TASK FORCE FALCON

Falcon Flier

Volume 5, Issue 4 | Produced for the personnel of Task Force Falcon | July 15, 2001

KFOR soldiers offer medical assistance

The sick and the weary of Kosovo recieved badly needed medical care thanks to the soldiers of Task Force Medical Falcon.

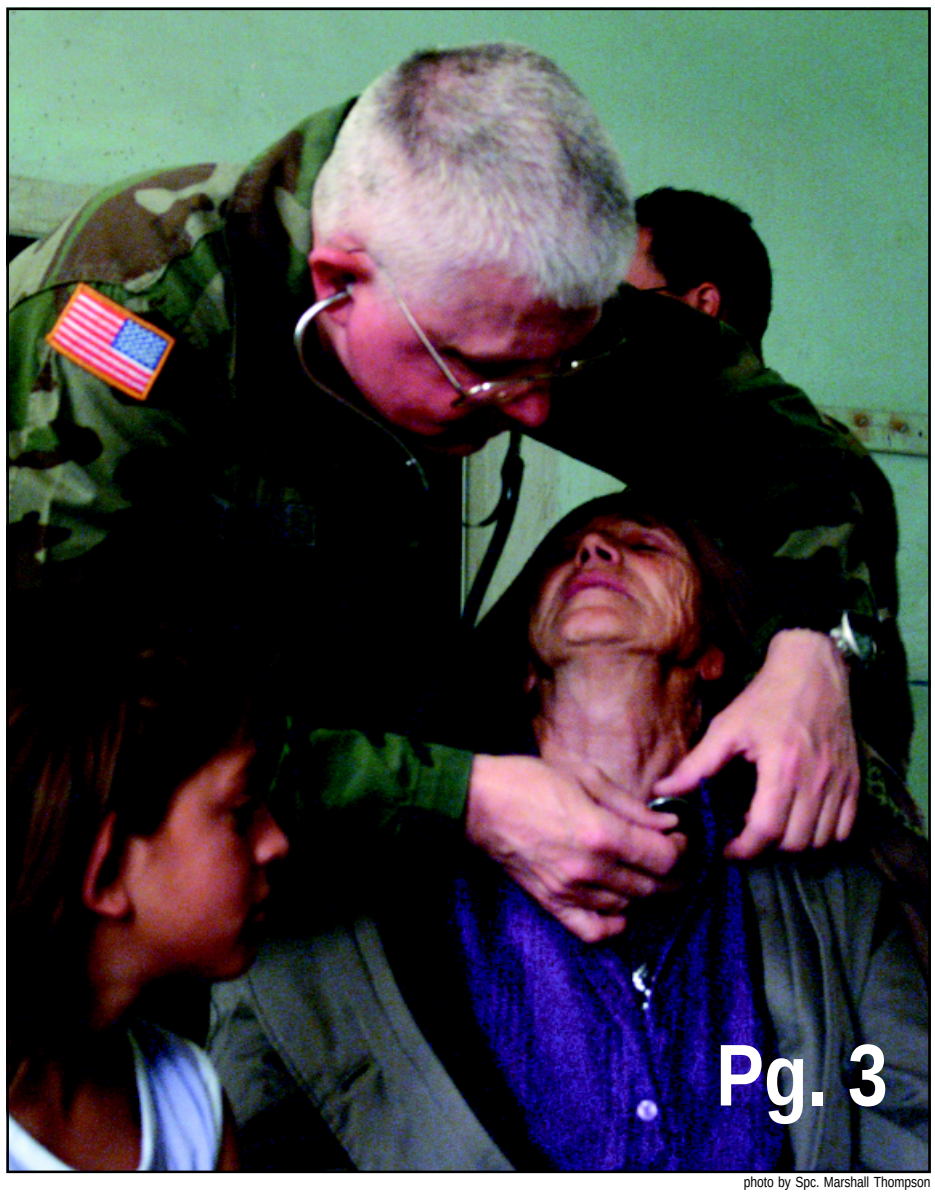

Pg. 3

photo by Spc. Marshall Thompson

Col. Gregg Quick, an emergency room physician with Task Force Medical Falcon from the 399th Combat Support Hospital examines a woman from Topojane, Kosovo during a medical civic action program.

Pg. 8 and 9

photo by Spc. Engels Tejeda

The Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders make a special visit to Kosovo for the 4th of July.

TFF CSM Hill shares his NCO knowledge with Polish and Ukranian soldiers.

Pg. 15

photo by Spc. Maria Jaramillo

After inspecting a Polish vehicle, Task Force Falcon Command Sgt. Maj. Marvin Hill congratulates the soldier for his good maintenance.

photo by Spc. Maria Jaramillo

A Task Force Falcon soldier tries to qualify for the German Schutzenschnur medal.

U.S. and German soldiers train together despite uniformed paragliders.

Pg. 15

Fitness is the way

Story by
Brig. Gen. William C. David
Task Force Falcon Commander

Do you know what will put an extra spark in that reunion with your significant other? Do you know what you can do to become mentally sharp? And do you know how you can help your team?

The answer is simple and it's one of those goals we set when we took over on June 1. Make yourself better than you were before through a good physical fitness program. You are only limited by your imagination.

You think that there's nothing in this physical fitness stuff for you. Think again partner.

Picture your arrival home after a tour in Kosovo. While there are many things that would make good souvenirs, body fat isn't on the list. Strong arms give better hugs and lean body mass just looks better. Plus I'm certain you'll want endurance when you get home so that you can do all those things you want to do. Your significant other will thank you for your work here. Run now.

They'll love me the way I am, you say. That may be true, but you have to make it home first.

Fatigue is a common factor in accidents. Accidents and poor performance can lead to mistakes that get you hurt. You can combat fatigue with fitness. Start your day with a good workout so that you'll be mentally sharp all day long. You gain stamina, improve your ability, and become less prone to fatigue.

So, you say that no one else should worry about your physical fitness because it's your business. Not true.

This may be an "Army of One" but you are critical to our team. The chain is only as strong as its weakest link. And a team only runs as fast as the slowest member. Our team is no different. You don't want to be the one that conks out right in the middle of an important project at the office. And you don't want to be the one that let the weapons smuggler get away.

That's three reasons to be relentless when you go on that next trip to the gym. Be relentless for your significant other! Be relentless for yourself! Be relentless for the team!

The Eagle Cash Card, accepted everywhere you ought to be

Story and photo by
Spc. Scott A. 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."

PV2 Paul Terrell, from the 2-44th ADA, signs up for the new Eagle Cash Card. Terrell was the first lower enlisted soldier who signed up for the cash card at Camp Bondsteel.

"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 loose 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.

Falcon Flier

Circulation: 4,000

The *Falcon Flier* is an authorized publication of the Task Force Falcon Public Affairs Office. Contents of the *Falcon Flier* are not necessarily official views of the United States Department of the Army, Department of Defense or the U.S. Government. It is produced by the 358th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, SADAFRC, UT, Task Force Falcon PAO.
For story ideas, comments or suggestions, contact Task Force Falcon Flier Editor at 781-5200, mail to Falcon Flier Editor, HQ Task Force Falcon PAO, Camp Bondsteel APO AE 09340 or e-mail at Gary.Peterson@bondsteel2.areur.army.mil

Task Force Falcon Commander	Brig. Gen. William C. David
Public Affairs Officer	Maj. Randy Martin
Camp Bondsteel OIC	Maj. Norman Johnson
Camp Monteith OIC	Sgt. 1st Class Brian Kappmeyer
KFOR Media Liaison	1st Lt. Mark Jacobsen
First Sergeant	1st Sgt. Kerry B. Miller
Camp Bondsteel NCOIC	Staff Sgt. Tom Cornaby
Webmaster/Daily Flier	Spc. Scott Holdsworth
Media Relations NCOIC	Sgt. Ann M. Burrows
Editor/Layout and Design	Sgt. Gary E. Peterson
Assistant Editor/Layout and Design	Spc. Marshall Thompson
Journalists/Photographers	Spc. Maria Jaramillo, Spc. Engels Tejeda and Spc. Travis Bascom

Task Force MedFalcon makes house call

Story and photo by
Spc. Marshall Thompson
358th MPAD

Rezearta Omuni, a young girl from Topojane, Kosovo, carried her little brother, Qendrim, to the school were they hoped he could find medical attention for his tiny bandaged foot.

Qendrim and many others badly in need of medical attention were lucky enough to be treated by dedicated soldiers from Task Force Medical Falcon who worked with the Greeks and the local community to set up a Medical Civic Action Program (MEDCAP) June 28.

"A MEDCAP is a program to go out into the communities and take care of the illnesses and medical problems of people in underserved areas in Kosovo," said Col. Greg Quick, an emergency room physician with TFMF from the 399th Combat Support Hospital.

Sgt. Robert Murray, a combat medic with TFMF from the 399th CSH said, "Their medical care system is nonexistent so we really need to help out the people that we can, especially with these MEDCAPs."

The soldiers from TFMF offer more than free medical care –they make house calls. Instead of waiting at Camp Bondsteel, they pack up equipment and medical supplies and go out into the different communities.

"We're here [in Topojane] to help out the civilians. They can't get into Camp Bondsteel unless it's a life, limb, or loss of eyesight injury. So this helps out people that have small things like bronchitis or something. This way we can treat regular illnesses and not just traumas," Murray said.

"This is a different aspect to medicine," said Quick. "Our primary mission is to treat the KFOR soldiers in the hospital area."

