



Falcon Flier

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Father and son serve together in Kosovo.
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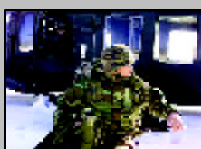
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Spc. Bill Putnam/photo

Sgt. Andre Grooms, a slingload team leader in Headquarters and A Company, 10th Logistical Task Force (10th Mountain Division), watches a CH-47 Chinook with two nets of flour take off for the village of Arren, Albania, Jan. 21st. The 10th LTF delivered almost 40 tons of flour to three isolated mountain villages in eastern Albania during Operation Mountain Relief, a humanitarian relief mission, during a three day period.

Tenth Logistical Task Force and Task Force Dragon bring aid to stranded villagers on Albanian mountain side

by Spc. Bill Putnam
Staff Writer

KUKES, Albania—After battling weather and time for almost a week, a small group of American soldiers helped feed three isolated mountain villages near this town in eastern Albania.

When a major snowstorm hit the region earlier this month, the Albanian government asked the American government for humanitarian relief for these stranded villagers. Three mountain villages in eastern Albania were snowed-in with a dwindling food supply and with no chance of getting help until spring.

The U.S. Government responded with a humanitarian relief operation called "Operation Mountain Relief."

The 10th Logistical Task Force (10th Mountain Division), Fort Drum, N.Y., and the 1st platoon, C Co. 7th Bn. of the 101st Aviation Reg., (101st Airborne Division), Fort

Campbell, Ky., provided the man and equipment power for the operation. A small contingent of artillerymen from 3rd Battalion, 6th Field Artillery Regiment, provided security on the Landing Zones.

"The tasking came down for us to provide some soldiers to come to this location here," said Capt. Michael Rivera, the commander for Headquarters/ A Co., 10th Logistical Task Force, "and rig some flour, and prepare to sling load it forward to provide some relief to some people who need it."

The mission's importance was stated early on by 2nd Lt. Robert Cargel, a platoon leader in Headquarters and A Company, 10th Logistical Task Force.

"These people haven't eaten in almost a week and a half," he said at the briefing. "It's up to us that they get that food."

The plan to bring these villages food was simple, Cargel explained the night before the

mission started.

"We're going to fly from Camp Bondsteel to Kukës, Albania, unload the helicopters and rig the food onto nets," the sling-load platoon leader in HQ/ Alpha Company, said, "from there we'll slingload the food to the towns."

Unfortunately the weather held up the plan. After waiting until midday both Jan. 19 and 20, the mission was scrubbed due to heavy fog.

Monday, Jan. 21, was different. The heavy fog that had socked the area in burned off early. The two CH-47 Chinooks, and one UH-60 Black Hawk from the B Co. 2 of the 10 Aviation Reg. (Fort Drum, N.Y.) were quickly loaded with equipment and soldiers, and then took off for this small Albanian army compound.

Because the sun sets early this time of year, they only had a couple of hours of daylight to work with each day. The small

force of American soldiers went to work. The helicopters were unloaded, six cargo nets rolled out, and small Albanian army trucks loaded with 110-pounds of flour drove onto the airfield. Albanian soldiers helped the Americans stack a total of 13 tons of flour for the village of Arren that day.

After that the Chinooks and Black Hawk took off, and a sling-load crew hooked them with their swinging cargo. With that the Landing Zone fell quiet until the helicopters returned for the flight back to Camp Bondsteel. The Black Hawk would act as an observation and control helicopter for the two, much larger, Rivera said. Chinooks during the three missions.

While the helicopters were off delivering their much-needed cargo, he said this mission is something that his soldiers have relished. As the ground commander for the sling loading and (Please see AID, page 14)

TFF Commanding General

No New Year's resolutions: Using the present of today



Brig. Gen. Keith M. Huber

Webster defines resolution as 'the act of determining.' When I say 'no New Year's resolutions' let me put it in a proper context. The past is history, it's a point in time, it's a source of knowledge and education, and it's a lesson that we can learn from. The future is uncertain, and it's a mystery. Today is now. It is a precious opportunity. It is a rare gift, and that is why I think

we refer to today as a 'present.' So what do you do with this opportunity?

I don't believe in the concept of New Year's resolutions, something that you decide to do on a specific point in time, and typically the joke is that by the end of January all New Year's resolutions have been broken. What I propose to you is that we need to make these resolutions each and every day. Each day, the present of the day gives us the opportunity, the gift, to go through a resolution, this act of determining, of shaping how we can become better human beings and better soldiers.

I would like to challenge you. I want you to take this opportunity that we have while we are deployed to Kosovo. I want you to look at your spiritual health. Take a few minutes a day to focus on what you think is truly important, to improve your relationship with your God, with your family, with your friends, to reflect inward, as to how to be a better human being, and a better soldier.

I want you to challenge yourself, and look critically at your current physical health, possible weight loss, stopping a habit like chewing tobacco, or smoking, all of those activities that potentially diminish your privilege to share time with family and friends.

We've allowed ourselves the opportunity to go

without alcohol during our stay here, so for those of you that are seeing an improved physical condition, based upon decreased alcohol consumption, that's a good news story. Challenge yourself to improve your stamina, your strength and your speed. We have some great physical fitness facilities with the availability of certified trainers. You've got friends who will help you get in shape.

There are many of those here who have available time, which is a valuable resource. If you depart Kosovo without having improved your physical fitness conditioning, your physical health, you can only blame yourself and a lack of discipline, a lack of focus.

So use this "present" of today. Each and every day make that resolution that 'today I will do things. I will make improvements in myself internally and externally. I will be a better soldier.'

Challenge yourself mentally. Use the opportunity to read, to learn a different language, work on your education at the MWR Education Center.

Improve your financial status. Take the responsibility to use the advantages that you have here with the tax-exempt status, with the lack of requirements for expenditures, and get your financial house in order. This is a great opportunity to eliminate some of the stress that comes with the financial burden of paying bills. Get yourselves out of debt. Plan and focus on how you start saving for the future. I've talked to you about the Thrift Savings Plan. There are all sorts of ways for you to secure your financial future. If you sit down and take the time and truly map out where you are, and how you can make improvements.

Work on your friendships. This is a special bond between those of us who wear uniforms, and willingly sacrifice our own personal comfort to serve our nation, to serve something larger than ourselves. You will build friendships here, because you had the opportunity, you had the time; you had the exposure to truly get to know each other. Challenge yourself to be a better friend, to be a true friend, not an acquaintance, but a

friend, someone who will give advice, someone who will listen, someone who will understand, someone who will be there to assist with stress management, the grief

and possible loneliness that accompanies tours away from our family, to help you stand proudly as a productive member of our team here.

Work on your leadership. Be a leader. Lead mentally. Lead physically. Improve yourself. All of the men and women, in TFF who serve in the Army, Air Force, Navy and Marines depend on each and every one of us. You and I have to accept this awesome responsibility of molding our future leaders. We all have the chance here to positively influence people to show them by being role model what is physically and mentally the standard. We all need to challenge ourselves to do this.

So don't think about New Year's resolutions. Don't think about the past. Don't worry about the future. Focus on TODAY. Focus on your resolution every morning when you open your eyes. That today 'I'm going to challenge myself. I'm going to improve myself. I'm going to be a better member of this team.'

Webster in his definition of resolution, also at the bottom of the definition had a synonym. And the synonym for resolution said 'see courage.' And that's what I'm asking you to do. I'm asking you to demonstrate personal courage. To recognize that there are improvements that you as an individual, you as a human being, you as a soldier, you as a leader should make mentally and physically everyday.

There are improvements that all of us should make, and we've got a new challenge and a new opportunity each and every day to do that. This should be your resolution when you wake up in the morning, to take that challenge, to show and demonstrate our personal courage.

Climb to Glory ... To the Top

TFF Command Sergeant Major

Look around: What you can do to make a difference today



Command Sgt. Maj. Ted Walker

You can make a difference, and you have. If you have to ask yourself that question, then look around and pause for a moment. Maybe the answer lies in the quote, "ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." Now is the time to stand up for all that is good, right and just. Look at old glory on your shoulder. It should make you proud that you are part of an institution

that serves others. Around the world the men and women of our armed forces are sacrificing some part of themselves for the good of the nation, whether it's on the night shift or a day shift, standing guard in the cold on a corner, or just being in a certain place in time. You make a difference. You make a difference in the hearts and minds of the people here in Kosovo. You may not hear it said, but you can see it in the day-to-day actions of the people.

Safe and secure are the watchwords, and freedom of movement is what you give. You make a difference to your battle buddy when best friends, and loved ones are so far away. You are the sounding board for the pain, for the joy and the excitement. On point, because of what you do, others share in liberties

that sometimes are taken for granted. Nevertheless, you make a difference.

As positive role models you influence actions, sometimes without saying words, other times in the way you behave. High standards are your invisible sign showing others what right looks like.

Take a look at the little things you do daily that brighten the day for someone else. Just saying 'thank you' or a smile goes a long way in bringing out the best in people. A pat on the back, as a sign of appreciation or approval, makes others stand taller.

You are a member of the Task Force Falcon team. Did you make a difference today? If you can't answer that question, take a look around.

About the Falcon Flier...

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Soldier on the Street

What is your most memorable moment in the Army?



Pfc. Selin Eskandarian,
Ammunition Specialist
HQ/A Co., 10th LTF
(Camp Bondsteel)

“My most memorable moment in the Army had to be the time I spent in the field in February (2001) at Fort Drum. It had to be minus 40 degrees. It was the coldest that I have ever been.”



Spc. Danny Fredericksen,
Mailclerk/Driver
ASG (Provisional) Falcon
(Camp Bondsteel)

“The day that I graduated from Airborne School at Fort Benning (Georgia).”



Spc. Lashundra Mathis,
Military Policeman
TF 504th MP (209th MP Co.)
(Camp Bondsteel)

“Getting off the plane and coming here.”



Spc. Jessica Swann,
PAC clerk
TFF HHC
(Camp Bondsteel)

“Finding out I was coming to Kosovo. I was excited.”



Staff Sgt. Thomas Walls,
S-4, NCOIC
TF 1-30
(Camp Monteith)

“Going to the Audie Murphy Board and getting selected and stationed at the best ROTC program in the nation- Texas A&M University Army ROTC Department.”



