; a road through which they hope couriers of peace will travel.

Engineers, KPS and TMK team up with local students to clean up Balkans

by Spc. Engels Tejeda
358th MPAD

KFOR soldiers, the Kosovo Protection Core (TMK), the Kosovo Police Service, and hundreds of local students joined efforts Saturday in cleaning the yard of Zenel Hajdini High School in Gjilan/Gnjilane.

Soldiers of B Co., 11th Engineer Bn. joined members of the Kosovo Police Service (KPS), members of the Kosovo Protection Corps (TMK), and dozens of local students in an effort "to make Kosovo a better place."

The schoolyard at Zenel Hajdini High School in Gjilan/Gnjilane had turned into anything but a schoolyard. Shrubs that rose well above the knees of the students and piles of trash turned the yard into a literal garbage dump site.

But that has all changed thanks to the efforts of KFOR soldiers, the TMK, the KPS, and students who spent a Saturday morning cleaning the school.

"It is very important to have a yard, a clean yard," said Teride Ahmeti, psychology professor at Zenel Hajdini. "The kids need a space were they can relax during recess," she added.

But having a clean space to play was only one of several motivating factors behind the project. KPS officer Naser Ibrahimi said that his organization was involved because "it is necessary to have a clean environment" for a better Kosovo. He stressed that the KPS has a special team dedicated to working with local teenagers and children in general; and that it was their priority to help the kids "to build a healthier environment."

The participating groups mutually organized the event. A representative of the TMK said that they had "done this before, we are doing it now, and we will do it again.

"It's very important (to clean the city)" said Ramiz Bytyqi, service member with the TMK. "We are going to make a proposal to do things like this more often."

The TMK directed a similar citywide "clean-up" day about six months ago. A service member of the organization said that events like these are one way to show that the TMK is about taking care of the community.

And taking care of the community is what the event was all about, according to fourth-grade student Luzim Huruglica.

"(Cleaning the school) gives out a good message," he said. "It tells the people that we care about our school… We hope to clean the school and the whole city."

While cleaning the entire city might be a bigger challenge, and it might require a lot more people, the students said they are determined to take on the challenge. That kind of motivation, according to Pfc. Chris Ridge, engineer with B Company, "shows that they care for their city" and encourages the soldiers to provide a safer environment.

"(Working with them) shows that we care about the people and the way they live," said Ridge. "You feel like you are really making a difference doing stuff like this because you can actually see the result of your work."

At the end of the project the result was clear: a clean, healthier environment for the students of Zenel Hajdini High School and the rest of the citizens of Gjilan/Gnjilane.

A Co. 11th Engineers bridge gaps in Kosovo

by Spc. Maria Jaramillo
358th MPAD

A small implacement escavator peels away the rotting planks of the bridge to reveal the support stringers underneath, where the explosives would be placed. The combat engineers of A Company, 11th Engineer Battalion blew up the bridge south of Binoc as the first step to putting in a new and stronger bridge over the creek.

On a cold, rainy day a troll stood guarding a timber bridge made of rotting planks that tentatively crossed over a rushing creek. The bark had long ago peeled away from the wood and an age-old brown slime had taken its place. Any considerable weight on the bridge might be its destruction, and this fairy-tale monstrosity was exactly what combat engineers strapped some C-4 plastic explosives around and blasted into the water.

Engineers combined the unique opportunity to use live explosives and begin a humanitarian assistance project on a bridge south of Binac last September. The old bridge was deemed no longer usable, but it needed to be taken out before they could put in a new one.

The bridge was only 10 feet wide and 13 feet long, but demolitions were used to tear it down because not only would it be a cool explosion; it was also a valuable training experience for the platoon. This was the first explosion outside of the training environment for many of the soldiers.

"Because we are engineers some of the training value will be to blow the bridge, and tomorrow we are going to come back out and build a stronger bridge," said 2nd Lt. Alex Elmore, 1st Platoon Leader with A Company, 11th Engineers.

This virgin run for the soldiers required an emergency medical technician on-site in the event of any accidents. The medic was equipped to take of everything from dehydration and headaches to tourniquets and field dressings.

"Soldiers feel a lot more secure and comfortable with medics. Sometimes they have concerns about 'what if something happens to me out there' 'who is going to take care of me way out here,' but if they see a medic here on-site they feel more comfortable and able to do their job," said Pfc. Jacqueline S. Duncan, a combat medic assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company 11th Engineer Battalion.

One safety consideration was calculating the safest distance from the explosion that the soldiers could be. For this particular bridge destruction, it was decided that 300 meters was the minimum safe distance.

The bridge was composed of a layer of planks on top of four logs, called stringers, that were a little over a foot longer than the gap on both sides. First, the planks were torn off the stringers so that the explosives could be placed in the middle of the bridge on top of the stringers.

"We are going to put sandbags over the demolitions so that the explosion goes downward," said Staff Sgt. Pedro Fombona, a squad leader with A Company, 11th Engineer Battalion.

Next came the actual demolitions, whose blast would be powerful enough for ash and log to be raining down as soldiers sat in humvees the safe distance away.

This successful day ended for the combat engineers as they jumped into the creek to begin clearing broken pieces of logs out the water.

(RED CROSS continued from page 5)

but as anybody that walks in the door can see, they provide many other services as well. These services are provided by a dedicated staff of five people; three are at Camp Bondsteel and two at Camp Monteith. They would have to be, to want to come in an area such as Kosovo.

"You would be surprised how many people ask 'why are you here?', Kathleen reflected. They just shake their heads; they can not understand why civilians would want to come into a hostile fire zone. Fortunately, you guys have done a really good job of protecting us. We haven't had anybody die (in war) since Vietnam".

Maybe the reason the soldiers do such a good job taking care of them is because of their coffee. According to Kathleen, Brown & Root provides the same coffee to the Red Cross that they give to the soldiers in the mess hall. For some reason, though, she says, theirs seems to taste better. Perhaps it's the smile and the seemingly endless supply of cheerfulness that you get there that makes the difference.

Your friendly Red Cross staff will be on hand 24 hours a day to serve you if you live at Camp Bondsteel; and from 6:30a.m. until 11:30p.m. if you are staying at Camp Monteith. In addition to Kathleen, you will find Sally Delaney (Assistant Station Manager) and Joshua Karnes (Assistant Station Manager) at Camp Bondsteel, and John Florig (Station Manager) and Camille Buchanan at Camp Monteith to serve your needs. The Bondsteel unit is located at Bldg. 1330C Room 6-North and South (phone #5014) and the Monteith unit is at McGraw Hall, Room 203 (phone #7174). Or, if you care to visit them on-line, their website address is: www.redcross.org.