Even though it isn't their primary mission, all the soldiers said they were happy to do anything they could for the people of Topojane.

"It's an honor to be treated by people who care," said Sgt. 1st Class Miguel Martinez, the non-commissioned officer in charge of the MEDCAP with TFMF from the 399th CSH. "I show I care by trying to give them accurate medical care as quickly as possible. We all know how we don't like to wait in the doctor's office. It's kind of the same thing. I don't want them to have to wait out there any longer than they have to."

Martinez and the other soldiers from the 399th CSH are reservists out of Massachusetts. They have all sacrificed a lot to come to Kosovo and provide their services to the people as well as the Task Force Falcon soldiers.

Murray, a college student studying business, gave up a three-year scholarship to Norwich University in Northfield, Vt. to come to Kosovo.

"I'm enjoying it in Kosovo," said Murray. "It definitely makes up for what I'm missing back home. I'm definitely doing something good here, and that's the bottom line."

As Murray and his fellow soldiers are quick to point out, the MEDCAPs do a lot for everybody, not just the people they treat.

"These sorts of things give you a much better understanding of the culture that we're dealing with. It's hard to understand this country's problems, the hardships and the like. It gives us a much better feeling for what's going on in this country," Quick said.

Lt. Col. Ray Van Wynagarden, a radiologist with TFMF from the 399th CSH, said, "As a physician, I'm concerned about everyone's health. This is a really good way to promote good will."

The good will was not only shared between Massachusetts and Kosovo, but between the United States and Greece. The whole MEDCAP was coordinated between the two nations.

Rezearta Omuni, a Kosovo native, carries her little brother Qendrim to a local MEDCAP to get treatment for his injured foot.

Van Wynagarden said that he likes working with the Greeks.

"They [the Greek soldiers] speak very good English. I'm afraid I don't speak anything else," Van Wynagarden said.

Whether the KFOR soldiers were U.S. or Greek, their desire to help out and make a difference was the same.

"Just the fact that we are here, I believe, does make a difference," Quick said.

Martinez said, "Helping people is what it's all about."

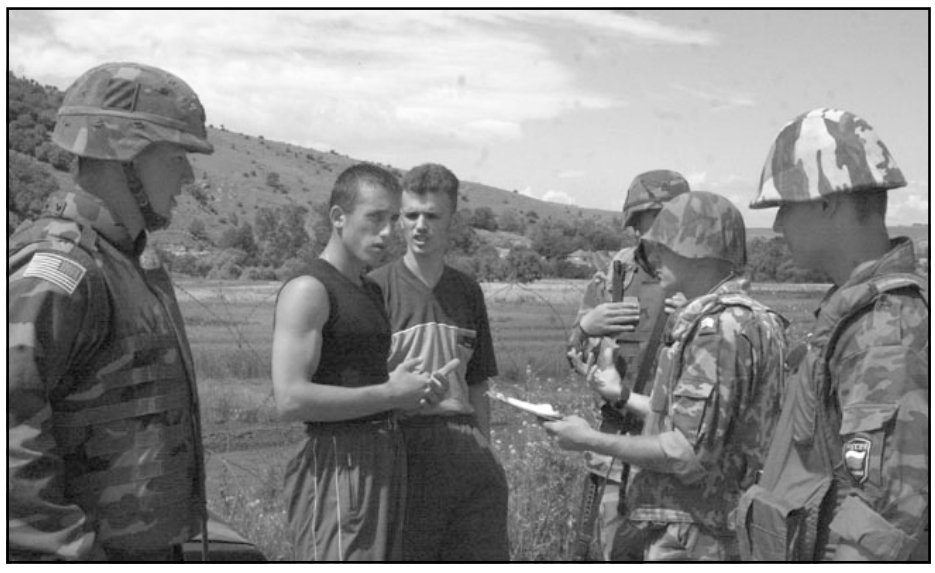
"May I have some gum?"

Story and photos by
Spc. Travis Bascom
358th MPAD

"May I have some gum?" A Russian soldier gestures in his native tongue to his American counterpart. Reading his body language, the American Soldier presents his peace offering of Copenhagen only to be horrified as he watches it be chewed like gum and spewed out rather quickly.

It may be hard to believe that instances like these help strengthen relationships between the two superpowers that festered a fear of nuclear war throughout the world for over forty years. But after you see all the soldiers laughing together at the act, you may change your mind.

"Working with the Russians allows us to see how they do things differently, and we learn from each other," said Staff Sgt. Tevesi E. Fata, non commissioned officer in charge of A Battery 1-41st Field Artillery, near the Kosovo-Serbian boundary, which is one of three check points where Russian and American forces are enforcing access in and out of Kosovo.



Sgt. Arthur Ackerson with A Battery 1-41st Field Artillery 2nd Section and Russian Soldiers Sgt. Meshchezyakov Paul and Sgt. Jangazor Renat work together to perform traffic checks near the Serbian boundary.

Sgt. Arthur Ackerson with A Battery 1-41st Field Artillery 2nd Section and Russian Soldiers Sgt. Jangazor Renat perform a traffic check at a check point near the Serbian border.

"Due to the Cold War in the 1970s and 1980s we were going to fight each other and now that we are communicating, we tell each other about families, culture and life. We look at each other's pictures and it strengthens relations," said Sgt. Meshchezyakov Paul, a soldier in the Russian Army.

The two soldiers have been working together for the past two weeks in a program that has roughly been around for a year.

Inspecting the vehicles that come through the check point, the Russians will ask for the passports as the Americans inspects the vehicles only to trade off at the next inspection.

A mixture of humor and confusion is in the air as both parties try to learn the other's language while at the same time practicing Albanian and Serbian, the two most common languages going through the boundary.

"We're learning a lot of their language and we teach them English. A lot of times we don't even need the interpreters," said Fata.

"This helps relations. We know their point of view and hopefully in the future it will help us get along," said Fata.

"Sometimes Russian and American soldiers become close friends and swap both internet and home addresses," said Paul.

Wordsearch: Rank, what it's all about

T J K A R B Y R B W X Z R U E G A L O C T C T X A L D B D E H U K H P F M G J B
S H C Q V S U V R G L K N G Z L A P L G H H N R A W I G C V H G W L T A H H F A
M E E M N K W M K C T Z U T V R S W G H N I A R S B B S E B I R G Y F I K L L A
R Y C P M C B X K B N F J E E L K P Z A F G E F J C G T N W M S V I B Z Z H I S
A O S W K N X I Y K A H L N L Y Z T E N R N G F B X B K E T Y S R H V X S N S E
B E W G L E A Q W F E J E S U G E N S C E V R I W K B D M Y S N Q B V C O A P R
L X M D Q T V M A V G G A P W V S R J G I C E B L A N C E C O R P O R A L L N B
Y S S E N I O R A I R M A N F I R S T C L A S S K T R C S E M G R F U C C X S A
L C N M U E D K Z E E Y C Y G D J N P L V X L G X Q G R D T M U B G D X A H Z B
A I X B Q Y C V I R S X C N I X A H U T F V A I D E A N A D A F A N N J B D L J
K T V E S U G D O R T B S H I N A F J O H N C N S H S Q D N S V O I J J V F I F
J K E R S S A L C T S R I F E T A V I R P L I E U T E N A N T C O M M A N D E R
F L M P J G Z O H H R Y M T S I L E G D B Q N H W L V U H T E O M M P R M J U Q
W L A R I M D A E C I V U Z C V N P G W Z P H E T T F Q M S R M F X O E E Q T W
Y E B R T W S N K H F E N C H H U F S S A L C D R I H T R E C I F F O Y T T E P
Y O B O G W A S M L I O F E O V T Y P E H Z E S S K N E R O H W K J I P T K N R
D E A E M O X U O L A D E M H M B U V Q O Y T P Y C C Y C C I T C X Z C R J A B
C C I W X D D E A W Y R U B A F M R K B W I W R C I O K X S E Z N N O L E I N N
G L A P Y T B R F T E I I J Q S S A L C T S R I F R E C I F F O Y T T E P R T N
W L X E R E V L D E R M O M Q D T X N Z I X G F A P M E U K P S X K H I M N C W
W I S S Z I U E L H E R W F D Q H E D D H U O F V W Y B V N E P R K M S A J O I
U Y L D T F S M O N G Q H T N A E G R E S Y R E N N U G R E T S A M K E I L L J
B B M V C U A E E E I S E N I O R M A S T E R S E R G E A N T G I R G L I Z O K
M Y J U Y A B D N Q Q E I A F Q K A L T E B R Z Y E X F E B Y J C R S P E N N B
X L H H Z K I E Y E Q H E B L Y G A E H L R Z G N P A W L U O C E X L L K K E A
Y K E N E A R V J M P P U E C Z N P R R N D G A E P S Y R P F S E E I T K S L J
Y F I N S A O O H H K T Q S Z P F Q P F Q P Q E K A G M W F F T L R V V P N O A
D Q H X L R Z Q W V P C W Y B E L V J H C A P T A I N N O F I P O C Z Y S F M K
S K O P L Q P E R F G L K U I Q D E C Z M C M Q P N T T A U C C Z J W N K M P E
Y Q A M J K A F R P N P W H X C J D P Q G F M E K S T T M F E F R H Y C D L U W
I A D Y Y R S Q Q U I J C H M H L G A S E F H U R S S F R A R B V V E K N W S X
Y V P J O K O K T A R R R I I T P Q S W P R M G X P K I I Z J K Y C V W C P Z S
V V G E V W J Q I A O B N H P E P R R M L G C D Z I W W R R A O V D N O H W P Z
E W U A M D S E Q I B W E O W D P N I P T S B F X M K I L O S G R W V V R F E U
Y C Q D U V R P N A S W D R B E L L A R G P G H M X O X I H O T Q L Q Z H X Z Z
L B Z X H B Q E Z A B H Q O F S U D O Q N Q K M Z Q R F L F X R C X T Y W L W R
W I W X O B S H W B U U N Y Z C K D E L R S K C I H F E T I Q U L L U W J B G O
B S C C X K T F N V Q A T M B A B S I R J M F S G Y U K D N G L A H A E K C F Y
M B G M E F C E R G P C B Z E L A J R H R X J L Y H C T O B B L C U F S A N L P
Y P W N B E R W Y T H F R N H O T J B S E J L W E I Y F Q U E A G C B Z S O U D