Spc. Geoffrey Broms,
PSD
TF 1-30
(Camp Monteith)

“Being a part of the absolute best Bradley crew in the Army . With Staff Sgt. (Patrick) Noling as my gunner and Lt. Col. (Audy) Snodgrass as BC, who can beat us? Battleboars, Hooah!”

— Compiled by TFF Falcon Flier Staff

Commentary

A story for the dinner table

by Spc. Molly Jones
Staff Writer

Everyone in the Army has some story about their career that they will remember forever. It will be told to their spouses, siblings, children and grandchildren around the dinner table many times over the years.

I'm in a slightly different situation than most of you, in that my father and I are in the same unit together. Yes, he and I are over here in Kosovo together, an illustrious father/daughter duo, but we don't see each other often. I'm at Camp Monteith and he's at Camp Bondsteel.

Stories from our careers together will more than likely frequent the dinner table on Sunday get-togethers, usually with varying differences in the tales.

On this one particular occasion, the unit was headed to qualify on our weapons, and only one person knew where the range was located, because it was new. Well, I was going to drive the second hummvee, and dad decided to hop in and ride with me. Why not? I had no problem with that.

It was a cold and wet Saturday in November for us in Alabama, and I wasn't too happy I was missing the Georgia vs. Ole Miss game to lie in mud while sleet hit me in the face. So we were off to the range at a high rate of speed to keep up with the lead vehicle.

As we began to pick up speed, the water that had pooled on the roof began to pour down upon us through the soft-top roof. Once we had handled that problem by pulling on our hoods, we realized how far behind the lead vehicle we were. I sped up because I didn't want to be the one responsible for making the rest of the unit lost as well.

Just as soon as we caught up, we were on a large on-ramp to the interstate, and my door flew open as I was entering traffic at 50 mph. I grabbed the door with my left hand while holding the steering wheel with the right. I couldn't get the door to close, so I just held on to it. Meanwhile, I've got my dad screaming that I'm too close to the guard rail, and now I'm going too fast for this kind of weather!

I continued to drive holding the door, and the windows became so fogged up that I couldn't see where I was going. If you've ever driven a hummvee in the winter, you know how badly they can fog. I wasn't exactly able to reach for at least one hand on the wheel. So, I'm beginning to get a bit nervous simply because I'm in fast moving traffic, holding my door closed, driving with one hand, can barely see through the foggy windows, and the roof is leaking water into my eyes. To add to the madness, I've got my father screaming at me. Of course I began to yell back at him, obscenities no less, enough to make a sailor blush.

About that time he sees that we should be exiting, but of course I can't signal to anyone that I'm going to turn because I'm having to hold the door closed! Once we exited, I knew I'd be able to shut the door at the red light. We approached the light and of course it turned green. The next three lights, same thing! I was beginning to get very upset. My dad knew that, I know, and began to antagonize me like he loves to do. He enjoys pushing people's buttons.

I finally got to a red light, closed the door, wiped the fog off the windows and the water off my face and out of my eyes from the leaking roof. At that point, I don't think I had ever been so furious with my father. I knew if he was riding with any other soldier, he wouldn't talk to them like that, but since it was me, he could.

We finally arrived at the range, and he and I had lanes next to each other. We were still quite mad at each other. We coached each other just like we were supposed to, and both qualified. I out shot him by one, which made me feel a little better. Not much was said on the way home in my car that evening.

When I woke up Monday morning I had no voice. I'm not sure if I just lost it because I was lying on the cold, muddy ground, or because I yelled at my dad so hatefully. My voice was gone for about three weeks. By that time the tale was humorous to us all.

I'm so fortunate to be over here with my father. I know deployments are hard on everyone, including the ones left at home, because I've been on both sides.

I'm sure this deployment will make for many more tales to be told at future family gatherings. Although we are only halfway through this deployment, I look forward to all the challenges we still have left. Those will make for the greatest memories I will have the honor of sharing with my father.

Like father, like son...

Duo serve together in Kosovo

by Spc. Taylor Barbaree
Editor

CAMP BONDSTEEL— When Pfc. Adam Tracy was growing up, he felt he could turn to his dad for anything, even when the situation involved his own undoing.

Presently, at the age of 20 and more than 10,000 miles away from home, the surveyor/draftsman with (Fort Bragg, North Carolina's) B Co., 27th Engineer Battalion (Task Force Tiger) finds himself less than a mile away from his dad in one of the most unlikely places- Kosovo.

"Some of my friends look at me strange when I tell them that I am going to spend time with my dad," Tracy said, when asked how he is planning to spend his spare time. "I feel like I am really fortunate to serve on this deployment with him. It's a great feeling knowing that I can turn to him when I need to talk. I consider him as one of my closest friends."

Indeed, a father-son relationship is special. If you don't believe it, just ask the elder Tracy (Robert), who is the first sergeant of Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment of Task Force Falcon's Area Support Group (Provisional) Falcon.

"I was up for a deployment rotation, and asked if I could be assigned to Kosovo," Tracy said of his departure with his Fort Sheridan, Ill. Army Reserve unit (1st Brigade, 85th Division). "I am grateful to have the opportunity to be here with my son. I have been on eleven deployments during my 29 years in the military, so I understand how difficult they can be on an individual," he said. "While this is a great opportunity to spend time my son, it is always a privilege for me to take care of soldiers."

While there are certainly differences in the pair, most notably the rank interval, both father and son agree that their desire to serve in the Army as helped strengthen their relationship.

"Our time together is limited, but I enjoy it. We usually go down to the MWR Center and play pool or go to a movie," (son) Adam said.

"I am very appreciative of the time that Adam and I have together here," as (father) Robert chimed in. "Because Adam's unit has been gracious enough to allow him to spend time with me. We were able to celebrate New Year's and his birthday. We both appreciate it, and thank them. However, I don't consider myself his first sergeant, and I don't have a desire to meddle in his unit business."

Speaking of strong relationships, the elder Tracy mentioned that his older son, David, also serves in the military as a sergeant with the U.S. Army Reserve's 1st Brigade, 84th Division.

"Anytime you have more than one thing in common, it helps build that relationship. I have always thought of soldiering as a team concept. So you could say in our case that we are a team. I compare our desire to serve in the Army to being in the same college fraternity," he said, as pride beamed from his face.

"We all chose to serve in the Engineer Corps when we enlisted in the Army and we all trained at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri in roughly the same area (of the post), so that is also a common bond that we share."

Another significant, but unusual circumstance about the trio, he said is the fact that July 29th is an important date for the Tracy family.

"Tracy enlisted in the Army on July 29th (2000), and prior to that David shipped out for Bosnia on the same day of the month. The unusualness there is the fact that July 29th is my birthday."



Spc. Taylor Barbaree/photo

ASG (P) Falcon 1st Sgt. Robert Tracy, left, and son, Pfc. Adam Tracy, B Co. 27th Combat Engineers

Adam, stated that his father had little to do with his reason for joining the Army.

"I did it to better myself and earn money to go to college. My goal is to be a civil engineer," he said.

And how does the mother and wife of the Tracy household feel about her youngest son and husband being away

from their home in Naperville, Ill., and serving in Kosovo together?

"She is just glad we are both together and can lean on one another when we need to," Adam said, while his father added, "even though she is unhappy we are away, she takes it in stride. She is the bedrock of the family."

TFF Deputy Commander CMO

Reflecting on African-American heroes of the Revolutionary War



Col. Lawrence Saul

African-Americans to our nation's story. This is, indeed a rich and significant aspect of American history, and deserves retelling. One aspect often overlooked is early Black military historical figures. This chapter of our history is filled with many great heroes; sadly, many are now all but forgotten. I think this is a sad state of affairs, for

those who forget their history are not worthy of their ancestor's contributions. During the course of some substantial research for my masters' degree I found some terrific examples of incredible heroism and sacrifices in the name of liberty. In this column I will focus on the American Revolution.

THE AMERICAN WAR FOR INDEPENDENCE

Like all Americans during the colonial era, Blacks had much at stake in the outcome of the struggle for independence. Clearly, their freedom was their overriding concern. If freed from the imperial power, the same power that enslaved them from the start, the Black man could establish for himself a new place in a new society. It should not come as a surprise that Blacks, both free and slave, embraced the cause of freedom. The contributions of Blacks to our nation's successful struggle for freedom are unmatched in history. Sadly, this incredible chapter in our nation's history is often overlooked. We owe our

freedom, in part, to the contributions of these early African-American patriots.

Beyond a doubt, the first blood shed in the struggle for independence took place in Boston. That blood was from a Black man, Crispus Attucks. The Boston Massacre was the initial event in our struggle for freedom. Patriots had been demonstrating and protesting against British oppression for some time. A strong British Army presence had served to suppress the local protestors, further inflaming the mood of the people. British troops occupied Boston trying to protect His Majesty's agents and tax collectors, enforcing the Stamp Act, Sugar Act, Currency Act, Mutiny Act or whatever indignity King George III imposed on the colonies. Citizens and troops fought each other routinely. Among the leaders of the protests was Crispus Attucks, (1723-1770). Attucks was the son of a freed slave and a Natick Indian woman. In fact, the name Attuck means deer in the Natick language.

The massacre occurred on March 5, 1770. A group of patriots, led by Attucks, attacked a British sentry. This lone Redcoat was an easy target for the protesters; he was merely the target of pent-up aggression. As the incident grew in proportion, a larger British contingent arrived to support the guard. The British troops, after being pressed by a heckling, snowball throwing crowd, let loose a volley of shots. Three persons were killed immediately and two died later of their wounds. The first to fall was Crispus Attucks. He was the first man to give his life for our nation in the struggle for independence against Great Britain. Hence the flame of liberty was lit, ever so tenuously.

History tells us that of the 300,000 soldiers who served in the Continental Army under General George Washington, approximately 5,000 were Black. They fought in virtually every battle of the war. For example, Blacks served as Minutemen at Concord (Please see COL. SAUL, page 11)

Open for business...

TF 1-32 “Chosin” assists in bringing garbage service to Vitina municipality

by Spc. Taylor Barbaree
Editor

POZHARAN/
POZARANJE— A headline on a newspaper could simply state, “The Trash Man Cometh”, and all in this village would be able to relate to the meaning of those words, thanks to the Camp Magrath based 1st Battalion of the 32nd Infantry Regiment (Task Force 1-32 Inf. “Chosin”).