Oh, and in case you have a bit of free time on your hands, they are always happy to accept volunteers at either location.

MWR
Task Force Falcon

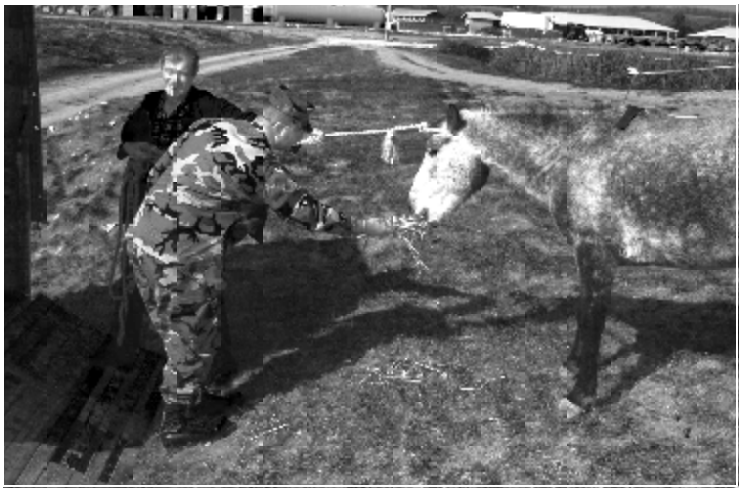
November Events

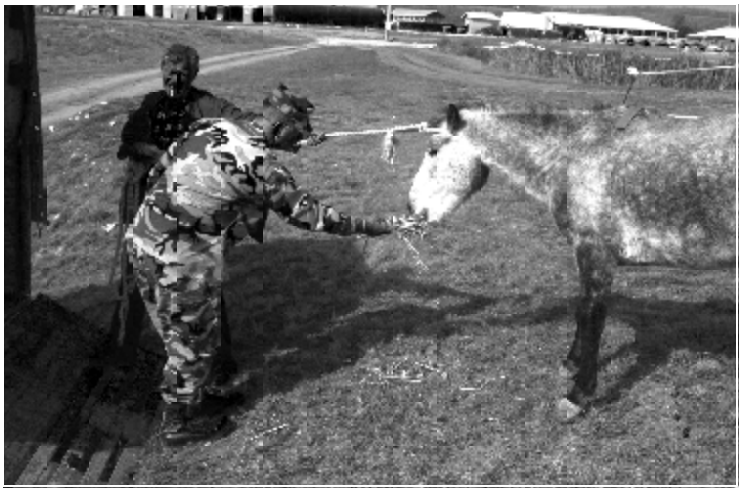
10k Turkey Trot Run
Sunday 25 Nov. 01
Southside Gym
7 a.m.-7:45 a.m. Registration
Run starts at 8 a.m.
Top Male/Female Awards
Awards for top three finishers
in all age categories

Thanksgiving Weekend Indoor Volleyball Tournament
Single Elimination
Nov. 24-25
Northside Fitness Center at 1 p.m.
Preregistration available
six players per team
10 person team max
Sign up at Southside or Northside
Community Center
by Nov. 23 5 p.m.

Street Hockey Tournament
Nov. 24-25
at Southside outdoor Basketball court
sign up at Southside or Northside Rec Center

Morning Star Dancers
Native American Music and Dance
Nov. 22, 8 p.m.
Southside Fitness Center





The Best of Combat Camera:

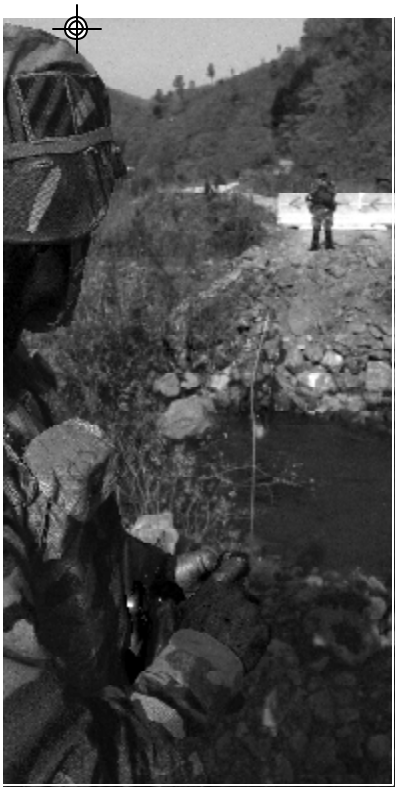
This is a regular section of the Falcon Flier which features some of the best work of Combat Camera. Special thanks to Combat Camera (55th Signal Company, Fort Meade, Md.) for submitting these photos.

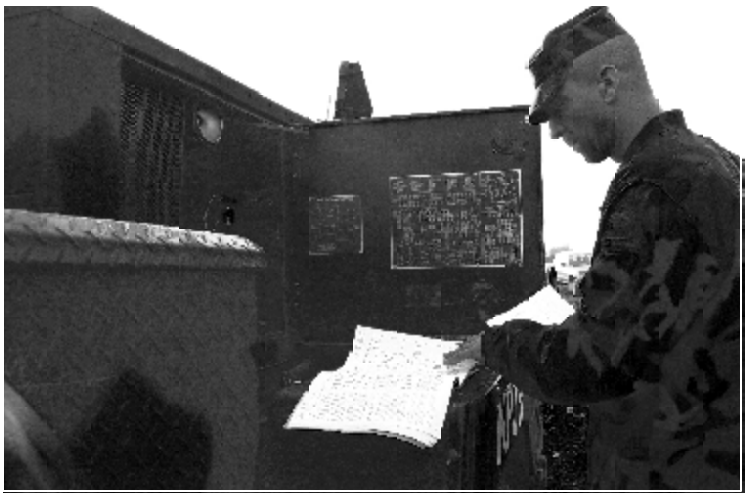
Task Force Sabre soldiers fire G-36 assault rifles at a Schutzenschnur range in Orahovac/Rahovec, Kosovo on October 12, 2001. Eighty American soldiers participated in the German Schutzenschnur weapons qualification to earn the German Marksmanship Badge during NATO's Operation Joint Guardian II.