WORD KEY:

ADMIRAL
AIRMAN
AIRMANFIRSTCLASS
BRIGADIERGENERAL
CAPTAIN
CHIEFMASTERSERGEANT
CHIEFPETTYOFFICER
CHIEFWARRANTOFFICER
COLONEL
COMMANDER
COMMANDSERGEANTMAJOR
CORPORAL
ENSIGN
FIRSTSERGEANT
GENERAL
GUNNERYSERGEANT
LANCECORPORAL
LIEUTENANT
LIEUTENANTCOLONEL
LIEUTENANTCOMMANDER
LIEUTENANTGENERAL
MAJOR
MAJORGENERAL
MASTERCHIEFPETTYOFFICER
MASTERGUNNERYSERGEANT
MASTERSERGEANT
PETTYOFFICERFIRSTCLASS
PETTYOFFICERSECONDCLASS
PETTYOFFICERTHIRDCLASS
PRIVATE
PRIVATEFIRSTCLASS
REARADMIRAL
SEAMAN
SENIORAIRMAN
SENIORCHIEFPETTYOFFICER
SENIORMASTERSERGEANT
SERGEANT
SERGEANTFIRSTCLASS
SERGEANTMAJOR
SPECIALIST
STAFFSERGEANT
TECHNICALSERGEANT
VICEADMIRAL
WARRANTOFFICER

Falcon's force

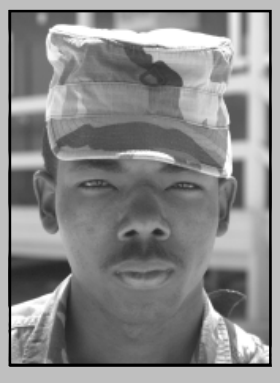
What does duty mean to you?

Cpl. Luke Carr
240 gunner
2-502nd Infantry Regiment, Vitina

"Duty is important so you know what you're doing. That way, if you know what's going on you can continue the mission if someone gets hurt."

Pfc. Brian Frogge
Signal support specialist 716th Military Police Battalion, Bondsteel

"Duty to me, means doing what's right and doing something before your told to do it and you know it needs to be done."



Pfc. William Exum
Supply specialist 1-41st Field Artillery, Bondsteel

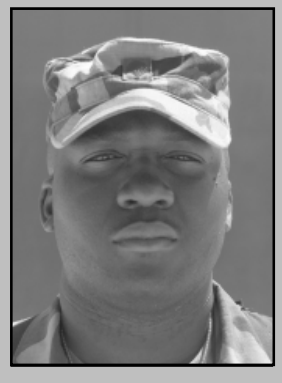
"Duty means being at work and doing it the same every day. There is duty to family too because they're part of my life. They're the only people I care about."

Spc. Alemar Calambro, Infantry tow gunner 2-502nd Infantry Regiment Vitina

"Duty is doing your job and making sure that it's done properly. I learned a sense of duty from NCO's and by doing what's right."

Pfc. Matt Moser
Automation specialist 1-41st Field Artillery, Bondsteel

"Duty means to serve and do my best to carry out the mission and make sure it gets done properly with military bearing."



Spc. Bryan Walkes
Military policeman 340th Military Police Battalion, Bondsteel

"Duty means that you do your job at 110 percent. When you finish your job well it shows everyone around that you deserve to handle more important tasks."

Knock, Knock! Who's there? The Comedy Break Show

Story and photos by
Spc. Scott Holdsworth
358th MPAD

What do you get when you put a Texan, a New Yorker and a guy from Denver in a room full of people with weapons?

Great laughs at the highly praised "Comedy Break."

Jeff Burghart, one of the three comedians from the Comedy Break, gets into his jokes with actions and impersonations of all kinds.

Jeff Burghart, Mike Estimé and Louis Johnson made up the Comedy Break, a group of comedians who performed at Camp's Able Sentry, Monteith, Vitina, and Bondsteel.

"This is the first time that every member of the audience had guns," said Burghart. He then shared an experience in Texas where a member of the audience jokingly pulled a gun on him when he made fun of the Bee Gees.

"I laughed the whole time," said Spc. Faith Patterson of the 399th Combat Support Hospital, Task Force Med Falcon. "It was hilarious. I enjoyed myself. We should have more of these."

Burghart seemed to point his first remarks on the calvary, making fun of their hats and walking around like a cowboy would, but even they enjoyed his remarks.

"It was fun," said Sgt. Richard A. Wolfe, Task Force Sabre, 17th Calvary. "I liked it. This is the first time that I have ever been to a live show."

The three comedians came from very different places in the Untied States. Burghart, a native Texan, now resides in L.A., California. Louis, who is a USO tour veteran of the group, is from Denver, Colorado. Estimé is from the New York/New Jersey area.

"Every time we do a show people come up to me and say 'we needed that', which is much more fulfilling than other people saying just that I'm funny," said Estimé.

Sometimes soldiers need a little getting away. Laughing is one of the best ways to do this. The Comedy Break definitely brought many laughs to this region.

"They say 'We've been here over a month and a half and that's the hardest we've laughed'," according to Burghart.

All the comedians have a lot of fun on these tours and all three agree that it has turned out to be a really good one.

They not only have fun doing the shows, but between shows they joke around. They have really enjoyed their time here.

"We get to go driving through the towns, and we get to see what kind of effect the soldiers are having," said Estimé.

"I was just amazed at some of the things I've seen. Not only what the soldiers have to endure, but also what people that live here have to endure. It makes you more appreciative of the things you have," said Estimé. "I definitely have much more respect after being here."

Before they left, they made just a few suggestions for the soldiers. They said keep smiling and keep your spirits up.

"For once I'm not joking," said Burghart. "We're proud of you back there."

The audience of the Comedy Break in Camp Bondsteel laugh as they enjoy one of the jokes presented there. The South side fitness center was full of people who enjoyed the Comedy Break

Strike Force finds a new home in Vitina

Story and photo by
Spc. Marshall Thompson
358th MPAD

The dark brown soil of a field in Vitina contrasted deeply with the four red white and blue shovels used to overturn the soil during a groundbreaking ceremony for a new base camp for the 2-502nd Infantry Regiment on July 2.

The patriotic shovels were wielded by Brig. Gen. William David, Multinational Brigade East Commander; Samet Dalipi, President of the Vitina Municipality; Zoran Kramerivic, Vice-President of the Vitina Municipality; and Rick Rooter of Brown and Root Services. The decision to build a new base camp came for many reasons.

Brig. Gen. William David, Multinational Brigade East commanding general, turns the soil for the new 2-502nd base in Vitina/Viti, Kosovo along with Samet Dalipi, President of the Vitina Municipality, Zoran Kramerivic, Vice President of the Vitina Municipality, and Rick Rooter from Brown and Root Services.

"The current location of the battalion is a metal machine shop factory. In the long term, this is a facility that can be turned back over to the economy of Kosovo and employ the people," David said.

Even more than helping the local economy, the new base camp is a sign of KFOR's dedication. The address given during the ceremony stated:

"This is a special moment in history for the Multinational Brigade East, the 2-502nd Infantry Regiment, and for the citizens of the Vitina Municipality.

"The decision to build this outstanding camp shows our continued commitment to the citizens of the Vitina Municipality, and will provide an environment where all ethnic groups may live and work together."

David said that the new base would also increase force protection for the soldiers serving in that area.

Pvt. Brett Kelley, an infantry gunner from Company D of the 2-502nd Infantry Regiment, is one of the soldiers currently serving in the area. Kelley had the honor of holding the shovels during the ceremony along with Cpl. Demetrius Crawford, a Marine Corps civil affairs specialist attached to the 404th Civil Affairs Battalion.

Kelley said, "I won't be here to stay in [the new base camp]. I rotate out to different places every six weeks, but I hope it's better for the next soldiers rotating in. Where we were staying was just a big factory, but now we have our own place."

Building a new facility isn't an easy thing to do, but David reiterated the importance when he said, "The new base is another symbol of the U.S. commitment to Kosovo."