“This is undoubtedly a great day for our town,” said Pozharan/Pozaranje Mayor Fadil Ramiqi, as he and other community leaders accepted ownership of a new garbage truck from TF 1-32 Inf. “Chosin” commander Lt. Col. Robert Nye during a Jan. 22nd ceremony located near the village’s school. “We are also grateful for the presence of KFOR and the relationship we have with (TF 1-32 Inf. “Chosin”).”

“Having this truck will allow this community the opportunity to receive garbage service,” said Capt. John Walton, TF 1-32 Inf. “Chosin”, civil affairs representative, explaining the details behind the momentous occasion.

“Prior to today, the municipality of Vitina received a new fire and garbage truck from the previous

task force (502nd) to begin service there,” he said. “From that point, we began looking at ways to extend service. Hopefully, we can begin working on ways to assist in providing other services to this area.”

Walton said humanitarian assistance funds enabled the previous Marine Civil Affairs Team the opportunity to purchase the new truck.

“We are thankful for the rela-

tionship that we have with this community and with the Univerzal Company (which will handle the garbage service),” Walton said. “One of the requirements of providing them (Univerzal) with a garbage truck is that they had to employ both Albanians and Serbians in their company. They have done that, so we are glad to fulfill our commitment.”

During the ceremony, which

occurred during one of the most sunshine filled days of Kosovo’s rugged cold weather season, Nye gestured toward the presence of the Moon while speaking to the hundreds of residents gathered for the ceremony.

“Some of you may remember the day man stepped on the moon,” Nye said, paraphrasing the words that U.S. Astronaut Neil Armstrong spoke during his moment of triumph, who stated the accomplishment was ‘one small step for man and a giant leap for mankind’. “I believe this dedication is similar, this is a small step for Pozharan/Pozaranje and a giant leap for the Vitina Municipality.

“Thank you for being here today and thanks to all the people who made this day special,” he said, mentioning Samet Dalipi (president of the municipality), Mayor Ramiqi, Zijadin Brahimi (the director of Univerzal), Bafti Lubastani (363rd TMK Commander) and his soldiers.

At the conclusion of the speeches given by Mayor Ramiqi and Mr. Brahimi, the crowd viewed the capabilities of the new truck as it picked up a trash container and emptied its contents into the collection area.



Spc. Taylor Barbaree/photo

Lt. Col. Robert Nye, Commander, TF 1-32 Infantry “Chosin”, second from left, poses with community and civic leaders of the municipality of Vitina in the village of Pozharan on Jan. 29th. Nye, on behalf of TF 1-32 “Chosin” and Task Force Falcon, presented a mock key to Univerzal (Company) Director, Zijadin Brahimi symbolizing the gift of a new garbage truck (pictured in the background).

TFF Commander visits Fort Drum soldiers at Firebase Rock

by Capt. Tyler “Hawk” Sunshine
Task Force 1-32

DEBELDE, Kosovo— This town sits quietly on the southern edge of Multi-national Brigade (East), especially since several feet of snow fell here during late December. Some excitement, however, was added to this normally serene setting, as the new year kicked off with an unexpected visit for the soldiers of 1st Platoon, B Co., 1st Battalion of the 32nd Infantry Regiment (Task Force 1-32 Infantry “Chosin”), who perform missions here daily.

During the first week in January, Task Force Falcon Commander, Brig. Gen. Keith M. Huber, visited Firebase “Rock”, which is an outpost in the mountains bordering the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The visit was part of a tour of outlying bases in MNB-(E).

After arriving at Firebase “Rock” by helicopter, Huber set out on patrol with the soldiers of 1st Platoon, to see the village of Debelde first-hand.

During the patrol, soldiers shared their impressions of the



Capt. Tyler “Hawk” Sunshine/photo

TFF Commander, Brig. Gen. Keith M. Huber, second row (center) with soldiers of 1st Platoon, B Co., at Firebase Rock during January.

village with the general. Staff Sgt. Christopher Jacob of 1st Platoon, B Co. Task Force 1-32 Inf. “Chosin” spoke about his impression of the village.

“Debelde is a town faced with a number of challenges such as employment, transportation and refugees,” Jacob said emphasizing the importance of Bravo Company’s

mission. “I think our involvement here plays a crucial role in providing the necessary security and allowing the community to develop.”

For the soldiers that accompanied Huber, the mission wasn’t business as usual; “I didn’t really expect a General to come out of Fire Base Rock,” said Pfc. Jason Koenighaus, excitedly.

“It was squared-away to go on a patrol with a general,” added PFC Arthur Brantley from 1st Platoon.

The visit was not a big surprise for 1st Lt. Nick Brandi, the OIC of Firebase Rock.

“VIPs visit (Firebase “Rock”) frequently to learn about our interaction with the Macedonian Army and our missions along the border and are always amazed by the panoramic view of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,” he said.

Whatever the perspective, the end result was the same: soldiers had a chance to meet their senior leadership and the TFF commander had a chance to perform a daily mission with soldiers.

Members of 490th Civil Affairs look back on experiences in Kosovo

by Spc. Bill Putnam
Staff Writer

CAMP MONTEITH— One instant sticks out in Staff Sgt. Derek Calero's mind about his deployment to Kosovo.

His civil affairs team drove through the village of Bostane a couple of days after they had given some clothes to a local leader. One little girl in particular stood out in Calero's mind, even now that a couple of months have passed on. She wanted a pair of earmuffs the day the clothes were passed out.

"Little earmuffs," he called them.

They were given to her and "a couple of days later we drove by, and she had them on her head," he recalled.

As they approach the end of their tour in MNB East, a civil affairs team from the 490th Civil Affairs Battalion, an Army Reserve unit from Texas, and two of their translators sat down at this camp's cappuccino bar to talk about how things have gone.

In not so many words, they talked about the good, the bad, and the ugly of their deployment.

Calero is the noncommissioned officer-in-charge of a civil affairs team based here. He, team chief, Maj. Robert Broussard, and two other soldiers, Sgt. Paul Anderson and Spc. Ron Wistrom, drive all over the Novo Brdo Opstina, talking with village and town leaders. Val and Betty, the translators, go out with them. Without them, the team's job would be impossible. They've both been with KFOR since the beginning, and have the broad range of experience that only someone staying on here can acquire.

Sometimes the team's work can be frustrating. But they don't complain. They've enjoyed their time here.

Anderson and Wistrom have different, but similar, memories than Calero's that will mark their deployment.

For Wistrom it's building a friendship with a young child in Novo Brdo who seems to know his humvee from a distance and calls his name out as he drives by. For Anderson, it's having snowball fights and building snowmen with children in Gornji Makresh.

Both Val and Betty's memories of the last two years have been the significant steps forward in Kosovo. It used to be that there weren't any Serbs from the surrounding towns walking through downtown Gjilan. Nearly three years later, Serbs are walking around downtown, said Val.

"Most people probably don't know they are Serbs," he said.

Some Serb and Albanian politicians have even started to talk to one another without the presence of



KFOR or non-government organizations, said Betty.

"That's a good thing," she said. "Things are getting back to normal."

But for all the good things that they've seen, challenges remain.

For Calero, the biggest disappointment was not getting a new fire truck for town of Novo Brdo.

"The team worked on it and worked on it and worked on it," he said. They had assistance from NGOS and "it just fell through. That was a big let down."

But despite that let down, the team did deliver a new garbage truck, and 25 garbage bins for Novo Brdo.

Calero said that Novo Brdo was a town "that really needed a garbage facility, garbage bins, and garbage trucks. The team worked on it and that got done."

The challenges that Val and Betty face are different. Every six months or so, a new group of people show up. A new set of rules, a new way of thinking, and a new set of friends come and go.

"You know, people are just coming and going, it repeats itself. We make friends, we lose them," Betty said. New faces are nothing new for her. She first started working with Airborne units in Vitina, and then moved on to working with armor and infantry units out of Camp Monteith. She recently started to work for civil affairs teams. "Others come, then we lose them again. It's a little difficult but it gets interesting and challenging."

Because she's worked with high tempo units like Task Force 3rd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, or armor units like Task Force 1st Battalion, 37th Armor Regiment, she's noticed the different mentality of CA teams. TF 3rd of the 504th Para and TF 1st of the 37th Armor have previously served in Kosovo.

"They seem to be too tame for my taste," she said

laughing. "I was with other kinds of teams—tankers, airborne—so we had different missions in the past. These missions are more peaceful... it's a big difference, but it's interesting anyway."

Dealing with the politicians from the different towns in the team's Area Of Responsibility has been Broussard's biggest challenge. He said it was hard to talking to them at first, but they've made progress for follow-on units.

Getting the different ethnic groups "to work together has been a real challenge," he said. "But... it's gotten better. So we made progress."

"I've seen more cooperation between the mayors in the village. I've definitely seen more cooperation," he added. Both ethnic groups didn't work together for political reasons for the 10 or 15 years before and just after the war,

according to Broussard. He added the biggest obstacle remaining is overcoming the mindset of noncooperation.

"It's a mind set... it's going to take time, lots of time," he said.

Getting used to the cold winters here in Kosovo can be challenging enough. For Calero, a native of New York but resident of Texas, the cold seemed unbearable.

"For myself, the change of climate," he said was his biggest challenge here. "The heavy snow, the cold."

He hasn't been in New York since 1989 and everywhere he's deployed to in the Army has been "hot."

At some point the conversation drifted to home and what they looked forward to most. Reuniting with loved ones and just being home tinkering around the house, even painting picket fences came up.

"Well, I'm looking forward to heading home and getting back together with the wife," Anderson said. He and his father have plans to tile a floor in his house. But Anderson and his wife have a bigger project.

"(We'll) eventually pick up where we left as far as adopting a child, kind of get things going again," he said.

It's all part of a larger share of the American Dream that Anderson and his wife want. The white picket fence, apple pies baking in his kitchen oven, two cars in the garage and, "two-and-a-half kids, you know?" he asked.

Even though Kosovo is Val's home, he expressed the same goals. His dreams are like Anderson's.

"Get married, build a house, finish (my) college degree, and buy (a) car," he said.

With that, the conversation started to end, but Anderson wanted to say one more thing.

"By the way, that apple pie will be made from scratch," he said with a smile.