Maj. David Wishart tries to persuade a horse onto a truck at the stables in Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, on October 18, 2001. Wishart is a part of the 490th Civil Affairs Bn at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo. He is helping in this humanitarian effort with the distribution of the horses that were confiscated by KFOR over the last months. In an effort to promote goodwill KFOR and Task Force Falcon are giving these horses to the locals for free.

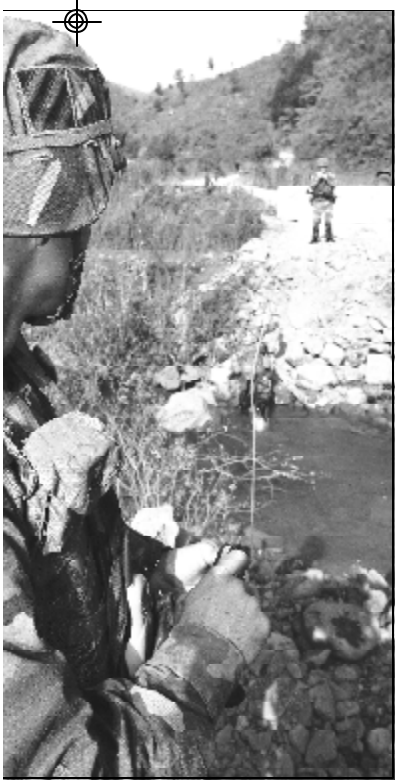
Pvt. Andrew Nye from the 11th Engineer Bn, C Co., is nailing bo hold the stringers for the bridge the engineers are building acros Kosovo on October 9, 2001. The 11th Engineers are in Mijak to river so that the villagers of Mijak can safely cross the river.

Sgt. Jeff Bowman from the 11th Engineer C Co., is mea across a river in Mijak, Kosovo on Octob 9, 2001. The Mijak to build a bridge across a river so the villagers the river.





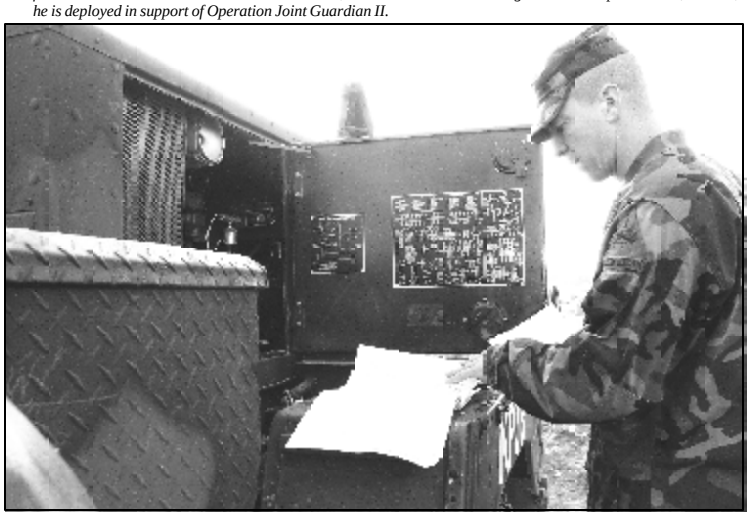
e 11th Engineer Bn, C Co., is nailing boards together that will bridge the engineers are building across a river in Mijak, 01. The 11th Engineers are in Mijak to build a bridge across a of Mijak can safely cross the river.



rom the 11th Engineer Bn, C Co., is measuring the distance Iijak, Kosovo on October 9, 2001. The 11th Engineers are in idge across a river so that the villagers of Mijak can safely cross

Task Force Falcon G3 NBC NCO Sgt. 1st Class Luis Vega oversees the combined efforts of French, US and TMK soldiers during the chemical cleanup of the IBG Battery factory in the town of Gjilane, Kosovo near Camp Montieth on Monday October 29th 2001. These two soldiers wearing French chemical protective garments spray the excess chemicals from their suits prior to stepping out of the cleaning pit.

Sgt. 1st Class Andrew Williams (left) of the 1st Bn, 41st Field Artillery, instructs and assists Pfc. Lipnae Mongkeya fire the M109A6 Paladin Howitzer on October 16, 2001. Williams is a master gunner at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, he is deployed in support of Operation Joint Guardian II.



Staff Sgt. Jine Vincent with Task Force Falcon 3A, checks the operations of PU 798 Generator on October 17, 2001. He is doing preventive maintanance and check services (PMCS) on the radar systems for proper functions. Vincent is deployed to Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo in support of the peacekeeping mission Joint Guardian II.

B Co., 37th Combat Engineers map roadways for KFOR

A Dozer pushes dirt off the side of a hill to lessen its slope to the soon-to-be-built road. The combat engineers are building the five-kilometer road to create a new bypass route that does not cross over into Serbia.

by Spc. Maria Jaramillo
358th MPAD

If a soldier is driving through Kosovo, how does he make sure to stay in Kosovo? Everything from maps and high-tech devices have kept Task Force Falcon soldiers within the boundaries, but a frequently traveled route was found to cross into Serbia. And as discovered with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, if a country decided to close its border to KFOR soldiers, it can.

So in an effort to avoid any reoccurrence of the FYROM situation, TFF combat engineers are building a new five-kilometer bypass road that weaves soldiers back around without crossing any borders.

"This way if [Serbia] closed down that part of the road, we will still have a route around it," said Sgt. Sean P. Matteson, senior equipment operator at the construction site with B Co., 37th Engineers (Combat) (Airborne).

The road is planned at 24-feet across and five-kilometers long. The road will be wider than many of the paved routes KFOR vehicles currently use, to allow for easier access to military vehicles such as tanks and five-ton trucks.

One major consideration the engineers had to plan around was Mother Nature.

"If Mother Nature doesn't like it, she'll change it," said Staff Sgt. Travis N. Richards, a construction foreman with B Co., 37th Engineers (Combat) (Airborne).

So taking into thought of where the hills were relative to the road and where the water naturally drained off, the engineers had to curve and gradient the road and build culverts accordingly. If they didn't take natural weathering into consideration, there are a couple of problems that could develop.

"Mother Nature already decides where water needs to go, we could build anything we wanted and after the first rainstorm, the water could cut right through a road," Richards said.

Every place that the road cut into a hillside, the road was built with a slight angle that flowed with the natural hillside to avoid standing water. If a slope was too steep, a water drainage pipe, or culvert, would be put in and the road built over it. There are also ditches on the side of the road two-feet deep for water drainage.

"It's a little bit more complicated than what you see in a book," Matteson said.