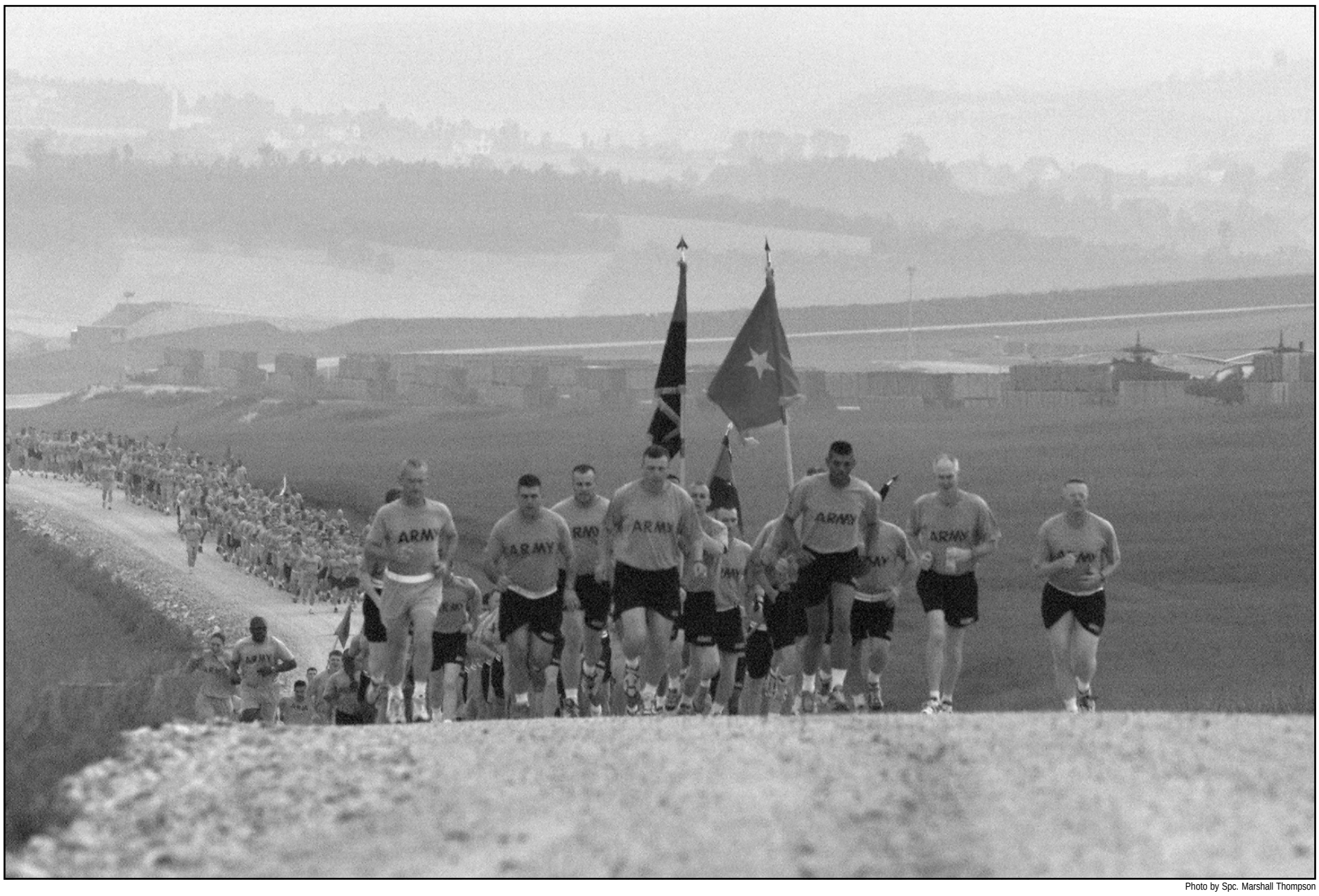


Photo by Spc. Marshall Thompson

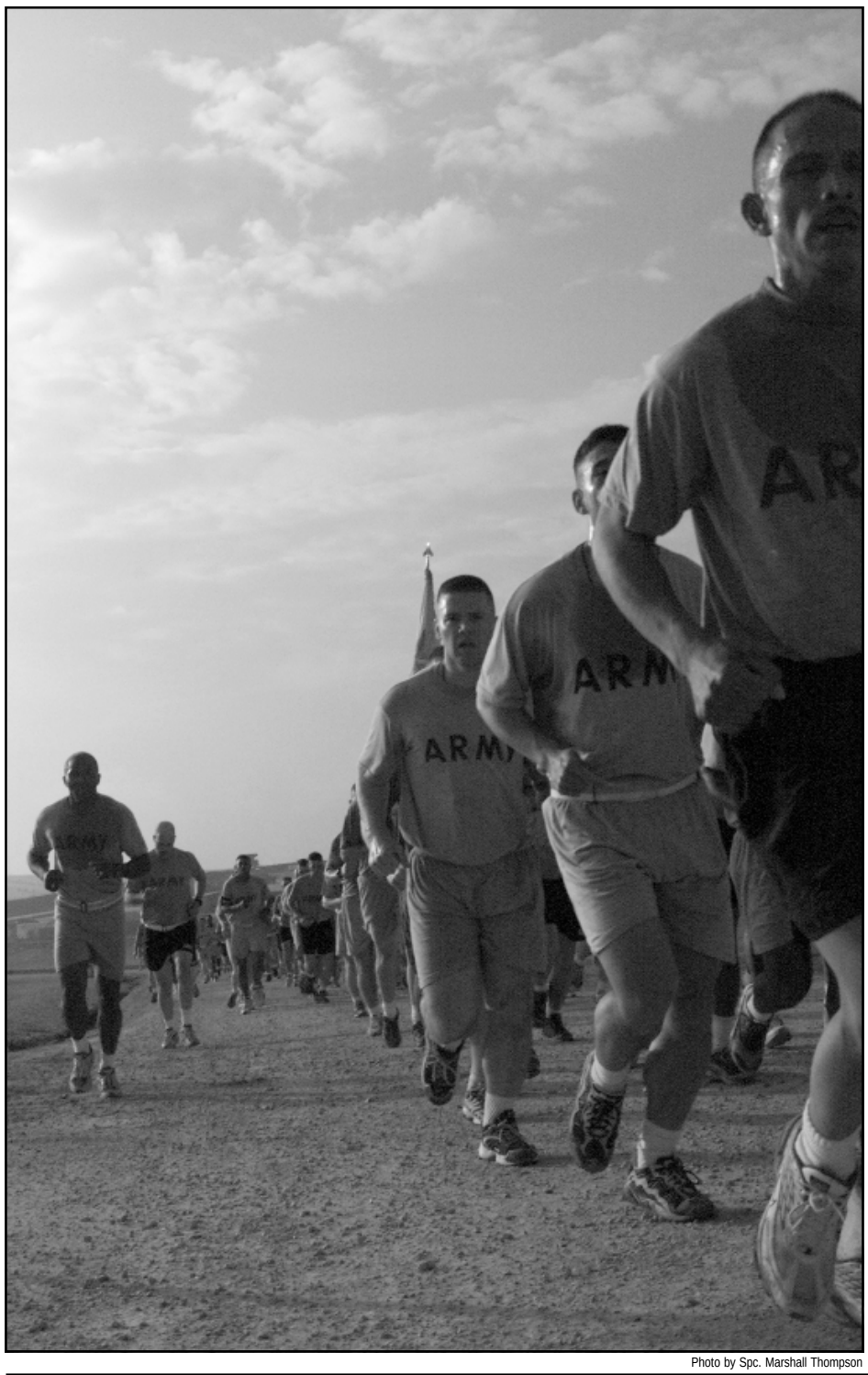


Photo by Spc. Marshall Thompson

Photo by Spc. Scott Holdsworth

Photo by Spc. Maria Jaramillo

TFF squares off in softball

Story by Sgt. John Edwards
358th MPAD

On a day hot enough to peel paint, Task Force Falcon (TFF) dueled off amongst themselves for the 4th of July softball games.

A few hardened softball enthusiasts showed their support to the players, and were joined in celebration briefly by a visit from the Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders. The ballplayers and spectators had the unique opportunity to talk, get autographs and mingle with each cheerleader.

Prior to the semifinal tournament, the Cowboy Cheerleaders presented the TFF HHC pitcher, TFF Commander Brig. Gen. William David with a Cowboy jacket and poster.

The game began with David containing "Glory's Guns" (a team of Engineers) for the first couple of innings.

It wasn't until the fourth inning that the game began to heat up. At the top of the fourth inning HHQ taunted "Glory's Guns" with a lead of five to three. However, "Glory's Guns" launched a damaging assault that ended the fourth inning with a tie of five to five.

The only threat to HHQ was a mammoth hit by Maj. Bill Bolden.

Bolden smashed a laser-shot to the fence that enabled him to have an inside the park home run.

Even so, the Engineers rallied and finally took the lead in the fifth inning and never looked back.

In later semifinal action, Brown and Root squared off with Task Force Medical Falcon. All in all, both ballplayer and spectators had a good time at the park.