TFF NCO/Soldier of the Quarter

Staff Sgt. Kevin C. Smith, B Co., 10th LTF, second from left, and Spc. Cassandra M. O'Neil, 209th MP Co. (TF 504th MP), second from right, were honored as the Task Force Falcon NCO/Soldier of the Quarter during a ceremony held at the North Town DFAC on January 26th. Both Smith and O'Neil were presented with Army Achievement medals and a TFF Coin by TFF Commander, Brig. Gen. Keith M. Huber (pictured far left). They were also presented with a complete Army PT uniform compliments of AAFES. Command Sgt. Maj. Ted Walker, TFF Command Sergeant Major, joined Huber in presiding over the ceremony (caption and photo by Spc. Taylor Barbaree/131st MPAD).

TFF Falcon HHC builds land navigation course

by Spc. Molly Jones
Staff Writer

It is nothing new that KFOR gives classes to TMK soldiers that enhance their search and rescue skills, but Task Force Falcon 10th Mountain Division Headquarters and Headquarters Company, out of Fort Drum, N.Y., went a little further than expected when asked to give a session on land navigation.

The TMK had already received some instruction about land navigation from a previous rotation, but wanted to know more, so HHC went as far as constructing a land navigation course which opened Jan. 23.

The course serves dual purposes, explained 1st Sgt. George Bealonis, Task Force Falcon HHC first sergeant. "We put it out so all U.S. troops can utilize it, as well as the TMK soldiers. Once we are gone, they can continue to teach others the skills they have learned on the course we built them."

Also, TFF has "a lot of soldiers that are passing the promotion board over here in Kosovo, and they need PLDC to actually keep their sergeant stripes on," said Bealonis. When they actually go through the land navigation course at home for PLDC, they will definitely be successful if they do

well here, he explained.

"The course is shorter and smaller, less area to work in, but more challenging because of the terrain and all the extra gear our guys have to wear that is not required at home," said First Lt. Joseph Evans, HHC 10th Mtn. Div.

The course took a total of a week to put together with the help of Bealonis, Evans and the rest of the headquarters company. They got engineer pickets, along with plywood to make signs, and ventured out to plot all the points to put on the map. "From there we set out breaking it down into different lanes for each team to go through," explained Evans.

The course not only has day lanes, but night lanes as well. It is broken down into different sections because some areas are too dangerous to go through at night, according to Evans.

"The terrain here is very tricky. This course will be a tremendous help to the TMK, and help our soldiers preparing for PLDC shortly after redeployment," said Bealonis.



Spc. Molly Jones/photo
First Lt. Joseph Evans, TFF HHC, hands over to TMK soldiers a map, compass and other accessories needed for the land navigation course they built for the TMK soldiers to train on.

"They all did a fantastic job setting up this course. I think it's one of the most difficult courses I've ever seen, simply because of the rough terrain. Everyone will benefit greatly from it," said Command Sgt. Maj. Theodore Walker, TFF Command Sergeant Major.

MARCH IS WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



Writing Contest

Essay or Poem

THEME: WOMEN

RULES:

1. Word Limit: 800 on 1/2 x 11 papers
2. Must be written on word processor - double space
3. Include name, rank, unit, SS #, address, telephone and e-mail on cover page. **SSN only** on all other pages.
4. Must be an original writing
5. **Entrée must be at CBS MWR (South) no later than March 10th**
6. Eligibility: Military Personnel, DOD Civilians and Contractors

IDEAS:

- Opinion of Women in the Military
- Woman/Women who influenced your life
- Women in Politics
- A Woman's Place
- Etc.....

AWARDS:

First place entry will be published in the "Stars and Stripes" First and second place entries will be published in "The Falcon Flier". All participants will receive an MWR T-shirt.

For more info call Lillian Quehl at 781-3198.



Texas Two Steppin'

Capt. Charles DeVinner, information officer, 131st MPAD (Alabama Army National Guard), right, was solicited as a dance partner to one of the U.S. Air Force's *Tops in Blue's* performers, during one of the group's country musical selections. *Tops in Blue*, comprised of Air Force personnel, put on a two-hour show entitled "The Magic of Music" at the Camp Bondsteel theater Jan. 25th for TFF servicemembers. The event was sponsored in part by the KFOR MWR office (caption and photo by Spc. Taylor Barbaree/131st MPAD).

Relaxing in the city that g

Journalist pens his experiences of Sofia, Bulgaria

by Spc. Terry Boggs
Staff Writer

A swirling fog had settled over the land. Assembled at Camp Bondsteel Theater, teeming with anticipation, sat 118 soldiers, all in civilian clothing. As the fleet of buses pulled up, preparing to take us away, we could feel excitement in the air. Our destination: Sofia, Bulgaria, for a 4-day FMPP trip.

A delay in departure did nothing to hinder our spirits, as we boarded our respective vehicles. All sharp objects were taken from us, to be returned to when we get back from our trip. We took our seats and the adventure began.

The ride to Sofia took about seven hours, during which we all engaged in our own activities. Some read, some slept, others looked at the scenery out the window. The fog followed us for a while, and then mysteriously dissipated. As the hours went by and Sofia came closer, the air in the bus became more restless. We were ready to arrive.

Upon our arrival at the Hotel Rodina, we stepped off the bus and collected our gear. We were relaxed from the ride, but ready to roll. The hotel loomed over us as we entered, and there were staff people waiting, and eager to help us. There were also friendly MPs on hand to show us where to go next.

The Rodina is the tallest building in Sofia, standing a majestic 22 floors up. The staff was efficient and friendly, as we quickly discovered. The bellboys were helpful on where to go, there was plenty of hot water and the hotel food was fantastic. Our hotel had its own bakery, which made bread and pastries on a daily basis. Each restaurant inside the hotel has its own kitchen, and the staff works overtime to prepare some of the finest dishes available in Bulgaria. A pasta restaurant will also be opening inside the hotel in the near future.

Rooms are available in singles, doubles, and apartment suites. The soldiers of KFOR enjoy rooms which, though are simple, are clean and nicely sized. They include a bathroom, with soap, shampoo and a bathtub in every one. They also can make accommodations for spouses to visit. I was told there are almost always single rooms, in case you want some privacy.

The price of the room includes free access to most of the hotel facilities. There is a large, clean swimming pool, workout room, sauna, large jet pool tub, ping-pong, darts, and plenty of seats to stretch out and relax. For a nominal charge, they also offer a tanning bed, professional massages, and an Internet center. They also offer room service.

For the skiers, there is now a Bulgarian ski trip available, with transportation provided to and from the hotel. I do not have the full information on the ski center, but I did bring back some brochures. Call at 5200 or stop by the PAO for one. It is all written in Bulgarian, but it has great pictures of the resort on it. I only brought a handful, so if you are serious and want



Spc. Terry Boggs/photo

Sofia is an ancient city, with many beautiful buildings and plenty of things to see and do.

one, you should call as soon as you can.

We went upstairs, were briefed, and given our rooms. Those of us with less patience sampled some of the local beverages while we waited. A bottle of local beverage costs 2 Lev (or about one dollar) at the lobby bar. Some of the mixed

beverages ran 20 Lev, or about ten dollars.

After the formalities, we were released to do our own thing. I chose to dine on the 22nd floor at an exquisitely decorated restaurant with a refined ambience. The meal was delicious, and despite the lush surroundings, reasonably priced. The view of Sofia at night outside the window was gorgeous. Lights shown from office buildings, homes and factories as the night sky revealed a display of stars, and the lack of foggy weather allowed us to view the panorama of the city at night.

After a fabulous dinner our group was aching to see some of Sofia, so we ventured downstairs and had the bellboy summon a taxi. Some of the other soldiers were already relaxing in the comfortable chairs in the spacious lobby and were enjoying beverages of their own. The ground floor of the hotel was large and ornately decorated. The reception desk was round and brass-colored and somewhat busy for 11:30 at night.

The cab arrived shortly thereafter and we climbed in. Though the driver did not speak much English except 'dollars' and 'quickly', we were able to tell him where we wanted to go. Most of the destinations in Sofia are within a certain radius, and should not cost more than 5 lev, or about \$2.50. Tips are, of course, not included but should be offered.

The cab ride was short and enjoyable.

During our briefing, we learned of more than 2-dozen places where we were allowed to go while in the city. There were several restaurants, Irish pubs and casinos there, as well as other establishments that provided varied forms of entertainment. (The hotel casino is closed for now, but there are others in the area. The Princess was a good place to go.) Most places inside the boundary were allowed by KFOR policy to visit.

Everybody had gone their own way, but we were all required to return and sign in by 3 a.m. Although we had not departed until 11:30 p.m., we still had enough time to enjoy ourselves and forget about work.

Breakfast is served every day until 10 a.m., and is included in the price of the room. The morning meal was served in the lovely Winter Garden restaurant and included wonderful cheeses, delicious pastries (baked fresh right in the hotel bakery), and other delectable items. It redefined continental breakfast, as we know it, and took it to a higher level.

After breakfast we went shopping and had blast. We took a taxi to the underground mall, a kind of flea market where you can select from a variety of different items, from clothing to souvenirs and not pay a lot of money for them. Leather goods are cheap, around \$90 for a full-length jacket.

While outside the hotel you may wish to leave your wallet in your room and carry your money in a front pocket. There have been known to be pickpockets around town, and they are said to be very good at what they do.

Sofia is a very old city with a lot of history behind it. There are quite a few historical and cultural places to visit, for those of you who are culturally minded. As we made our way through town, it reminded me of many other large cities I had been in. The streets were laid out in bricks, as many European city streets are. People went about their business, despite our obvious presence, and the fact that we were American tourists.

The streets were full of people, some trying to make a living by getting us to part with our lev. Some played instruments, such as the violin or bagpipes. Others were more forward, coming right up to us and asking us for money. One lady, who I call the 'Pretzel Lady', offered us the opportunity to take her picture, then wanted cash for the privilege to do so. She must have thought she was Cindy Crawford. After we forked a couple of lev over for the pleasure, she offered us a pretzel. I think she made out well.

Dozens of ancient buildings were scattered throughout the city, some as old as 1,000 years. Sofia itself dated back to 7th century B.C., making it more than 2,500 years old. And although some newer structures provided a slightly modern look, there was no denying how long this place had been there.



This statue of Sofia stands guard over the city. It was named in the 14th century.

The name Sofia means 'wisdom' and this city certainly seemed to bear the name quite well. It possessed a certain essence which seemed to convey years of history and gave it a personality all its own.