All this planning for the road has ended up benefiting more than just KFOR soldiers, but also the local citizens, especially farmers. Before the road was even completed, tractors and trailers were using the carved out sections to move to their fields.

There are still a couple of days yet to come before the road is open to KFOR traffic, a project of this size is might take two months before completion. But the Bravo 37th Airborne combat engineers have found a new way to put time and energy into improving Kosovo for both its citizens and the soldiers.

Fort Campbell Task Force, KPC lend helping hand to Brod/Brad

by Capt. John D. Lybarger
Special to the Falcon Flier

Soldiers of HHD, Task Force 716 Military Police along with the members of the 16th KPC with the local children of Brod.

On Aug. 29, 2001, 18 soldiers from HHD, Task Force 716 Military Police along with 13 members from the 16th Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) worked side by side to lend a helping hand to people in need. This particular humanitarian aid project is focused on helping the children of the town of Brod have a better school year. Throughout the day, the HHD soldiers and KPC members worked hard building a new guard rail for the steps leading up to the front door of the school, fixing almost 100 yards of fencing around the school, caulking all the school windows, scrubbing and cleaning the interior of the school, and cleaning up the trash around the schoolyard. The KPC organizations of Kosovo are based on the premise of training its members with a focus on natural disaster relief efforts and special humanitarian projects. NATO's Kosovo Force supports this organization by providing each KPC Detachment with training based support and a unit official who assists them in developing their training plans. For several of the soldiers it was the first time ever interacting and working with someone who spoke a different language, and with only two interpreters, most soldiers had to find different ways to communicate back and forth with their KPC counterparts. Staff Sgt. Stacy Santos, the HHD Operations Sergeant stated, "The soldiers learned a lot from one another this afternoon. They realized their weaknesses and how to overcome those weaknesses by working together as a team." During lunch the soldiers and KPC members shared Meals Ready Eat (MRE) and cold water. "The soldiers really enjoyed sharing lunch with someone who had never experienced an MRE before," stated Santos. "And, about lunch time, all the local children started coming from everywhere; luckily we had enough for everyone."

This is just the first of three projects the partnership units have planned for the duration of their deployment rotation. The second phase of this relief effort will go towards building the children a schoolyard playground. Staff Sgt. Jason Blankenship, an Ohio State Trooper and construction contractor from Det. 5, 391st MP Bn, an Army Reserve unit deployed out of Columbus, Ohio, has played a key role in developing the blueprints for this much-needed recreational equipment. On Sept. 21, 2001 the soldiers and KPC members once again linked up to lend a helping hand by constructing a playground that the children of Brod can be proud of. The last project the units plan on completing is the remodeling of the schoolhouse floor. With the onset of the extremely cold winter, the soldiers, along with the right materials and the knowledge some of the KPC members bring to the game, think this project will be the most memorable.

Just before their redeployment back to Fort Campbell, Ky., the soldiers of HHD, Task Force 716 Military Police tried to bring Christmas a little early to the children of this old school they have worked so hard to clean up. With donations from relatives, elementary schools, MP units from around the world, and several nonprofit organizations, the children of Brod Elementary will have a little something to smile about before the holiday season. HHD First Sergeant, Sgt. 1st Class Richard Beaty stated, "I want my soldiers to know how lucky they have it. After six months being away from their families everyone can get themselves into a "Bah Humbug" atmosphere. I think seeing the smiles on these kids' faces will liven everyone up before we head home to our own families."

I do solemnly swear...

Spc. Marc S. English, A Co., 110th MI Bn., Fort Drum, N.Y., became the first soldier to take the oath of reenlistment during Task Force Falcon Rotation 3B. English, 21, a native of Witchita, Kan., is a ground surveillance system operator with the 110th (photo by Sgt. Jamie Brown/ TFF Falcon Flier staff).

Swipe it...

Purchase your Eagle Cash Card today from your camp finance office

by Spc. Scott Holdsworth
358th MPAD

The old way to deal with the dollars and change of every day activities here in the camps of Kosovo has now switched to the simple new way of the Eagle Cash Card.

The Eagle Cash Card, which has been used in Bosnia since 1999, was introduced at Camps Bondsteel, Monteith and Able Sentry for U.S. soldiers in Kosovo.

The Department of Defense and Department of the Treasury have many goals they hope to meet because of the Eagle Cash Card. The card has been created for many different reasons.

One of the main reasons for the Eagle Cash Card is to support the use of local currency.

"We are discouraging the use of dollars in theater," said Maj. Kevin Kolozsy, commander of the 101st Soldier Support Battalion.

"We don't want to flood these growing countries with dollars only to leave and make them dependent on the dollar," said Capt. Amanda Flint, Detachment Commander for the finance office C Company, 101st SSB.

The card will reduce cash handling costs.

"It costs money to get money from the states down to Kosovo," said Flint. "The Eagle Cash Card will make it so no U.S. currency will be needed in theater."

The Eagle Cash Card will also reduce paperwork and resources used. It will save time and money.

"The goals were met in Bosnia so there's no reason to think why they won't be met here," said Flint. She even thinks it will be well exceeded.

"You can do anything with the Eagle Cash Card that you can with cash, plus more," Kolozsy said.

The Eagle Cash Card makes transactions a lot easier.

"If they come up with the card they put it in the point of sale terminal, verify their amounts and they're out of there," said Flint.

Though AAFES and other vendors will still be accepting money, credit cards, and checks, it is much safer to use the Eagle Cash Card.

"If I lost my money, there's no way to get it back. But if I lost the Eagle Cash Card, I could come in and get my money back," said Spc. Larhonda McCay, a cashier of finance at the 101st SSB. "The fact that I don't have to carry cash around in my pocket makes me feel comfortable."

Pfc. Thomas Tyner, D Det., 10th SSB, displays the Eagle Cash Card that is available to soldiers of Rotation 3B.

"It is more secure because AAFES and other vendors check nametags and KFOR badges," said Kolozsy.

"It will make transactions a lot quicker," said Kolozsy. There is no counting of bills. So they can't miss count. There will be less of an opportunity to lose money.

It was not an easy task to get the Eagle Cash Card started. Many hours have been spent learning the new system and getting the word out about the service.

"My soldiers have worked incredibly hard to get this done," said Flint. "Even at the lowest levels, they made it happen."

So next time you're at the finance office ask for the Eagle Cash Card. It's accepted everywhere you ought to be.