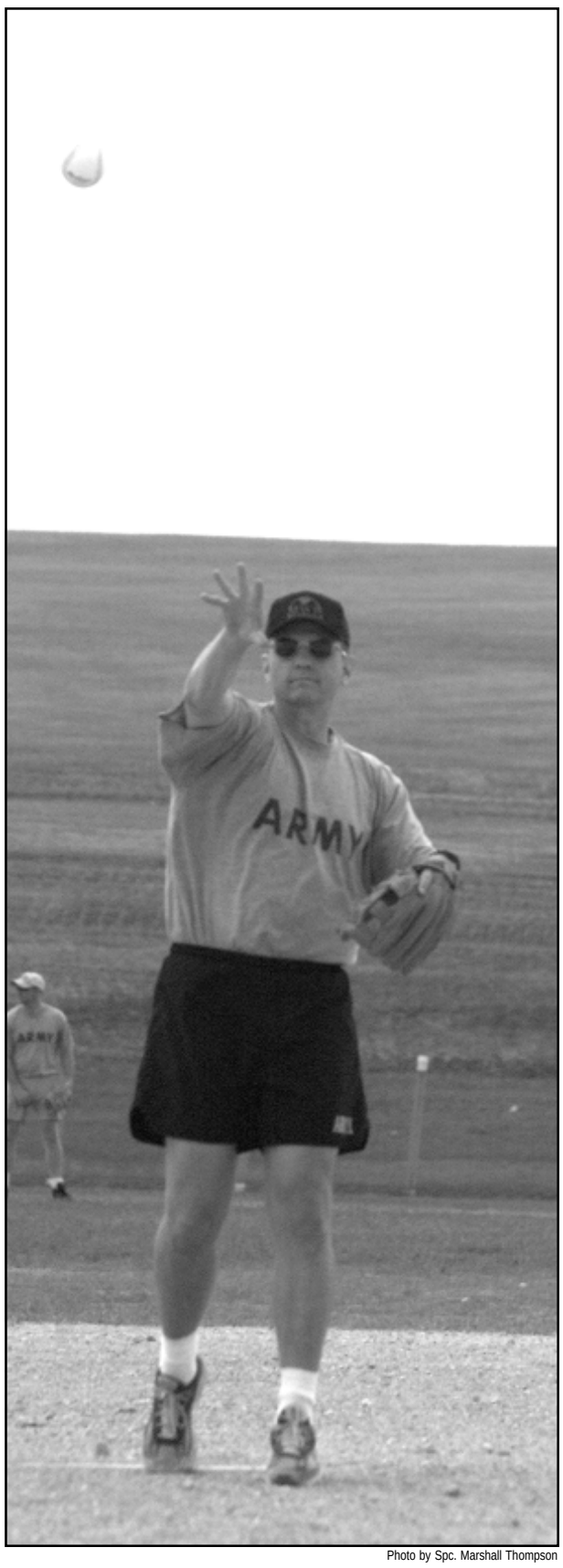


Photo by Spc. Marshall Thompson

Photo by Spc. Marshall Thompson

Upper left: Task Force Falcon joins Multinational Brigade East Commander Brig. Gen. William David on a run to celebrate the 4th of July.

Far left: TFF soldiers finish the last leg of the Independence Day run.

Center left: The 501st Signal soldiers play a friendly game of soccer agains the United Arab Emerates.

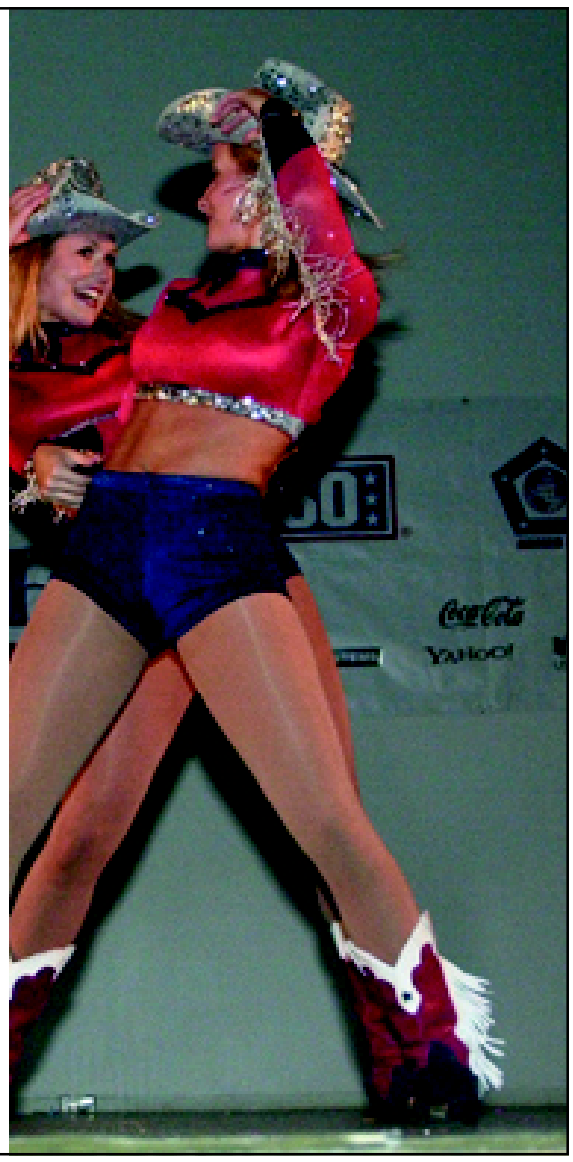
Left bottom: The Fourth Dimension rocks away for a spectacular concert on July 3rd.

Above: David throws out the first pitch of the softball tournament.

Above right: TFF soldiers kick the softball tournament off with a bang.

Right: A 501st Signal soldier does a corner kick during a game against the United Arab Emerates. The United Arab Emerates won 1-0.

Photo by Spc. Scott Holdsworth



Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders visit Kosovo for the 4th of July

Story and photos by
Spc. Engels Tejeda
358th MPAD

"Hooah!" was the only sound the crowd of soldiers were capable of making as ten American beauties took over the stage at the Camp Bondsteel movie theatre. Almost speechless, paralyzed and completely flabbergasted by the Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders, the U.S. soldiers of Multinational Brigade East celebrate America's 225th birthday.

The day began with the arrival of the girls to Camp Bondsteel.

They attended a softball game and presented a jacket to Brig. Gen. William C. David, commander of Task Force Falcon.

After the game, the cheerleaders attended a press conference at the movie theatre where they signed a cement star as part of an ongoing tradition.

Throughout the day, the cheerleaders attended several sites where they signed autographs and invited soldiers to their show, which began at approximately 8:30 p.m.

Displaying stunning flexibility, radiant smiles and flawless fitness, the cheerleaders performed their show for the largest crowd this rotation has seen at any event. Throughout the show, the girls invited the crowd to participate in several activities, to include "dropping" a soldier and dancing for four others on stage.

Kelly Korchoff, cheerleader for the Dallas Cowboys, explained the reason behind her squad's visit to Kosovo.

"I think a lot of times back in the United States we don't realize what is going on and it is necessary to have the American troops keeping the peace in these nations...I hope that if anything, (our visit) brings at touch of home (to them). It just feels like we can come over here and let them know that a piece of America is here with them."

This is Korchoff's third USO tour; she said soldiers are the reason why she keeps coming back.

"The thing that inspires me the most when we come on USO tours is just seeing smiles on the faces of the American service men and women that are in the audience. It brightens up my life and I hope it brightens up their's... If just for a moment, a day or a week, they remember that we came here. That inspires me to come back," said Korchoff.

If smiles are all that's required for the Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders to come back, MNB-E will be seeing them come again and again. Soldiers did nothing but grin and make statements such as, "our morale has never been so high."

Pfc. Shane E. Farley, tank crewmember with A Company 3-69th Armor, explains the impact the girls had on his team. "The morale of the soldiers went up when they were coming because of our anticipation. I think I'll remember them for a long time."

The girls also performed at Camp Monteith, Camp Able Sentry and Vitina. In addition, they visited several remote sites to include Cernica, Zegra, and Novo Brdo.

Left page:The Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders visited Task Force Falcon soldiers July 4 to celebrate America's birthday. The cheerleaders performed a two-hour show at Camp Bondsteel, Camp Monteith, Camp Able Sentry and Vitina.

Left: The cheerleaders sign autographs for KFOR soldiers and workers.

Below: The cheerleaders required the participation of a few lucky soldiers during their show at Camp Bondsteel.

The "Hunter" travels by night in search of smuggling

Prc.Bradley Thurkow, bottom, and Pfc. Christopher Logue, top, soldiers from A Company, 15th Military Intelligence Battalion, conduct pre-flight checks on the Hunter.

Story by
Maj. Norman Johnson
358th MPAD

You're sleeping, but I'm watching over you and protecting you. I see everything that's going on. I see weapons being smuggled on the backs of pack animals along the steep, rugged mountainous terrain of Kosovo. I see vehicles and people trying to move stealthily through the night. I see possible weapon caches buried in the recesses of caves. Nothing escapes my eyes. I cut through the night blackness like a cat prowling for its prey. I'm here to provide a safe and secure environment for the people of Kosovo.

The "Hunter", an unmanned aerial vehicle that travels the night sky in search of possible smuggling routes, is one such piece of technology that is being used along the Kosovo/ Former Yugoslav Republic Of Macedonia (FYROM) border to keep the peace.

"It can reach speeds as fast as 110 knots, heights of 16,000 feet and travel almost 200 km by remote control," said Spc. Andrew Caballero, air vehicle operator with A Company, 15th Military Intelligence Battalion. "The Hunter is an unmanned aircraft that can be used for a wide variety of missions to include surveillance, artillery target acquisition, NBC monitoring and laser target designation."

The Hunter is the size of a small single seat aircraft minus the cockpit. It has a flight control box (FCB), which controls all take offs and landings; a ground control station (GCS) from which the aircraft is given all its commands while in flight; and a tracking radar which feeds all of the information from the GCS to the aircraft and also receives the aerial imagery from the aircraft and relays it back to the GCS.

"The training involved to operate the ground control station and the flight control box takes almost two years," said Lamont, FCB operator for A Company 15th Military Intelligence Battalion. "It is my job to launch and land this aircraft safely."

Lamont receives all the same training that a regular pilot receives prior to being able to fly the Hunter.