That evening we ate dinner at Rio's Brazilian restaurant, and were quite impressed with everything we saw and tasted. It was certainly a meal to remember. Afterward, we took in some more of the city at night, and then went to bed for a short but comfortable night's sleep.

The next day was a repeat of the previous one, except I took a camera this time. We tried to get to bed early, but alas we were unable to for some strange reason. Maybe it was because we were having too much fun.

The trip back was about the same as the one out, but it

grows, but never ages

Rio's offers exotic mix of atmosphere and cuisine



Spc. Terry Boggs/photo

the 14th century after the church Sveta Sofia.

didn't seem as long. I was tired, but felt refreshed. I reflected on the past few days and all I had experienced. I wish it could have lasted longer, but duty called.

As we arrived at Camp Bondsteel, I was amazed at the different weather. We went from sunshine back to fog again.

If you are thinking about going, whether to relax and read a book in your room, dine at fine restaurants, or just have a plain old good time, this trip offers it all and is highly recommended for everybody. You will not regret it.

For more information about the Sofia trip, call Waverly Tynes at 4217. For information on the hotel, you may wish to visit their website at <http://www.rodina.bg>. For more pictures of the Hotel Rodina and Rio's, see the TFF website at <http://www.tffalconhqsaure.amy.mil>

by **Spc. Terry Boggs**
Staff Writer

SOFIA, Bulgaria— Welcome to Rio's. Your evening begins with a delicious, fresh salad in an exotic atmosphere. You are then served wonderfully cooked meats by friendly, efficient waiters, whose sole purpose in life is to make you happy. During dinner, you are entertained by live guitarists, and brought as much as you care to eat. After dinner you are offered cigars and brandy, while live dancers perform for your pleasure.

No, you are not in South America, and you are not dreaming. You are in an authentic Brazilian Restaurant, a place where fine dining meets impeccable service, and everybody there works to make your dining experience the best ever.

Rio's, located in downtown Sofia, is a must-visit on your FMPP trip this rotation. From the moment you enter the door you are greeted by a friendly staff who will show you to your table, pull your chair out for you and provide almost immediate service.

You are offered a menu, from which you can choose one of several dishes, including what would seem to be a meat sample platter. A complete bar provides you with most anything you desire to drink. You are then invited to sample the fresh salad bar, which features such mouth-watering items as Bulgarian cheese and Greek black olives.

Once you finish your salad, your plates are quickly cleared and the first course of meat is brought out. Do not be shy, take as much as you like, but remember, there is plenty more coming. At least six to eight different kinds of meat are served, including duck hearts and babyback ribs. All are grilled to perfection.

During your meal, you are treated to music by live guitar players, who will come perform at your table for your enjoyment.

After you finish your entree, as you sit and poke at your belly, you will notice a humidor containing Cuban cigars being brought to your table and offered to you. If you accept, you will enjoy a unique show consisting of the lighting and placing of the cigar in a snifter of brandy, then into your mouth. You never have to touch it, except to enjoy.

Then, as if this were not enough, you will then be entertained once again; this time by a small band of Cuban dancers. The dress is exotic, as are the dances they perform. If you are lucky, one of them may actually invite you to come join them in their dance.

As a dining experience it was incredible. And the cost? Your basic dinner: about \$12. Cuban cigars started out at \$20. Exquisite service: included free. All entertainment: also free. Enjoying possibly one of the best meals of your life with good friends: absolutely priceless.

— *Editor's note: The following commentaries were written by TFF's webmaster and Falcon Flier staff writer Spc. Terry Boggs during his four day FMPP to Sofia, Bulgaria.*



Spc. Terry Boggs/photo

Soldiers enjoy a meal at Rio's Brazilian restaurant located in downtown Sofia.

Finally some answers to your tax questions

by Pfc. Tiffanie Tribble
TFF Legal Office

When I was first told I had to file a tax return with the I.R.S. I immediately pictured people dressed in dark clothing, coming to sell all of my prized possessions and selling my home to the highest bidder. I became so terrified by this nightmare I created in my mind, that I had become overwhelmed and intimidated at the thought of filing a return on my own.

Tax season can certainly be a frustrating time, and even more so for many of the younger soldiers, who may be filing a return for the first time. How do you figure out how much income you have earned, what types of income to report, which forms to use, or even if you have to file a return in the first place! There are answers out there. The Tax Center, Bldg 1340A in the Legal Assistance Office, located at Camp Bondsteel, is equipped with trained tax volunteers, and plenty of resources to get answers to your questions. Each unit has an officer at each of its company levels that were designated as your first point of contact for any questions that you have, and insure that you have all the paperwork necessary to file a return at the Tax Center.

The following are answers to some commonly asked questions to get you started.

Q: Who must file taxes?

A: To determine whether or not you must file a return, use the chart below. First find your filing status at the end of 2001, if your gross income (all taxable income in the form of money, goods, property, and services, even if earned outside the United States) is equal to or more than the amount shown for your status, then you must file a return.

Q: What is my filing status?

A: Each filing status is listed in the chart on the right. It is crucial that you understand and choose the correct filing status. Each status is taxed differently. To insure that you are not paying unnecessary taxes, please read the following carefully:

You (the taxpayer) are considered to meet the qualifications of each filing status if on the last day of the year the either of the following bullets applies.

1. Single.

-You were never married.

-You were legally separated, according to state law, under a decree of divorce or separate maintenance.

2. Married filing a joint return.

-Married and live together as husband and wife.

-Live together in a common law marriage recognized in by the state the where you now live or where the marriage began.

-Married and live apart but are not legally separated.

-Separated under a under a interlocutory (not final) divorce decree.

-Spouse died during the year and you have not remarried.

3. Married filing a separate return.

(Taxpayers can choose to file separate return even if one spouse has no income)

4. Head of Household

You must be single (divorced, or legally separated)* and have paid more than half the expenditures necessary to upkeep a home, if it is considered to be the main home. (If you are married with dependent children, you may also be able to file under the head of household status). *

5. Qualifying Widow (er) with Dependent Children

In order to file under this status, your spouse must have during 1999 or 2000 and you have not remarried before the last day of 2001, and would have been entitled to file a joint return for the year of the spouses' death and have a child that qualifies as your dependent for the year.

You must also have contributed more than half

Filing Status	You must file a return if your gross income was at least:
Single	\$7,450
Married filing jointly	\$13,400
Married filing separately	\$2,900
Head of Household	\$9,500
Qualifying Widow(er) with dependent child	\$10,500

This chart only applies to most people under the age of 65, who cannot be claimed as a dependent on another persons return.

the cost of the upkeep of a home that the dependent child resided in the entire year.

Q: Who can be claimed as a dependent?

A: Claiming someone as a dependent on your tax return entitles you to an exemption for that person, which lowers your taxable income. There are two types of exemptions: personal and dependent. The exemption amount for both is the same: \$2,900. However, different rules apply for each exemption.

You may claim the personal exemption for yourself, as long as you cannot be claimed as a dependent on someone else's return. In this case, you cannot claim the exemption for yourself, even if the person who could claim you does not exercise this right. You may also be able to claim your spouses' personal exemption. As long as your spouse cannot be claimed on someone else's return and you were married before the last day of the year. Your spouse can longer claim their own exemption even if they file a separate return.

To claim someone as a dependent you must answer these questions.

1. Is she/he a member of my household?

This person must have lived with you the entire year or be of blood relation to you.

2. Was he/she for any part of the year, a U.S. citizen/resident or a resident of Canada or

Mexico?

A child is usually considered to be a resident of the country that the parent resides.

3. Can he/she file a separate return?

You cannot file a joint return with this person only to claim a refund, if they could file separately and not incur any tax liability.

4. How much gross income did he/she earn in 2001?

You cannot claim someone who grossed or exceeded the exemption amount.

5. Did I provide more than half of his/her total support this year?*

Compare your total contributions to the entire amount of support he/she received from all sources. If you provided more than half of the total support, and you met all the previous requirements, then you may claim this person as a dependent.

Where can I find more information?

www.irs.gov is overflowing with information, as well as the current years federal and state tax forms and instructions.

The Tax Center will begin providing simple tax services, to include E-filing, beginning February 4, 2002. Clients will be seen by appointment only. The Tax Center will close on April 15th so plan to come in early and avoid the rush.

* Special restrictions apply.

New DoD system allows servicemembers opportunity to visit pay accounts on-line

by Capt. David L. Gardner
10th Soldier Support Battalion

The Employee/Member Self Service (E/MSS) allows Department of Defense (DoD) to access their pay accounts online 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. E/MSS allows users to review or make changes to their Federal tax information, financial allotments, home or correspondence address, and direct deposit or electronic funds transfer (EFT) information.

One benefit of E/MSS is the ability for all users to view and print their LES online. E/MSS can display

the current plus prior two LESs. In most cases, the electronic LES will be available up to two days prior to the pay date. E/MSS eliminates the long wait for the Leave and Earnings Statement (LES) to see that an action was processed. Operating in a near real-time environment, E/MSS allows users to go back into the system a few days later and actually see that their payroll record has been updated. DoD employees and military members must have a Personal Identification Number (PIN) to use E/MSS.

Visit the Finance Office or the DFAS home page at www.dfas.mil/emss.

Consider TSP for additional retirement needs

by Capt. David L. Gardner
10th Soldier Support Battalion

The Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) began on Oct. 9, 2001 for members of the uniformed services. This was the first period for service members to participate in the program. The window to register closed Jan. 31, 2002. Unregistered service members are able to register during future open seasons. There are two open seasons held each year: May 15 through July 31 and Nov. 15 through Jan. 31. There is also a 60 days grace period for soldiers who entered active duty after December 8, 2001. Members of the uniformed services participate under most of the same rules and receive the same benefits as civilian TSP participants.

KFOR service members may enroll in the program by filling out the TSP Form (TSP-U-1) at their servicing Finance Office. Service members

may elect to contribute basic pay, incentive pay, or special pay (including bonus pay) to the TSP. They must contribute basic pay to be eligible to contribute incentive pay or special pay. The new 2002 Leave and Earning Statement (LES) has areas to reflect the members' involvement in the program. The blocks are located directly above the "REMARKS" area of the LES. The four entitlement categories are: Base Pay, Special Pay, Incentive Pay and Bonus Pay.