***10th SSB- Camp Bondsteel Finance Office**
Building 1330 B (Admin. Alley)
Hours: Monday-Saturday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sunday, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

***10th SSB- Camp Monteith Finance Office**
Striker Hall Building
Hours: Monday-Saturday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sunday, 12 - 3 p.m.

***10th SSB- Camp Able Sentry Finance Office**
Building 2
Hours: Monday-Saturday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sunday, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Farewell to arms...

Eastern Provincial outpost closes after September ceremony

by Sgt. 1st Class Brian Kappmeyer
Special to the Falcon Flier

As the American flag was retired at Observation Point Sapper on the eastern provincial boundary between Kosovo and Serbia, the ceremony marked another step in the return to normalcy for Kosovo citizens.

"The outpost's primary mission was to provide KFOR observation of Serbian security forces' adherence to the Military Technical Agreement (MTA) and to interdict Albanian rebels operating in the Ground Safety Zone (GSZ)," said Capt. David W. Gardner, commander of Alpha Company, 3rd Bn, 7th Infantry Regiment.

Alpha Co., took control of OP Sapper in May. Sapper was the first line of defense for Task Force Falcon against potential Serbian aggression and the last remaining outpost on the boundary with Serbia when it closed in September.

The GSZ was initially a five-kilometer wide buffer area created in June 1999 to separate NATO troops from Yugoslav forces, which withdrew from Kosovo after the 11-week bombing campaign against Yugoslavia. Based on the MTA, KFOR and Yugoslav forces were not allowed into the GSZ. This situation created a safe haven for Ethnic Albanian Armed Groups, such as the Liberation Army of Presevo, Medvedje and Bujanovac better known as the UCPMB.

The importance of OP Sapper was its close proximity to the town of Dobrosin, only 300 meters east of Sapper, and in the GSZ. At one time, the town was headquarters to the UCPMB, and when the headquarters was moved further east into Serbia, it continued to be a supply and training base.

"The soldiers at OP Sapper initially faced and accomplished three difficult tasks," Gardner said. "Monitoring the Kosovo border to ensure no illegal border crossings by the UCPMB, interdicting any illegal weapons being smuggled into the GSZ, and also to observe Serbian forces to guarantee they were complying with the MTA and did not enter the GSZ."

During the first several months of 2001, the UCPMB staged numerous attacks on Serb forces in Serbia and continued to use the GSZ as their safe haven.

In an attempt to decrease the amount of tense clashes between the UCPMB and Serb police, NATO reduced the size of the GSZ from five kilometers to one kilometer and allowed Yugoslav troops back into the area.

In May, the GSZ was in the final stages of reduction. The UCPMB had been given a choice to demilitarize and surrender to USKFOR or face a violent conflict with Yugoslav and Serb police forces.

"Reducing the GSZ was a key step in NATO's efforts to reduce the threat of a new Balkan war," Gardner said. "Soon after the UCPMB demilitarized and the Serb security forces moved quietly into the remaining portion of the Ground Safety Zone under a NATO and KFOR brokered agreement, the decision was made to close OP Sapper."

On May 25, Gardner and his soldiers negotiated with UCPMB leaders for the largest weapons turn-in — at the time — in KFOR history. Alpha Company began the tedious task of processing these weapons including 207 land mines, 87 grenades, more than 250 rifles, 32,719 rounds of ammunition, 200 RPG rounds, 13 machine guns, 240 mortars, one towed anti-aircraft machine gun, and five AT missiles. Four 10-ton trucks (HEMMTS) and one 5-ton truck were required to move the weapons.

"We processed more than 380 refugees from Dobrosin into Kosovo," recalls Gardner. "Many of them have returned to Dobrosin now." Why? Because they feel it is safe.

Serb forces reentered the GSZ May 31. It was the first time they had been in this area since January 2000. Gardner said, "In the nearly four months of their return, there have been no major incidents between Serb forces and K-Albanians living in Dobrosin."

Although A Co., 3rd Bn, 7th Infantry Regiment was responsible for closing down OP Sapper, many units were involved in the eventual outcome of KFOR's mission in the region. "The successes at OP Sapper under Alpha Company were built on the strong and critical accomplishments of past rotations," noted Gardner.

"Although the American Flag does not fly high over the Sapper compound any longer, KFOR has left such a significant mark on Kosovo that the American Flag will always be seen flying in the eyes of all K-Albanians living around OP Sapper," Gardner said.

Soldiers of Alpha Co., 3rd Bn, 7th Infantry Regiment lower 'Old Glory' for the last time at OP Sapper during September.

Vicenza based ASG providing services to CMT

Special to the Falcon Flier

CAMP MONTEITH— A small, but influential team of soldiers is ensuring this base camp continues to run smoothly and that the force is effectively protected.

Capt. Alfred Acenas, Sgt.1st Class Steven Hilliard and Staff Sgt. David Haywood are the Area Support Team assigned to Camp Monteith. The group is here from the Southern European Task Force in Vicenza, Italy.

"We manage the operations of the civilian agencies," Acenas, the AST-Monteith commander, said naming the seven agencies the team oversees such as AAFES and the Directorate of Public Works. "We monitor the quality of service they render to the Camp Monteith community."

The team is part of Area Support Group — Falcon, which is headquartered at Camp Bondsteel and began operations in Kosovo May 1. As part of the newly formed organization, the support team assumed life support operations from what was formerly known as the Mayor's cell here.

"The AST doesn't just focus on Camp Monteith though," said Acenas. "We also support other smaller sites in the Camp Monteith area. If one of the commanders at the outlying has a problem, he can use me as a liaison to get something done such as getting items from AAFES out to the site."

The team also manages the camp's Force Protection and Anti-Terrorism program.

"We make sure that Monteith is meeting the Force Protection and Anti-Terrorism guidance of the ASG," said Hilliard, the AST-Monteith noncommissioned officer in charge. "We do the planning and evaluation of the Force Protection and Anti-Terrorism program and the Force Protection Cell implements the program such as preparing the guard rosters."

"I volunteered to come to Kosovo to get a first hand look at the Balkans and I wanted to see this part of the world before I rotate back to the states," said Hilliard, who was serving as a training NCO before the Kosovo mission. "This has been a tremendous learning process for me in working with force protection matters."

The opportunity to learn also enticed Haywood to volunteer his services for the Kosovo mission. He was excited for the chance to help develop an Area Support Team from the ground level and work with the civilian agencies.

Haywood's title is operations sergeant, but his responsibilities also include administration and supply. "If anybody in the AST needs something, I'm the guy that can get his hands on it," said Haywood, who learned his supply mission on the job. "It has also been rewarding to help soldiers get things fixed by pointing them in the right direction.