While Lamont prepares to launch the aircraft, Spc. Joseph Meyers, A Company 15th Military Intelligence Battalion, runs pre-flight checks on the Hunter. He checks the twin 750 cc Moto Guzzie engines and the transmitter/ receiver (payload) system to make sure they run properly. Then he moves the wing flaps up and down. These components control the aircrafts ascent, descent and turning capabilities.

The aircraft is ready for its flight. It's dark now and the crew walks the aircraft down the silent runway, while the FCB crew prepares to launch the Hunter. The engines roar as Lamont taxis the aircraft down the runway faster and faster until it reaches the speed necessary to lift off the ground.

"The aircraft needs to reach a speed of about 50 knots before it can take off," said Lamont. "In the event that the launch needs to be aborted, we have a cable pulled across the runway, which will stop the aircraft."

"The Hunter has no brakes. It relies on a system similar to what pilots use on the deck of an aircraft carrier," said Lamont. "A small hook is dropped from the underbelly of the aircraft that latches onto the cable bringing the plane to a screeching halt, if necessary."

The plane slips into the secrecy of night as it climbs higher and higher and travels farther and farther out of human eyesight. The launch crew turns control of the aircraft over to the

See Hunter on page 14

Safety

Combat Stress Control can help you live healthier

Story by
Spc. Travis Bascom
358th PAO

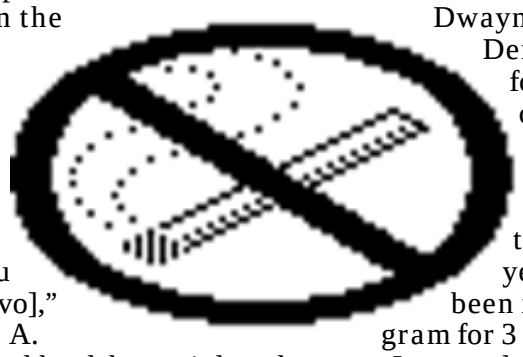
A soldier sits in a chair tapping his foot nervously. He anxiously awaits an interview with a doctor to see if he qualifies to receive the life saving medications that will free him from his illness.

The illness; smoking. The medications; Zyban and Nicotine Transdermal Patches.

For the last five weeks, Combat Stress Control (CSC) workers at Camp Monteith have conducted a Tobacco Cessation Program to aid soldiers in quitting their nicotine habit whether it be smoking or smokeless tobacco. This program has produced a high rate of success among those who continue to follow through the program.

Thus far, up to a dozen individuals in the four-week program have gone without smoking a cigarette for one full month — a success rate of almost 50 percent. An extraordinary success when compared to an average success rate of 25 percent for those who try to quit on their own with just medication. And a 10 percent success rate for those who try to quit without any medication, according to the makers of Zyban.

Smoking causes 19.5 percent (or 1 in 5) of all deaths in the United States. Producing 400,000 deaths per year. It causes a far greater death toll than drug abuse, AIDS, suicide, homicide and motor vehicle accidents combined. According to the American Lung Association, smoking also causes 30 percent of all cancer deaths in the United States.



"This is probably one of the greatest things you can do for your body and mind while you are here [Kosovo]," says Spc. John A. Gaffaney, mental health specialist for CSC.

The classes help soldiers on both the physical and behavioral addictions of nicotine. The classes are conducted by 1st Lt. Darren Hightower, Physician Assistant with the 3-7th Infantry Regiment and Maj. Rosalyn Morris, Psychologist for CSC, Camp Monteith. Together, they teach students on how to cope with the withdrawal effects of nicotine and provide escape ideas for handling such situations.

The success of the program can be attributed to the strong support system that exist in the classes, said Morris. Many soldiers go through the program with a buddy.

In addition, the soldiers gather strength from sharing experiences with one another.

"Thirty seconds after waking up I had to have a cigarette. I was a lost cause," said Pfc. Dwayne A. Trinidad, Dental Specialist for 3rd Logistical Task Force, who had been smoking for the past 11 years and has been in the program for 3 weeks. "A few days ago I wanted a cigarette so bad and I started to smoke one. It tasted so bad. It was nasty. I couldn't finish it."

"I workout a lot more now, and my allergies are a lot better," said Sgt. Brett A. Jadon, with the 3-7th Infantry Regiment, in his final week of the program. "I'm saving about three bucks a day and I'm not hacking up my lungs anymore."

Other stories include soldiers familiarizing themselves with their taste buds and losing what some nonsmokers recognize as an unpleasant odor that accompanies smokers. Soldiers attempting to kick the habit say that cough drops, suckers and gum can help in overcoming the addiction.

New classes start every thursday at 1500 hours in the CSC office located in room 113, Stryker Hall. Participants receive weekly checkups and the schedule is adaptable to meet the soldier's routine.

"We know soldiers are really busy so we make the program as flexible as possible," said Morris, who often visits troops out in sector. She delivers medications and ensures soldiers are continuing on course.

The program currently consists of 78 soldiers and has been growing exponentially in the past few weeks.

There is also an identical program available at Camp Bondsteel, conducted every Wednesday at Task Force Med Falcon. Those wishing to participate can go on sick call and fill out a registration form.

"It's really up to the troops, and when they're ready we're ready to help," said Hightower.

Kosovo gets a face lift

Story and photos by
Spc. Engels Tejeda
358th MPAD

Spc. Nathan Hostetter (left), B Company 37th Airborne Engineers, is assisted by his interpreter to train a TMK member on the D7 Bulldozer. The TMK and the 37th Airborne Engineers begin the construction of Freedom Field July 2.

The "Bushmasters" with B Company, 37th Airborne Engineer Battalion, out of Fort Bragg, N.C., are giving Kosovo a face lift in just a matter of days.

Just one month in sector and the "Bushmasters" are already leaving their marks on Kosovo. Early in July, the airborne soldiers joined efforts with the Kosovo Protection Corps (TMK) to transform a garbage field into a sport center in the city of Gjilan/Gnjilane.

Freedom Field will consist of a soccer field, a basketball court, and a tennis court. It will also be surrounded by a 400-meter track.

The funds to build the field were donated by several humanitarian institutions. However, KFOR and the TMK provided the manpower and machinery for the project.

1st Lt. Carl Wohlfiel, platoon leader with B Company of the 37th Airborne Engineer Battalion, said his soldiers trained the TMK members on the equipment necessary to accomplish the mission.

"We are using the same training methods we use to train new soldiers back at Fort Bragg," Wohlfiel said.

From sunrise to sunset, the "Bushmasters" trained TMK members on how to operate the D7 Bulldozer, the 621 Scraper and the 130 G Grader.

While it was hard work communicating with each other, the soldiers say it was not as hard as it could have been, partly because of the TMK's motivation.

"Communication is the biggest challenge because of the languages," said Spc. Nathan Hostetter, heavy equipment operator with B Company of the 37th Airborne Engineer Battalion. "But they are eager to learn and that makes it easy to (teach) them."

The two groups communicate using local interpreters. According to Capt. Agim Murati, commander of the 30th Engineer Brigade of the TMK.

"Missions like this are important for the people of Kosovo because someday they hope to build their our own parks without the need of foreign help," said Murati.

"This is very important because the training we give them today can help them be ready in the future," said Wohlfiel concerning the Kosovo Force (KFOR) mission: to provide Kosovo with the capability of self-sufficiency.

Plans for the field were started by B Company of the 94th Engineers out of Germany, who preceded the "Bushmasters".

Wohlfiel said the 94th Engineers removed all sorts of garbage from the field to include over 50 abandoned cars. It took the unit three weeks to clean up the site.

The "Bushmasters" are also involved in several other projects. Capable of doing both horizontal and vertical construction, these soldiers are currently building at more sites in sector. They have fixed several routes and began work on paving the roads at Camp Monteith in early July. The 37th Airborne Engineer Battalion is also currently building a sidewalk and a bus station in the town of Pozararje, said Capt. James De Lapp, commander of B Company.

Likewise, the TMK has been extremely busy. Just one month ago they helped build several in-processing sites along the Kosovo-Serbia boundary during the relaxation of Zone B. Three weeks later they built a kilometer-long sewage system at a town near Gjilan/Gnjilane.

B Company's 1st Sgt. Richard Smith said these projects are definitely taking a toll out of his soldiers, but he says they are motivated and see this as one more opportunity to do something for the Kosovo community.

"They enjoy working with the TMK," said Smith. "We are excited about this project because we (will be able) to see the product of our work when we finish."

The field is scheduled for completion in early September.

A soldiers of B Company of the 37th Airborne Engineers trains a TMK member on their machinery. The soldiers are working with the TMK and humanitarian organizations to build a soccer field, a tennis court, a basketball court, and a track as part of the future Freedom Field.

A TMK member operates heavy machinery as a soldier from B Company of the 37th Airborne Engineers observes and trains him. The two groups joint efforts in building Freedom Field in Gjilan/Gnjilane.

Nearly 150 soldiers of the 1st Battalion of the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, out of Vicenza, Italy, jump out of a C-130 aircraft into the British sector of Kosovo, during Operation Rapid Guardian II on July 10.

Reinforcements are just a hop skip, and yes, a jump away

Story and photo by Spc. Engles Tejeda

American troops dropped, "like rain from the sky," into a plowed field near Pristina in the British sector July 10, and marked the beginning of the ten-day exercise called; Operation Rapid Guardian II.

It was a hot day in the outskirts of Pristina, when in the early afternoon four C-130 aircraft appeared on the clear skyline. The first airborne troop jumped off just seconds after the crowd below identified the aircraft.