There are five different types of funds:

- (1) Government Securities Investment (G) Fund
- (2) Fixed Income Index Investment (F) Fund
- (3) Common Stock Index Investment (C) Fund
- (4) Small Capitalization Stock Index Investment (S) Fund
- (5) International Stock Index Invest (Please see *THRIFT page 14*)

'Greats of the Gridiron' visit Task Force Falcon during MWR morale call

by Staff Sgt. Michael P. McCord
Press Section NCOIC

CAMPBONDSSTEEL—To someone younger than 30-years old, the names might not ring a bell of remembrance. For the little bit older sect of National Football League fan, the names are instantly recognizable. The Dallas Cowboys' Charlie Waters, and the Washington Redskins', Mark Moseley, visited Multi-National Brigade-East's Camp Bondsteel and played host to a night of skill, football trivia knowledge and autograph signing.

"We started on January 9th in Sarajevo," said 'Skins long time place-kicker, Mark Moseley. "We've been to Tuzla and now we're here in the Kosovo area for four days," he said.

The staff of MWR had the Southside Gym decked out with a miniature artificial turf football field, orange pylon cones for an obstacle course and automobile tires hanging from a rope for a passing accuracy contest.

Waters and Moseley addressed the crowd of soldiers who had come to see the former football stars. The men recalled their careers, their personal highlights and shared stories of how men and women back in the states wanted them to tell the soldiers how proud the country was of them.

Charlie Waters spent his career with the Cowboy's knocking folks down from a number of playing positions. His role in the 'D' started as a free safety. A defensive spot he started at for the first few years. Later he played cornerback and his personal favorite—strong safety. "Strong safety was the position I ended up being an All-Pro at," Waters said. "Nineteen seventy-five was a great year for me personally and our team had a really good run that year," he said. "We went to the Super Bowl as a wildcard team. We didn't win it though, —Pittsburgh did," he said. "That was the Lynn Swann game," Waters winced. Swann made several circus catches in that game, which helped, put Dallas away.

Both men looked like they could still strap it up and run onto the field and offered coaching tips during the skills competition. The first contest was the passing accuracy one, in which the participant was allowed three attempts to throw the ball through a tire in the neighborhood of 10 or 15 yards away.

The crowd got into it and cheered each pigskin plinker as they tried their hand at it. They received a gift from the MWR team just for trying their luck.



Mark Moseley, (left) former Washington Redskins place-kicker, and Charlie Waters, former All-Pro defensive back with the Dallas Cowboys, keep the 'Skins and the 'Boy's rivalry alive as they play tug-of-war with an MWR football at the Southside Gym. Waters and Moseley were on hand to talk to soldiers stationed at CBS and helped with football related competitions staged at the gym.

"Looks like you've got a great group of soldiers who are doing a really fine job over here," said Moseley.

Moseley was referring to their professional military skills.

Moseley's career spanned almost 18 years in the NFL. The Philadelphia Eagles drafted him in 1970. "I played with them for a while and later kicked for the Houston Oilers. I started my kicking for the Washington Redskins in 1974 and finished my professional career with the Cleveland Browns in 1986," he said. "I guess my claim to fame is that I'm the only kicker to be named the league's "Most Valuable Player." I guess most of the guys admired that because that's one guy out of 1,600 players. It usually goes to a quarterback or someone of that stature, but in 1982 I had a lot of opportunities to win football games, and so they named me that player," Moseley said. "I feel very honored to have had that," he said.

A talented cast on that team surrounded Moseley. "I played with Joe Theisman, John Riggins, "the hawks" (big linemen), Art Monk and Darrell Greene, —who's still playing," said Moseley. Younger fans will remember Joe Theisman today as an ESPN football personality. "Joe was my holder for 12 years and we got along great," Moseley added.

Nowadays Moseley is busy with a weekly television show in the Washington, D.C. area called, The Redzone Report. It's televised year round. He recently opened a restaurant in Virginia and does client relationship work

with several major corporations in the United States.

Football wouldn't possess the following it has without long standing rivalries built upon the blood, sweat and bad officiating calls. A prime example of an NFL rivalry has been the Redskins versus the Cowboys.

To an armchair quarterback from the old school mentality of anything goes on a football Sunday afternoon, putting two former members of heated rival teams together on the same program would appear to be looking for trouble.

Not in this case.

Both men are easy going and personable, engaging each soldier who approached them with a smile and football talk during the autograph session.

While signing autographs the two looked on as the agility drill competi-

tion was underway. Similar to a backpedal drill; contestants were required to move backwards from one cone and to the starting point and do it faster than anyone else.

"We didn't work that hard in our own drills," Waters laughed as he watched the action. The crowd cheered loudly for each backpedaling soldier as their turns came up.

Football talk filled the air during the signing session. "My most memorable moment was standing on the sidelines after the game in 1977, when we beat Denver in the Super Bowl," said Waters. He had the fortune few get to experience—he played in five Super Bowls in his first eight years with the Cowboys. He retired after the 1982 season and went into coaching with the Broncos for eight years. He also coached at the University of Oregon for a year. He now works with a private company who manufactures power generator stations.

Staff Sgt. Dave Nicholes, 560th Military Police Co. and assigned to ASG, Customs, participated in the trivia contest where right answers moved a contestant five yards toward the goal line in the turf mini-field. "This was great," said Nicholes. Though Nicholes didn't score a touchdown, he wasn't disappointed. "I loved it," he laughed.

Getting to meet a football great up close meant something to these people. "I've heard of Waters before, but I've never had the chance to see him," the Customs soldier added.

(COL. SAUL continued from page 4)

Lexington. A few of those early patriots include: ... Cato Stedman, Cuff Whittemore, Cato Wood, Prince Estabrook, Ceasar Ferritt, Samuel Craft, Lemuel Haynes, and Pomp Blackman. At the Battle of Bunker Hill, Peter Salem fired the shot that killed British Major John Pitcarin of the Royal Marines. Pitcarin was the second in command of British Forces during the clash at Lexington. At least one Black, Caesar Brown, died at the battle of Bunker Hill.

Through the course of American history, the story of the War for Independence rightfully remains preeminent. In song, story, verse and painting, the images of the struggle remain powerful. One of the most significant and famous paintings is the depiction of General George Washington and the crossing of the Delaware River. It is considered one of the most recognized paintings in the world. The painting was the work of the German artist Emmanuel Leutze and was completed in 1851. The canvas tells the single most critical event in our nations history. On Christmas night, 1776, Washington and the Continental Army launched a surprise attack against the British

at Trenton, New Jersey. Besides the father of our country, there are three other famous Americans in the painting: James Monroe, another future president; Henry Knox, the father of the American Artillery; and Prince Whipple, a freed Black man. He is the third man back from the prow, and is seen pulling on the oar at Washington's knee. Whipple was a Black patriot who has become a minor legend of the Revolution. As an early biographer said of him, "Prince Whipple was born in West Africa. He was the son of wealthy parents. When about ten years of age, he was sent by them, in company with a cousin, to America to be educated. An elder brother had returned four years before, and his parents were anxious that their child should receive the same benefits. The captain who brought the two boys over proved a treacherous villain, and carried them to Baltimore, where he sold them as slaves. General William Whipple bought Prince off the block and took Prince to his native New Hampshire where he worked for the Whipple family. The irony here is that General Whipple was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. Prince Whipple was granted his freedom during the Revolu-

tionary war. After the war he settled in Portsmouth, New Hampshire where he died at the age of 32 leaving a widow and children. Today, in Portsmouth New Hampshire, Prince Whipple is celebrated as a local hero.

Whipple was not the only Black soldier to cross the Delaware River with the Continental Army that night. Another prominent freedman served in the ranks that Christmas time, Oliver Cromwell also fought in the battle of Trenton. There is every likelihood that there were more than just these two Black patriots who participated in General Washington's great surprise attack on Trenton.

There are countless Black heroes of the Revolution. They made major, significant contributions to the defeat of the British Army, and establishment of liberty. Sadly, they did not realize their own personal freedom. It would be a long, and often bitter, struggle against many opponents before African-Americans would gain acceptance, freedom and liberty.

Americans enjoy a rich history, filled with heroes who gave their lives for liberty. I trust we are worthy of their sacrifices and that we commemorate those acts.

TF 2-14 Infantry performs dual mission during "Iron Fist"

by Sgt. Jamie Brown
Senior Editor

BAJROVIT, Kosovo— U.S. KFOR units showed their versatility here on Jan. 22 as they performed two missions simultaneously in this small, isolated community. As medical personnel held a MEDCAP (Medical Civilian Assistance Program) in the middle of the village, giving medical care to the local population, members of the TF 2-14 Inf. (10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum, N.Y.) searched the village and its surrounding area, for illegal weapons.

This mission was part of Operation Iron Fist, a coordinated effort which utilized more than 3,000 soldiers from all five Multi-National Brigades, who carried out simultaneous search operations across the province. The intent of the mission was to disrupt criminal and extremist operations in Kosovo.

What made the mission here different from the others in Operation Iron Fist, was that it combined two missions in one, with the MEDCAP and the search.

"We're doing a MEDCAP," said Spc. Christopher Adler, a medic with the 2-14th. "We came out here to do a mission to look for weapons, and illegal activity. And we're out here, also, providing a MEDCAP for these people. It's gone well. We're having a larger



Members of 1st Platoon, A Co., TF 2-14 Inf. patrol the area near Bajrovit, Kosovo. The patrol was searching for illegal weapons during Operation Iron Fist.

Sgt. Jamie Brown/photo

turn out than we expected, which is good."

When the day was over, 34 villagers had their medical needs attended to, according to Capt. Jeff Alden, the provost doctor for TF 2-14.

"We set up an area of operations right here, and brought out our box of medicines, saw the local populace and helped them with minor medical needs," Alden said. "There was a gentleman who had recently broken his leg, and we gave some pain medicine, helped him rewrap a foot, because he was having complications from the cast, and we gave him some medical advice. Unfortunately, we weren't able to take off his cast, but we made sure he'd be able to go in and get some help. We took care of some folks with some colds, and headaches and that sort of minor

medical care. We had one family, in a tough situation with some chronic medical problems, and we're going to make arrangements for them to get hooked up with a regular doctor in the area."

At the same time as Alden and his medics were helping the villagers, soldiers from TF 2-14 were searching the area for weapons, and possible illegal activity.