"The peacekeeping mission is a benefit to the Kosovo people and in the long run what we are doing will help them get back on their feet," Haywood said.

Sgt. 1st Class Steven Hilliard (left) coordinates force protection issues with Staff Sgt. Rodrick McCree at the weekly guard mount at Camp Monteith.

I promise to...

Spc. April Taase, a topographic analyst with HHC, 61st Eng. Det. (Fort Campbell, Ky.) recently became the first native American to extend her commitment to the U.S. Army while serving at Camp Bondsteel. Taase, 23, is a native of the Pyramid Lake Indian Reservation located in Nevada. Task Force Falcon will be highlighting Native Americans during National Indian Heritage Month in November (photo by Sgt. Jamie Brown/ TFF Falcon Flier staff).

Chaplain's Corner

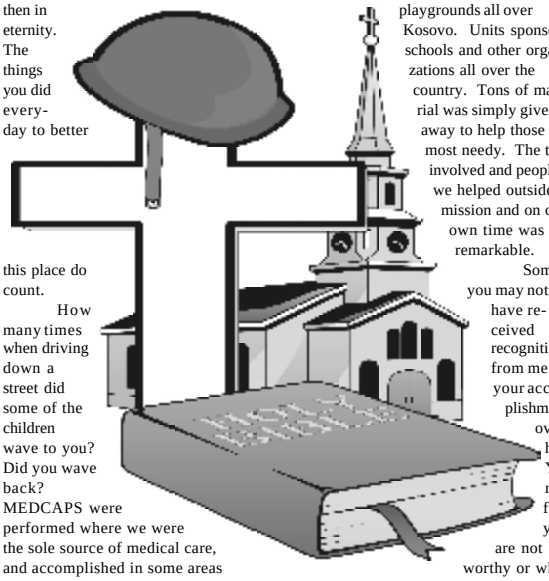
"Climb To Glory" with God as your driving force

by Chaplain (Maj.) Leon G. Kircher
TFF Chaplain's Office

As Task Force Falcon 3A prepares to depart and 3B takes the reins, it is important to reflect on the great accomplishments and sacrifices each have made. As a peacekeeping mission, Kosovo is not an easy assignment. As I look back on these last few months, a quote from Jonathon Edwards comes to mind: "Resolved never to do anything which I should be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life."

Were it so that every person would live their life as through every act committed and every good or bad deed done may be the last of their lives. A lot of people are receiving awards; commendation medals, certificates, coins and the like. Lots of units are receiving pats on the back for a job well done. And it certainly has been.

I want to take all of these recognitions a step further. Not everyone will receive a special award for their service in Kosovo. Yet that does not mean you did not do great things. The benefit to that is that whatever you have done to serve your God, your family, our great nation, the military these great people of Kosovo does count, if not here, then in eternity. The things you did everyday to better this place do count.



How many times when driving down a street did some of the children wave to you? Did you wave back? MEDCAPS were performed where we were the sole source of medical care, and accomplished in some areas barely reachable by vehicle. Did you help those who were sick or lame? Our engineers built bridges, sidewalks and playgrounds all over Kosovo. Units sponsored schools and other organizations all over the country. Tons of material was simply given away to help those most needy. The time involved and people we helped outside the mission and on our own time was remarkable.

Some of you may not have received recognition from men for your accomplishments over here. You may feel you are not worthy or what you did, not count to make this a better place. HERE IS A PROMISE, God saw it all. Every smile or wave you returned, every pencil or toothbrush you gave to a child, every kid you gave a hug or pat on the head, God saw it. The Bible says that "If you do this to the least of these, you do it unto me …" That makes it important. When you saw someone hurting along the road and stopped to help, you succeeded. And whether you were going to meetings, negotiating, patrolling, intercepting or driving a "see," God saw it.

Task Force Falcon's motto was, "BE RELENTLESS," and we were most certainly relentless in accomplishing our mission in every regard. "KFOR 3B's motto, "CLIMB TO GLORY" is also very appropriate for this mission. Those words imply a goal to achieve, but also a "climb," a struggle, to attain that glory which most certainly will be theirs. We all experience that "climb" in our daily lives.

I encourage all of you who read this to remember to help those most needy, keep your eyes on the mission, leave this place better than you found it, and know that there are people praying for you everyday. A "climb" is always upward, but upward to greater things. Do those things, and you will certainly be found worthy in God's eyes.

"Swift and Bold"

Lt. Col. Vance Nannini (right), commander, 3rd Battalion, 6th Field Artillery (10th tn. Div.) uncases the colors of his unit during a November 16th TOA ceremony held at the CBS Theater. The 3-6th FA is replacing the 1st Bn, 41st Field Artillery (3rd Infantry Division) after a six month mission here. Assisting Nannini is 3-6th FA Command Sgt. Maj. William Moore (photo by Sgt. Jamie Brown/ TFF Falcon Flier staff).

Class teaches NBC skills

by Spc. Maria Jaramillo
358th MPAD

A troop of soldiers walks through the foothills on a routine patrol. A couple of jokes are passed back and forth, and as they stop for a drink of water a hiss through the sky is heard and a second later a soft pop comes from the trees. The soldiers exchange knowing glances, and reach for their protective masks.

The U.S. military teaches its soldiers how to prepare against chemical and biological attacks, but a refresher course for multi-national medical and chemical personnel at Camp Bondsteel helped to unify NATO countries against common Nuclear Biological Chemical (NBC) threats.

The two-day course taught by U.S. medical instructors covered the history and current threat of NBC agent use, the characteristics of the threat agents and the treatment/field management of NBC casualties.

"By teaching the medical countermeasures, we are hoping to neutralize the use of chemical and biological weapons," said Maj. Michael McMahon, the director of instruction of the U.S. Medical Research Institute for Chemical Defense (USMRICD), Edgewood Arsenal. "In short, through medical education and training we are hoping to make these weapons obsolete."

In order to make an in-theater two-day class possible, the instructors had to meet all of the deployment requirements such as weapons qualification and immunizations.

"The instructors were hesitant about coming over to Kosovo because of everything that had to be done, but when they found out that the class size was larger than normal and 10 other nations were included they were really excited to come over," said Capt. Lance G. McCartney, the communications and signal officer with Task Force Med Falcon who sponsored the class.