"We just had about 150 paratroopers exit four C-130's," said Capt. Paul Edgar, company commander with Headquarters Company of the 1-508th Parachute Infantry Regiment.

"We are exercising our ability to reinforce KFOR (Kosovo Force) as needed by the forces here in country," said Lt. Col. Michael Kershaw, battalion commander for the 1-508th Parachute Infantry Regiment out of Vicenza, Italy.

Edgar and an advance party arrived in Kosovo a few weeks ahead to do a reconnaissance of the area. He said the exercise main objective was to show that "KFOR can reinforce itself in just a matter of hours."

"We are augmenting the MNB- Central force and we'll be conducting routine presence patrols and routine searches in the Norwegian and Finish areas," said Edgar.

The exercise is set; and according to Kershaw, his soldiers are ready and determined to accomplish the entire mission.

"Participating in operations like this, where you are reinforcing a real world contingency, is the reason why we sign up to come in the service," said Kershaw. "It's exciting for everybody, lieutenant colonels and privates alike. I think all of us are very excited."

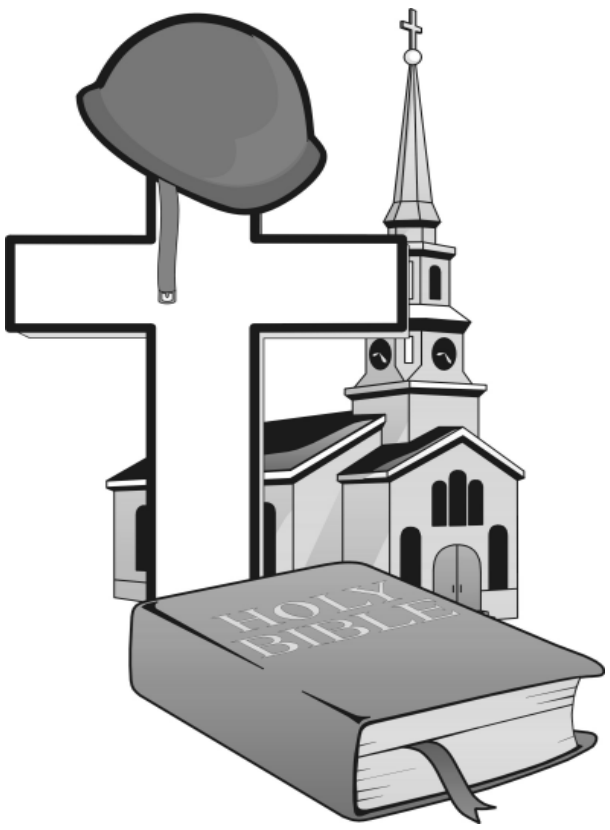
"This was a great jump... and one of my childhood dreams," said Staff Sgt. Melton Terrell, a jump master with 1-508th Parachute Infantry Regiment. Terrell said his team looked forward to carrying on the mission.

According to Edgar, this is the second time his battalion has participated in an operation of this sort in Kosovo; the first being approximately two months ago. The 1-508th Parachute Infantry Regiment falls under a practical reactionary force of the European Command Strategic Reserve Force. They also engage in similar missions in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Slovenia.

A soldier with the 1st Battalion of the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment out of Vicenza, Italy, secures the area just moments after landing at a drop zone near Pristina, Kosovo, during Operation Rapid Guardian II July 10.

Chaplain's Corner

Faith beyond the attack on Pearl Harbor



Story by
Chaplain Leo Mora Jr.
Task Force Sabre Chaplain

With less than five months until December, military historians and history buffs alike will commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Pearl Harbor bombing-Dec. 7, 1941-the day President Franklin Delano Roosevelt declared as a "date which will live in infamy." In many ways he was quite right. And since then, many people have looked back in solemn respect to the day that caught America by surprise, propelling us into what some have called the most traumatic global event of the last century: World War II.

Hollywood's pre-summer release, *Pearl Harbor*, has attempted to capture some of America's most distinguishing moments within the framework of the almost 60-year-old event. This attempt uses Dec. 7 and surrounding events as the backdrop encasing a shallow (but always complex) relational love entanglement among three people caught up in the winds of war. Due partly to time and interest constraints of the Disney producers, Pearl Harbor omits one bit of human history in particular; a poignant and inspiring story of faith in the life of top Japanese aviator and leader of the Pearl Harbor raid, Mitsuo Fuchida.

Born in 1903, Fuchida grew up in a small Japanese village and eventually came to hate the United States, which treated Asian immigrants harshly during the first half of the 20th century. Fuchida later attended a military academy, joined Japan's Naval Air Force, and by 1941, had established himself as the nation's top pilot with 10,000 flying hours behind him. When Japanese military leaders needed someone to command a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, they called upon Fuchida-Japan's best pilot.

Admirals Nagumo and Yamamoto wanted to cripple the American Naval Pacific fleet at Pearl Harbor using the element of surprise. And Fuchida was the one whose voice sent his aircraft carrier the message, "Tora! Tora! Tora!" (Tiger! Tiger! Tiger!), denoting total success of the raid. They took American servicemen stationed at Oahu and Hawaii, completely by surprise. Later, Fuchida was also surprised to learn that, of the 70 officers who participated in the Pearl Harbor raid with him, he was the only surviving pilot among them at the close of WWII. This fact caused him to ponder deeply about his destiny.

By 1945, Fuchida had become Japan's Imperial Navy Air Operations Officer. At that time, he was planning an air deployment of Japan's remaining 500 aircraft against a possible U.S. invasion on his homeland. On August 6, as he was eating breakfast in Nara, Japan, he heard about a bomb dropped on Hiroshima. He flew to investigate firsthand and, in the aftermath, submitted a shocking and dismal report to the Imperial Command.

On the same day, an American P.O.W. named Jacob DeShazer felt moved by God to pray for peace. DeShazer had been in captivity since 1942 when he, as a volunteer bombardier of Doolittle's Raiders, dropped his payload of revenge near Tokyo and then was forced to parachute into China. While imprisoned, first in Nanjing and later in Beijing, DeShazer had become a Christian through reading the Bible. His heart softened toward his Japanese captors. After his release from a Japanese war prison, DeShazer wrote a widely distributed essay, "I Was a Prisoner of the Japanese," detailing his experiences of capture, conversion and compassion.

Fuchida and DeShazer met in early 1950. DeShazer had returned to Japan in 1948 as a missionary. Fuchida had read DeShazer's testimony, bought a Bible, read it, and converted to Christianity.

According to Fuchida's account:

"Right at that moment, I seemed to meet Jesus for the first time. I understood the meaning of His death as a substitute for my wickedness, and so in prayer, I requested Him to forgive my sins and change me from a bitter, disillusioned ex-pilot into a well-balanced Christian with purpose in living.

"That date, April 14, 1950—became the second "day to remember" of my life. On that day, I became a new person. My complete view on life was changed by the intervention of the Christ I had always hated and ignored before. Soon other friends beyond my close family learned of my decision to be a follower of Christ, and they could hardly understand it"

(From Pearl Harbor to Golgotha by Mitsuo Fuchida, 1953).

DeShazer had recently finished a 40-day fast for revival in Japan when Fuchida came to his home and introduced himself. DeShazer welcomed the new Japanese convert and encouraged him to be baptized. While DeShazer continued to plant churches throughout Japan, Fuchida became an evangelist, spreading a message of peace and forgiveness in his native country and throughout Asian-American communities.

Fuchida died just over 25 years ago, on May 30, 1976. Like dynamite inventor Alfred Nobel, who wished his legacy to be one of peace rather than destruction, Fuchida wanted the message of his changed heart to supersede the memory of his infamous attack.

He wrote:

"That morning [December 7] I lifted the curtain of warfare by dispatching that cursed order, and I put my whole effort into the war that followed. ... [But] after buying and reading the Bible, my mind was strongly impressed and captivated. I think I can say today without hesitation that God's grace has been set upon me."

What began as unbridled hatred within Fuchida and DeShazer eventually represented-in the end- something far greater than any one of them could imagine: to experience and leave behind a legacy of love and reconciliation with each other, America, Japan and ultimately with God Himself

It is the land of the free, and the home of the brave! It promises liberty and justice for all! Heros of old died to protect it, and here we stand to keep it safe for future generations. The idea means so much to so many. What does America mean to you?

We are holding an essay contest on the theme:
"What does it mean to be an American Soldier?"

The Falcon Flier staff wants to hear what it means to be an American from you! The winner of the essay will recieve a gift certificate of $25 to AAFES and will have their essay printed in the October 1st issue of the Falcon Flier.
To enter: Submit your 500 word essay, name and unit to the address below by August 31th:

Falcon Flier
HHC, TFF, PAO
Camp Bondsteel
APO AE 09340

Or email us at:

Gary.Peterson@bondsteel2.areur.army.mil

Keeping a close eye on Kosovo, Staff Sgt. Brian Reese, a cavalry scout, watches a nearby town with the aid of a long range surveillance system.

Mission First: Come what may, it is a motto that Cav Scouts live by

Story and photo by
Spc. Maria Jaramillo
358th MPAD

"Mission first".

It's a U.S. Army motto that helped a group of soldiers continue on with their jobs and move past the harsh reality of the danger inherent in what they do.

Sgt. Richard Casini found a Kosovo minefield with a price no cavalry scout ever hopes to pay. While on a two-man dismounted patrol, a land mine exploded underneath his foot, and his life changed forever.