"We're conducting a perimeter search," said Staff Sgt. Ernest Rodriguez, a squad leader with A Co., 2-14th. "We're looking for weapons caches, and any other items that someone might want to smuggle. That could be used by people to hurt other people, so we're going to find it and confiscate it."

"Today we're doing a perimeter search to search for cisterns and possible weapons caches," said

Pfc. Shawn Staggs, an automatic rifleman, with A Co., 2-14th. "This is my second time out. I enjoy it. It allows us to get out into the countryside, and see some of the area. The importance of looking for weapons caches and demolitions is to prevent racial and ethnic violence. There's a slimmer chance of the possibility of a resurgence of a civil war."

Even though no weapons were found here, several soldiers thought the mission was a success.

"Here I get to go out and help people who really need help,

folks who don't have good healthcare otherwise, folks who don't have access to a lot of things, and we help provide that for them," Alden said. "It's a very nice feeling. It feels good to help folks out. We're able to do some real good, and help some people, and make a difference. We provide things that otherwise wouldn't be provided."

Another soldier, 2nd Lt. Kristopher Skinner, 1st Platoon leader with A Co., TF 2-14 agreed that the day had been a success.

"Even though we didn't find any (weapons) the mission was still useful for several reasons," Skinner said. "We showed our presence, we provided medical care for the villagers, which was a good thing, and we confirmed that there are no weapons in the area."

Soldier's Army career takes him from wrestling to peacekeeping

by Sgt. Jamie Brown
Senior Editor

It's a long way from the wrestling mats of Vermont to the mountain villages of Kosovo, but this is where his journey in life, and a 10-year career in the Army have taken him.

Sgt. Robert Gallipo, 29, normally serves with Headquarters 2-15 Field Artillery at Fort Drum, N.Y. where he is a company fire support N.C.O. However for this deployment in Kosovo, the native of North Clarendon, Vt. and lifelong resident of Rutland County is attached to TF 2-14 Inf.

Gallipo gets a gleam in his eye when he talks about wrestling, a sport in which he excelled in high school, and one he still carries a torch for today.

"I was a wrestler all through high school," said Gallipo. "My wrestling was pretty good, and I even continued wrestling into my Army career. I still wrestle. I just keep my ear open for tournaments that come on post, and I go to everyone that I can. I've won all but one so far."

The former Marble Valley League Champ for the Mill River Union High School Minutemen, Gallipo, was also

the post champ in his weight class at Fort Richardson, Alaska. Gallipo also hinted that his wrestling prowess has helped him in his military career.

"When we practice hand-to-hand combat it gives me the upper hand," Gallipo said chuckling.

Although he takes pride in his wrestling accomplishments, Gallipo said he is extremely proud of being a soldier.

"I like being in the military, and being a step above everybody else, being able to do what I know most people cannot," Gallipo said. "I'm proud of serving my country. All the glory is being a soldier. I wouldn't give it up for anything."

Gallipo also said that he takes



Sgt. Robert Gallipo

Sgt. Jamie Brown/photo

pride in the job he is doing here in Kosovo, one that he volunteered to do.

"I volunteered, because I always wanted to do a real-world mission, and the opportunity struck in Kosovo, so I raised my hand and volunteered for it," Gallipo said. "I've been over here since November 9. I'm basically doing presence patrols, medevacs and I'm usually in the

TOC (Tactical Operations Center) battle-tracking, monitoring radios, making sure everything is running smoothly."

According to Gallipo, his time in Kosovo has been mostly positive, although homesickness does set in

sometimes.

"This tour so far has its ups and downs," Gallipo said. "I mostly enjoy being out in the towns, and mingling with the people, talking to them, getting to know them. The down part of it is just being away from home and missing my family, especially my fiancé Gennifer Alvarez."

As he stood guard at a MEDCAP (Medical Civilian Assistance Program) in the isolated mountain community of Bajrovit, Gallipo said he enjoyed performing a lot of different missions that he normally wouldn't back at Fort Drum.

"These (MEDCAPs) are a lot of fun. You get to meet a lot of people," said Gallipo. "They'll come ask you questions, and you get to mingle with them. It's not exactly my job, but it's a change."

Gallipo has come a long way since his days of pinning opponents on the wrestling mats of Vermont, and although he still enjoys the sport, he has goals beyond collecting more trophies.

"I believe I'm getting old for wrestling," Gallipo said. "My goals are to finish college, go to OCS, and finish my career as an officer in the Army."

Day of basketball brings children of Kosovo together

by Spc. Bill Putnam
Staff Writer

CAMP MONTEITH— Players wearing Spurs, Kings, Bulls and Knicks jerseys run around the court helter-skelter chasing a basketball, swatting, bumping, laughing and panting throughout the short game.

On the sidelines, coaches yell for players to pass the ball, or they call the fouls the referees don't.

What makes this game different is the players. They are from different ethnic groups: Romas, Albanians and Serbs all playing on the same teams.

Sometimes the score of a children's basketball game isn't important. What's important is that the children play together peacefully.

On Jan. 26, 20 children, parents and teachers from Kosovska Kamenica, arrived at the Field House here for an afternoon of basketball and bridge building on Jan. 26.

Marina Jankovic played on the Spurs team. She said she's never played basketball with Albanians until today, but she has played with Roma kids in her neighborhood back home.

When asked if she will play with Romas and Albanians back home, she

replied:

"Yes, I will continue."

Organized into four ethnically mixed teams with a coach and translator, the day started with a free throw contest, a dribbling contest and a three-point shooting contest.

But the day's main events were the two 15-minute games of basketball.

There wasn't a lot of passing. There wasn't even a lot of dribbling. But there was some teamwork among the players. That, to many, was considered important.

"Sport has always been above the politics. Kids don't know the politics," said Yugoslav Jankovic, a physical education teacher in Kosovska Kamenica. "They don't know what the politics is about. What is important for them is the game, sport and gathering together."

Indeed, games like this haven't happened since KFOR arrived here three years ago. Most, if not all, of these kids have only vague recollections of the war that tore this province apart.

Capt. Chris Romero, a team leader with the 490th Civil Affairs Battalion, organized the day with the

help of Jankovic.

"I spoke with the leaders, both the school directors and just emphasized it's important as leaders that they see the idea (like this game)," Romero said. "They see the vision and use that to bring to the two ethnicities together."

"Hopefully there was a lesson learned here today, that was the whole intent."

For those of you wondering, the Kings beat the Spurs 6-4, and the Knicks lost to the Bulls 6-0.



Spc. Bill Putnam/photo

Players from both sides congratulated each other on a well-played game.

TFF Fire Academy prepares recruits for real-world missions

by Spc. Terry Boggs
Staff Writer

CAMP BONDSTEEL—Sitting inconspicuously near the flight line here is a large, metal building. From the outside it looks perfectly ordinary, metal walls, metal roof, it appears to be made just like any other dwelling on the base.

Enter the door and step inside, however, and there is a flurry of activity going on. People are running and calling out orders to one another. Many are gearing up; some are checking equipment. A group of four individuals are already suited up and on their way to their destination.

They arrive, and take their places outside of a door. From underneath the door, smoke billows. The four look at one another, and one of them nods. The one closest to the door opens it, and in finely orchestrated unison, they all enter, single file.

A few seconds later they emerge from the room, carrying a person. They lay the individual on the ground and begin CPR. A few seconds later, a voice calls out and the group get up to prepare for evaluation.

Fortunately, the fire was simulated, and the victim was a stuffed dummy. But for the men and women of the Task Force Falcon Fire Academy, the whole scene may as well had been real, instead of a training exercise.

Fire Academy trainees are serious people on a serious mission. Once they complete their two month course, they will be fighting fires right here on base.

Martin Davila, TFF Fire Chief, was on hand to offer some information about the Department and the trainees themselves.

"You will find ten firefighters on duty, 24 hours a day (at Camp Bondsteel)," said



Spc. Terry Boggs/photo

Fire fighter trainees at the Task Force Falcon Fire Academy gear up during a simulation at the fire station on Camp Bondsteel recently. Trainees serve at CBS and are trained to fulfill all of the normal duties of a regular firefighter.

Davila. "Their work day starts at 0800, and they work up till 2200 hours. During the work day they perform all the training they have to perform, station cleanup, and maintenance of vehicles. At 2200 hours they go upstairs and go to bed, then get up at 0600 and prepare the station for the next shift coming on."

Martin also indicated that there are two structural engines at Camp Bondsteel, each one capable of extinguishing the largest projected possible fire, which happens to be the DFAC. In other words, the dining facility is supposed to be the largest fire that can occur on base, and each vehicle is able to take care of it. Each vehicle can carry 1,000 gallons of water, which would then be supplemented by local hydrants.

Then there is Big Ugly.

Big Ugly, according to Martin, is aptly named and capable of carrying

2,000 gallons of water. Sitting in the station it may look ugly, but it would be a most welcome sight in case of a fire.

Martin also explained how the department is divided up. Each base gets its own group of firefighters, as well as one at the headquarters, located at Brown & Root facilities in Farizaj. This is appropriate, since with the exception of the leaders, all of the men and women of the fire department are Brown & Root employees. The strange thing about them is that none of them have any previous firefighting experience. Don't let that make you nervous, though. Each one of them is a trained professional.

"We deliver world class fire protection," Martin added. "We deliver that through qualified firefighters, experienced inspectors and skilled instructors that are delivering quality and realistic training to highly motivated host country

internationals.

The folks we were looking for had to be between eighteen and thirty-five years old, in good health, and they had to go through a medical examination, and an initial interview. In the initial interview, you had to establish your ability to read, write and speak English."

The test for this was simple, according to Martin. They put the presentation out for them, (in English of course) and at the end of the presentation, they wrote "if you are interested in this position, please stand up." They went through roughly 300 people before somebody actually responded. The reason for this, he said, was you need to be able to understand English quickly so you can follow orders.

One of the unique facets of this academy is the makeup of the trainees themselves. They are a mixture of Serbians and Albanians, two groups that have been involved in civil conflict for many years. Yet everything seemed to be calm as the students went about their business.

Pedro Torrez, Fire Academy Lead Instructor, gave a similar account. According to Torrez, the academy has 16 trainees currently enrolled, six Serbian, two Macedonian, and eight Albanian, and there has been no trouble so far between any of them. This is fortunate for the thousands of men and women who depend on them.