This class was usually taught back in the states, and the instructors had to improvise on some of their usual ways of instruction. A Field Training Exercise (FTX) usually follows the classroom instruction in order to give the students a chance to use their knowledge in a training environment. However, Task Force Falcon, didn't have the training equipment. Every chemical protection suit and decontamination kit was real said McCartney.

"Although we are not doing the field course because of the combat zone environment and lack of necessary equipment, we have enough videos to show the gist of the FTX," said Sgt. Peter Norton, an NBC instructor with USMRICD.

The course provided not only a chance to learn more about NBC agents, and a chance for multi-national soldiers to learn together, but the medical personnel of Kosovo Force (KFOR) left with more confidence in the service they can provide.

"This training reinforced my medical training. It provided first-hand knowledge that has made me feel quite comfortable in the treatment I can give," said United Kingdom Capt. Michael Berski, a Defense NBC Warfare Officer and Task Force MedFalcon Operating Room Nurse.

KFOR soldiers ensure peaceful rally

Pfc. Jason Winesickle, an infantryman in Co B, 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, watches the crowd outside a political rally held at the Gjilane/Gnjilane Soccer Stadium Nov. 11, 2001.

by Spc. Bill Putnam
Staff Writer

CAMP MONTEITH, Kosovo- Some called the atmosphere electric, but soldiers from Task Force 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, ensured that at the political rally at the Gjilan Soccer Stadium on November 11, the atmosphere didn't become violent.

The rally was held to support Dr. Ibrahim Rugova, the LDK(League for a Democratic Kosovo) president, in Kosovo's first internationally recognized elections. The province-wide elections will be held Nov. 17, 2001, and will elect the president, prime minister, and parliament of Kosovo. Rugova is running for president of Kosovo.

None of the soldiers, inside or outside the stadium, expected the crowd to get out of hand. Both 1st Lt. Matthew Howard and Staff Sgt. Gino Giardini, both in Task Force 1st Bn, 30th Infantry Regiment, have been in Kosovo for about two weeks and their units have provided security at several rallies so far. This one was going to be the biggest by far.

An estimated 10,000 people were expected to crowd inside the small soccer stadium in the middle of town to watch Rugova speak.

Earlier that morning, as the crowd slowly grew outside the stadium and trickled inside, Howard watched the crowd. His platoon's mission that day was to back up the Kosovo Police Service in controlling the crowd inside the stadium.

"We're just simply here to back them up and make and observe they're doing their job," said Howard. "We're not here to enforce our will on the (KPS). We're letting them take charge so the process of them taking over goes smoothly."

Howard explained that the other rallies his platoon's been at, the locals "tend to just follow along with what we say and do."

"The thing we need to remember is that this is just simply one of their political people" he explained. "They're going to stand up yell and scream just like a college football game. People are going to get excited, yell, and cheer. I don't see any problems in cheering their man on."

Outside the stadium the scene was equally as chaotic as it was inside. Giardini, an infantry squad leader in Co. B, 2nd Bn, 14th Infantry Regiment, watched the crowd grow.

Giardini's platoon that day provided outside and perimeter security at the stadium during the rally.

"This is definitely the biggest one," Giardini said about the crowd already gathering around him and his soldiers. "I'm sure they're going to get a little rowdy, but I'm sure they won't get of hand."

As Giardini said that, the crowd around the gate grew in size and noise level. People in line waiting to be searched by KPS officers waved party flags, while others parking cars honked their horns and waved more flags. Music inside the stadium became louder only adding to the electricity that seemed to pulsate through the crowd.

As the time for Rugova's arrival drew closer, the music and the crowd became louder. American AH-64 Apaches only added to the noise but not to the crowd's intensity.

As they circled overhead, dancers dressed in traditional costumes and playing drums and traditional instruments, the Tupan or drum, and the Surla or horns. The noises— the Turkish-like traditional music, the public address speakers playing western-style rock, and the crowd dancing and waving flags blended into one surreal east-west mix.

Then the estimated crowd started to chant "Ru-go-va!" repeatedly when the gates opened up and three black Sport Utility Vehicles drove onto the playing field. This was Rugova's motorcade and the crowd was ecstatic their man was here. The chants grew louder as Rugovaappeared from his car and walked down a carpet toward the stage.

"Pretty good, about like I expected," Howard said about the crowd's behavior during Rugova's entrance.

A little later as the crowd calmed down a notch, Howard described the atmosphere in the stadium.

"Would electric fit?" he deadpanned.

As the crowd grew larger just prior to Rugova's arrival, the decision was made to adjust the security perimeter and allow spectators onto the field behind a human wall of LDK, KPS, and US soldiers.

"We had to adjust a little bit because of the number of people here. There's no way you can get that many people in here," Howard said about the crowded stands. "We worked with the LDK security guy, so we adjusted and allowed them to come inside the soccer field, and we just adjusted our perimeter. I think if we just bend and fold, and work together with them, it shouldn't be any problems."

The Apaches were circling the area around the stadium for rooftop surveillance, explained Howard.

"They clear rooftops and anything like that. Obviously, there are rooftops we can't see," he said.

The Apaches, Howard thought, added to the secure environment.

"I don't think they're really paying attention to (the Apaches) to be honest with you," he said. "They're relatively used to it. You can listen to them chanting for Rugova. I think they're more focused on the rally," he said. "I think, actually, probably as long as they're not overpowering with the noise, I think it makes them feel a little safer with the security here."

As Rugova spoke to the boisterous crowd, Capt. Scott Moore, the commander for Bravo, 2nd of the 14th Infantry and commander of the security elements that day, said the rally was going along smoothly with no problems.

"Guys are positioning in good places so we can overlook the crowd," Moore said. "The people are here to voice their opinion and voice their support. I think the crowd's going to remain calm for the rest of the day."

Just then, the crowd started to chant louder and Moore commented that rallies like this and others are helping Kosovo move to a democratic society.

"I think if, you know, they're showing their support, that's one way. If they're doing it in a peaceful manner that's another way. And, that in itself, doing it in a peaceful manner, coming out here and showing their support for their respective leader, that's supporting the democratic process."

A day in the life...

66th MPs begin patrolling in Kosovo

by Spc. Bill Putnam
Staff Writer

Staff Sgt. Shawn Walden shakes the hand of a Mucivere politician after arranging a meeting with him. Walden said that meeting key leaders like the politician is a lot easier than meeting everyone if something happens in a village.

CAMP MONTETH—

The day would take a little longer than expected, but the wait made it worthwhile for the 1st Squad, 1st Platoon, 66th MP Co.