After Casini left Kosovo for home, his platoon still continues to push on in theatre with a job to do. The Cavalry Scouts in C troop of the 1st Cavalry Brigade Reconnaissance Troop still needed to carry out the mission of Task Force Falcon and help stop the flow of weapons smuggled into Kosovo.

"Sgt. Casini will be missed, but this is our job, and this is what we do. Things happen and you've got to drive on with the mission." said Pfc. Robert B. Chandler, a cavalry scout in C troop.

The mission for the scouts includes manning Observation Posts (OPs) placed along the border. Each team goes out for four days and then returns to Camp Bondsteel for a short break before heading out again.

"We don't stay at Bondsteel too long. It gets pretty boring after two days," said Pfc. Joshua Beavers, also a cavalry scout with C Troop.

The scouts cover possible smuggling routes along the border while out on patrol. A patrol was exactly what Casini was out on when he discovered the land mine. The platoon still conducts these missions, and the accident has not delayed their mission.

"We are going to do everything we can to help the people around here. It's going to be hard, but we are just going to have to drive on with the mission and do what we came out here to do," Chandler said.

AFN Radio

AFN Radio can be heard on 88.0 FM.

Special Show hours include:

Balkans Morning Show
6 a.m.-9 a.m.
Country Round-Up
9 a.m.-11 a.m.
80's Lunch
11 a.m.-1 p.m.
Today's Alternative
3 p.m.-6 p.m.

Saturdays:

Balkans Saturday Show
8 a.m.-10 a.m.
Solid Gold Show
10 a.m.-12 p.m.

Request lines are open at 762-5556

Hunter cont....

GCS. They will monitor and control the flight throughout the night receiving its digital imagery and recording this information for operational use.

"This information is also sent, at the same time it is received, to the tactical operations center at Camp Bondsteel and to KFOR (Kosovo Force) main's headquarters in Pristina," said Maj. Kirk McIntosh, Commander A Company 15th Military Intelligence Battalion. "There, the video will be watched and carefully analyzed for Albanian extremist activities along the FYROM border. Multinational Brigade East soldiers can then be routed to investigate suspected areas that are identified by the Hunter."

"The video from the aircraft is clear as if it were daylight outside, yet it's dark. This is because of its infrared camera," said Caballero. "It is very easy to detect movement along possible smuggling routes at night."

"All I can say is that extremists need to watch out, because we can see them," said Caballero.

The Hunter is guided to the flight line to begin another mission.

Achtung!

Story and photo by
Spc. Maria Jaramillo
358th MPAD

Casablanca is not just a black and white movie where the words "Play it again, Sam" ring out above a cloud of cigarette smoke. No, in Kosovo, Casablanca plays a different role. Camp Casablanca in the German peacekeeping sector of Kosovo hosted a barbeque and some fun after what could've been a disappointing day at the range for Task Force Falcon 11th Engineer Battalion soldiers.

The soldiers left Camp Bondsteel around 7:00 in the morning for Suva Reka, a German weapons qualification range. They went to earn the Schutzenschnur Medal and, more importantly, spend a day out with the neighboring military.

"It was something different. One of the best parts was being able to hang out with another

Engineers shoot for Schutzenschnur

military and see how they work," said Pfc. Charles Maxwell, a combat engineer with the 11th Engineer Battalion.

Qualifying for the medal involved qualifying on two separate weapons. The medal standards had to be met with only 15 shots with a German assault rifle and 15 shots with a machine gun.

"I thought it was really neat to try someone else's weapons," Maxwell said.

Before heading out to shoot, however, German safety officials conducted introduction classes on German weapons.

Unfortunately, none of the engineers had the chance to earn the medal that day. After finishing up with rifle qualification, the machine gun qualification was postponed and finally cancelled for the day when paragliders were spotted floating down within the safety zone of the range.

The engineers waited for the paragliders to stop for almost two

A combat engineer works with a German soldier on the separate pieces of a German rifle. The soldier was preparing to qualify for the German Schutzenschnur medal in an multinational service activity at Suva Reka Saturday.

hours. Two safety-warning flares were fired to alert the gliders of their position in relevance to the firing range. The gliders continued, however, and the soldiers finally left for the barbeque at Casablanca.

Even though none of the soldiers were able to come back to Bondsteel with the Schutzenschnur Medal, Maxwell summed up his experience with this:

"It's not really a big deal. I still had the same experience either way."

Photo by Spc. Marshall Thompson

Task Force Falcon soldiers slide down ropes hanging from a UH-60 Black Hawk as part of fast rope insertions training.

CSM teaches Polish/Ukrainian Soldiers about U.S. NCOs

Story and photo by
Spc. Maria Jaramillo
358th MPAD

An army less than two decades old is taking notes from American soldiers. The function and structure of enlisted soldiers in the United States Army was shown to White Eagle Camp, the Polish/Ukrainian (POLUKR) Sector in Multinational Brigade East.

Task Force Falcon (TFF) Command Sgt. Maj. Marvin Hill taught a class to POLUKR soldiers about the development and responsibilities of the Army's non-commissioned officers (NCOs).

"The NCO is what keeps the Army protected. NCOs focus on the individual training of soldiers," Hill said.

The class went over everything that goes into making the enlisted corps function. Rank structure, pay scale, training courses and benefits were covered.

"Our Army is only ten years old, and we need someone to show us how to make it a really good army. I want to know everything about the United States Army, because I want to provide it to my squad. He [Hill] gave us information that we didn't have, and he was very easy to understand," said Polish Staff Sgt. Andy Sharyi.

The Polish soldiers gave TFF soldiers an overview of the POLUKR mission in Kosovo and a display of weapons and vehicles. Polish soldiers stood in the hot sun as the team of TFF soldiers inspected the POLUKR vehicles and weapons. Hill congratulated all of the soldiers on the good maintenance of their equipment.

"One of our biggest responsibilities is taking good care and accountability of our equipment," Hill said.

The class concluded with POLUKR soldiers thanking the TFF soldiers for the visit.

"I hope that the Americans will come out again. They have much they can teach us," said Sharyi.

A POLUKR officer's weapon and ammunition is shown to Command Sgt. Maj. Marvin Hill.

Bradleys Engage and Destroy

Story and photos by
Spc. Engles Tejeda
358th MPAD

Soldiers of Headquarters Headquarters Company, 3-7th Infantry Regiment qualified to operate the Bradley at Ramjane Range July 9.

"Scouts have reported enemy activity in sector; engage and destroy!" The command is clear, and the soldiersHeadquarters and Headquarters Companies of 3-7th Infantry Regiment understand it well. From the technically advanced Bradley fighting vehicle, the crew replies:

"Roger!"

Suddenly, the integrated site unit of the Bradley, with bumper number AC 37, reveals a hostile vehicle approximately 1000 meters away. The Bradley commander orders his gunner to use the proper rounds and to accomplish the mission. Less than 50 seconds later, headquarters receives the report:

"Engaged and destroyed enemy vehicle!"

It's all part of the qualification exercise at Ramjane Range near Camp Bondsteel. Averaging 18 hours in the field and temperatures reaching into the 90s, soldiers of the 3-7th Infantry Regiment eagerly await to qualify on their 32-ton machines.

According to Staff Sgt. Jose Espada, Battalion Master Gunner with the 3-7th Infantry Regiment, the exercise lasts for six days. During this time, the soldiers from all companies of the battalion work on the critical skills necessary to operate the Bradleys.

"Normally, you have to go through Bradley tables two, five, six, seven and eight," said Espada referring to different stages of the qualification process. "Here we are only doing tables six and seven before qualification," he added.

Espada said that crewmembers of the Bradley are required by Army standards to qualify every six months. Because of the current deployment, the battalion is forced to do as much as possible to get the soldiers ready to operate the vehicles, even if they are unable to complete all the qualification stages.

During the exercise, the soldiers are required to "engage and destroy the enemy" from both the defensive and offensive positions. Much like the M-16 qualification range, the Bradley range has pop-up targets About 400-600 meters from the firing line are human silhouettes or "little green rebels" who are destroyed with 7.62 mm rounds. At about 1,000 to 1,400 meters a simulated truck pops up for about 50 seconds during defensive qualification or nine to 20 seconds during offensive qualification.

The soldiers are also required to fire wearing their protective masks to simulate combat during a chemical and biological attack and fire at night. While the hot weather and long hours of work can be tough to deal with, Espada said these things are not the biggest challenge the battalion faces when firing at the range.

"The biggest challenge we have out here (in Kosovo) is preparing the range and keeping people out of it," said Espada. "There are 14 gates around the range that we have to secure... normally, this area is farmland."

Espada said that his team is forced to check the field everyday. He said that air support has to do an aerial inspection daily to make sure that local farmers are not somewhere downrange when qualification is taking place.

The soldiers say that regardless of the challenges, they enjoy the exercise and see it as not only fun, but critical. Sgt. Timothy Romero, gunner with the 3-7th Infantry Regiment, hopes that while in Kosovo he will not have to fire the Bradley, "but it's always good to maintain your skills."

Soldiers fire a total of over 4,800 rounds a day when qualifying. The scenario makes for an atmosphere of war, and sends out a direct message:

"No matter who the enemy is, he must make no mistake – KFOR soldiers will succeed at their mission."

Staff Sgt. Jose Espada, battalion master gunner with the 3-7th Infantry Regiment, inspects the 25mm live training rounds just moments before soldiers of four seperate companies began to qualify at Ramjane Range July 9.

Six Bradleys stand by during a qualification exercise at Ramjane Range July 9. The soldiers spend on average 18 hours at the range.