With a bit of anticipation and excitement about the next six months the 66th Military Police Company started patrolling on their own Nov. 5.

As squad prepared to drive out to Kamenica, Kosovo, the squad leader, Staff Sgt. Shawn Walden explained the day's mission. They would be meeting with local officials, running route patrols and pulling a Temporary Checkpoint.

The latter two are traditional MP jobs, but the first is not," said Walden. But it was something he seemed to relish that day.

After leaving here and driving down the rough and bumpy roads of eastern Kosovo, they turned left to head north toward Kamenica and drove past a Russian army check-point. The 66th MP's area of responsibility is the Kamenica Opstina, or municipality, an area they share with the Russian 13th Tactical Group.

After dropping breakfast off at the Kamenica Information Center and talking to 2nd Lt. Scott Blanchard, his platoon leader, Walden drove north to the village of Kopernica.

Kopernica is fairly large village that sits at the bottom of a valley. While driving down the hill, the squad passed some road construction equipment. The Kamenica Opstina government was paving the road leading from Kopernica to Kamenica, said Walden. If he saw any new construction or paving he would report it to Blanchard, he explained.

The squad arrived in town just as school was starting. Kids streamed in from up and down the road to the school.

A tall man welcomed them to the school and invited them in. The principal brought them to the school's conference room. Inside the well-lit conference room , the two groups sat down to talk.

Walden wanted to meet local politicians, the principal wanted to know who the new guys patrolling his village were. All of this talking was done through Walden's translator, Fatmir "Fatty" Haliti.

An hour later the two groups parted and went about their days business. Besides reporting the names and locations of the politician's houses, Walden said he would pass along one other bit of information. The brand new school had no stoves or heaters for its classrooms.

Walden decided to walk through the village and locate the politicians. He explained, as he walked, the importance of knowing where the politicians lived. When the last task force was here something happened in a hamlet south of Kolce, but no one knew where the Points Of Contact lived.

"Talking to key leaders is a lot easier than talking to everyone," he said. "Plus it helps foster that 'we-are-being-included' feeling, so it helps foster a much better working relationship."

He and three of his soldiers walked through the village talking to people. Since there is no real address system in Kosovo he stopped to talk to a local storeowner.

"It dawned on us that the best way to find anyone in these villages is to go to the local convenience store," Walden said as Fatty asked where the politicians lived. "Unlike everyone else they don't work in the fields all day."

They eventually found all of the houses and headed back to the humvees parked across the village.

From Kopernica the squad drove through Kololec, a small Serb village.

A kilometer or two outside of Kololec, Walden stopped his squad for the TCP. Located on a hill that offered good vantages of all directions, the squad parked the humvees and waited.

While waiting for their first car, Long said he was glad to be in Kosovo after months of training. "It's nice to finally be doing what we trained for," he said.

The weather was the only thing he had a difficult time adjusting to, Long added. "California doesn't get this cold," he deadpanned.

He expressed surprise about a few things in Kosovo. Coming here he wasn't sure about the standard of living in the villages. People in the villages collecting firewood just to keep warm made him think about the "luxuries we have and it makes me appreciate what I have."

He was even more surprised to see how friendly the locals are to US KFOR soldiers.

"One time we were going through a village and an old man approached me saying 'thank you, America, we are free,'" Long said.

Soon a car rolled up to the TCP and Long went back to work. The squad searched six vehicles of various sizes finding nothing out of the ordinary. From there they drove five or six kilometers to Muciverce, another farming village. The most striking part of the Muciverce skyline is the sliver domed village Mosque and Minaret.

They parked near the local school and were soon swarmed by kids just released from school. At the school Walden asked directions to local politician's houses. They followed the directions and walked all over the village, even waiting 30 minutes for one to return from the fields.

Once he arrived, Walden explained that Blanchard wanted to meet the politicians and would this one be interested.

"Po ('yes' in Albanian)," the politician said and a meeting for two days later was set up. From there the squad moved back to the humvees. Their work done, they drove back to the KI and reported back to Blanchard.

"I didn't expect it to take so long but that's ok," Walden said before he drove back here to Camp Monteith.

3/7th Infantry makes way for the 30th Infantry in TOA ceremony

Lt. Col. Jack L. Kammerer (left), commander of the outgoing TF 3rd of the 7th Infantry, thanks Lt. Col. Audy R. Snodgrass (right) , commander of the incoming TF 1st of the 30th Infantry, at the Transfer Of Authority ceremony at Camp Monteith, Nov. 10, 2001. The statue in Snodgrass's hand is of a boar, 1st of the 30th Infantry's mascot. The statue in Snodgrass' hand is of a boar, 1st of the 30th Infantry's mascot. The statue was given to Kammerer in thanks for a smooth transition (photo by Spc. Bill Putnam).

Playing doctor...

Medgroup conducts mass casualty exercise

1 Lt. Marcus Nasby, deputy commander (Swedish), medic platoon, evaluates a casualty during a mass casualty at Camp Bondsteel on October 22. The exercise was conducted to help the new med group rotation take over duties here.

by Spc. Scott Holdsworth
358th MPAD

A mortar shell hits Camp Bondsteel and nobody knows who or where it came from. Many are wounded and as they wait for the rescue team, cries and screams fill the air. It isn't until a laugh is heard that you realize it's just another military practice mass casualty.

The new rotation finally arrived and Task Force Med Falcon V was eager to begin. Both of the Task Force Med Falcon groups participated and practiced for the real thing. They held the mass casualty exercise to see if the new unit was ready to take care of the injured of the new rotation.

"The purpose (of the mass casualty exercise) was to test and see if our personnel, that are taking over this hospital, are ready to treat many casualties all at the same time," said 1st Lt. Kurt Martin, S1 and Public Affairs Officer for Task Force Med Falcon V.

Many things were learned and will be remembered as the new group look forward to the next six months.

"Things don't always go perfectly smooth, but it's an exercise. You live, you learn," said Sgt William Gombos, Medical Lab Technician of TFMF V. "There's always teaching points with everything you don't do right, and there's always reinforcements with what you do right."

The members of the new rotation have many more things to learn before the old rotation leaves, but the mass casualty exercise has brought them closer to becoming ready.

"I think it's gone well," said Martin. "I think we've done a great job and our guys have shown that their qualified and ready to do this."

Members of Task Force Med Falcon V react to a soldier suffering from combat stress. During the exercise, soldiers encountered a variety of simulated injuries and situations.