The department's mission is actually twofold. They train the firefighters to put out fires at the different camps in KFOR, and then send them home in the hopes that they will take their experience and training with them. That way, if an emergency develops among the civilian populace, there will be some knowledgeable professionals on hand to deal with the crisis.

So rest easy, but be careful. For though these fine men and women are there to keep us safe, and hopefully we will never have to use them.

Pumping iron

Fitness expert shares views on weightlifting, supplements and ephedrine

by Sgt. Jamie Brown
Senior Editor

He's big, strong and healthy, and if he sees you in the gym using bad weightlifting techniques, there is a good chance he will set you straight. In a weightlifting world filled with misinformation and myths, Warrant Officer 1 Roy Rucker, TFF ACE G-2, SYSCOM OIC, has tried to shine the light of truth on how soldiers can reach their fitness goals.

Rucker, an A-certified personal trainer, certified masseuse and certified sports strength trainer, has been body building and competing in body building contests for almost 10 years. Over this time Rucker has acquired a lot of knowledge about weight training, and he wants to share it with his fellow soldiers.

"God gave us all abilities,"

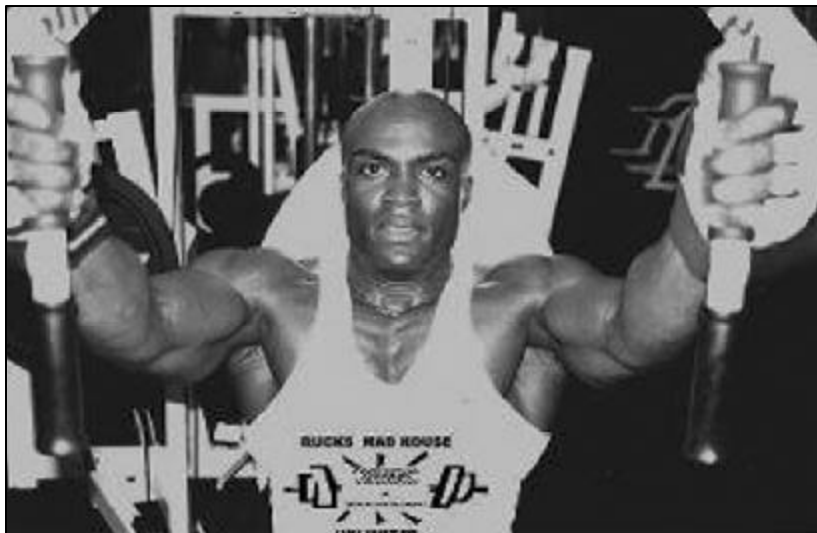
Rucker said. "Your body is only going to look a certain way. Your metabolism, how you're going to perform on a daily basis, what you're going to look like. My thing is, when you see people who want to try, especially in the Army, I feel compelled to help those people out. And that's what I do on a daily basis."

Rucker prides himself in helping soldiers who may be getting bad information from other sources.

"I've seen over the years that there are a lot of soldiers that are interested in weight training and bodybuilding, but they really don't know how, so they read magazines and see different pictures, and want to do the things they see in the magazines," Rucker said. "But the stuff they see in the magazines, only works for those professionals, or so-called professionals, who use drugs. Most of the people in the magazines, that's what they're doing, using drugs to promote supplements, and weight-loss, weight-gain products, which is a billion dollar industry. I'm trying to get soldiers to see that, you don't need to listen to that stuff. You need to get with a personal trainer, or someone who knows what they're doing, and try to learn about your body, because that's the only way to see some kind of gains or improvements."

Rucker has several tips for those starting a weight-training program:

1. Have a plan—"Before you actually pick up a weight, learn what your body needs to do to grow or tone or whatever you want



contributed/photo

Warrant Officer 1 Roy Rucker works out in the gym. Rucker often extols the virtues of strength training to his fellow soldiers.

to do," Rucker said.

2. Use proper form and technique—"Learn proper technique and posture first, which is very important, because without them you can go to the gym and lift tons, and still look like you never lifted weight a day in your life, and you can possibly end up hurting yourself," Rucker said. "Soldiers need to be concerned with correct form. You have guys in the gym who have read a lot of magazines, so they consider themselves professionals or certified trainers, that's not so. I see guys taking advice from guys who really don't know what they're doing, all the time. Those are the kind of people I walk up to in the gym, and actually sit down and give them my credentials, tell them who I am, and explain certain things to them, the correct way to do things, and if they do things the correct way, how they'll benefit from that."

3. Use good nutrition—"Healthy eating is important too," Rucker said. "If you're looking at a specific goal you have to know how to get there, via nutrition, because nutrition is going to allow your muscles, along with the stimulus of weight training, to get where they can possibly go. Because your body has certain limitations, you can only look like your body is going to allow you to look, without steroid use, which I don't promote."

Along with the topic of nutrition, however, comes the topic of supplements, like the kind that can fill an entire aisle in the PX.

"If everyone could eat like they're supposed to eat, they wouldn't need supplements," Rucker said. "If you're an extreme weightlifter or power lifter, and I do mean extreme, getting the maximum pump out of your muscles, draining them of everything that is in them, supplementation is good to restore the protein that you need, the creatine that your body produces naturally to aid muscle recovery. If you're just a normal, average Joe that's in the gym to tone, shape and have a moderate type workout to stay in good physical condition, food will work. Actually supplementation is really not needed. I see those products, and I see soldiers getting them, and you can see the looks on their faces, they're looking for a magic pill, and it just doesn't happen that way. Those products will work for you if your body needs it, but if your body doesn't need it, then it's a waste of money."

One supplement that has been the topic of a lot of discussion lately is ephedrine. Several products containing ephedrine were pulled from the shelves of PXs located in Kosovo, after it was determined that the supplement was a contributing factor in the injuries of several servicemembers.

"The thing about Ephedrine, it is actually a derivative of the actual ephedra plant," Rucker said. "It's been pulled, because there have been a lot of incidents lately of people using the product and not being educated about it. You can go in and read a magazine

and see this wonderful product containing ephedra, and say 'I need to tone up and get all ripped up.' So you go buy it. You read the minimum dosage on the back, and you start taking it. I would tell soldiers, before you buy any weight-loss, or dietary type product, containing ephedra or anything else, you read the label, before you buy it, you put it back on the shelf, you get out of there and go do some research on the product. Find a personal trainer or physician and ask them about that product, and the ingredients that are contained in that product. Or go to the FDA website and they will explain all that stuff to you. Once you educate yourself, go back and talk to the physician, and you find out if you have any kind of health problems, i.e. heart condition, high-blood pressure, asthma, or anything that might cause any kind of adverse

reaction when you use that product. That's the thing that a lot of soldiers aren't doing. They're not trusting the health and medical system. They won't go see the physician to find out: is it okay for me to take this product?"

I've been taking products that contain Ephedrine for about nine years, I haven't had any adverse affects whatsoever, and I contribute that to education. I've seen soldiers pass out from using the product; they'll take it and then go overexert themselves. It does give you more energy than you could probably ever want, and you use it, not knowing you have high blood pressure, or a heart problem, and the next thing you know, you're on your back. I've seen heart conditions and kidney failure. I've actually witnessed two people die from it, from misuse. If they had been educated they would still be alive."

If soldiers have a question about weightlifting Rucker said they should feel free to contact him on the global e-mail here, or via his website "rucker's relics.com. Rucker said that he wants to share the joy of weightlifting with his fellow soldiers, because it has meant so much to him.

"Working out promotes a healthy lifestyle," Rucker said. "It helps you feel better, makes you look better, and we as soldiers need to be in the best of shape. That's why I'd recommend weight training, because it promotes muscle strength and growth. It makes your whole life better."

(AID continued from page 1)

landing zone operations, Rivera said this mission makes his company's time worthwhile.

"To see our soldiers doing their mission, they feel a lot of pride, and I take a lot of pride seeing my soldiers work hard and getting the mission done," he said. "They're doing what their nation's called upon them to do."

(THRIFT continued from page 10)

ment (I) Fund
All service members are enrolled in the G Fund initially, but may reallocate funds and monitor their fund status on-

Wednesday was no different with fog grounding the flight from Camp Bondsteel to here, until midday. The mission left for the compound and went to work loading up seven tons of flour for the small village of Lekbibaj. Three nets of flour were pre-stacked and readied for the next day as nearly seven tons of food would be delivered to the village of Margegaj

Thursday, would prove to be the last day of the mission. The fog burned off early, and the loaded helicopters took off. Once on the ground, the slingloading of the two Chinooks took just a few minutes due to the load's preparation, and the LZ was quiet again as the two birds raced toward their objective.

Even with all of the hard work put in

by the soldiers, some felt that they could have done more.

"It's too bad we couldn't have done more," Maj. Todd Guggisberg, 10th LTF executive officer, said after the operation ended, "but we fought the weather and time and its good we did what we did."

line. Enrolled members will receive a personal identification number (PIN) via the United States Postal Service after the first contribution. For current

members, the first contribution is end-of-month January 2002. The PIN allows online access for the members.

For more information on the

Thrift Savings Plan, visit our nearest Finance Office or go online at <http://tsp.gov/>

Chaplain's Corner

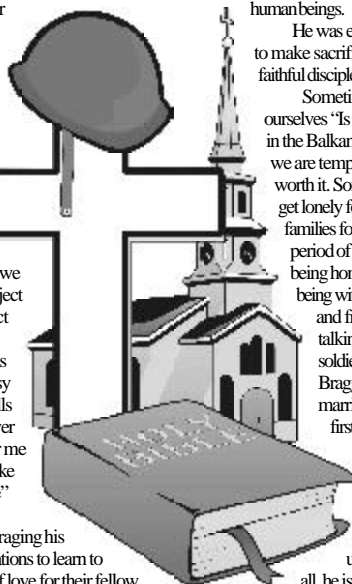
Your sacrifices are the ultimate acts of love

by Chaplain (Capt.) Simon Obeng
TFF Deputy Chaplain

Sacrifice has always been a part of human habitation. Sacrifices have been offered in every culture and in every generation, either to the Supreme God, or to other intermediaries. It has always been believed that, when the mother earth, or a particular river that protects the people, or the Supreme God who created all things is offended, the only thing that can reconcile any of them is by offering sacrifice to them.

However, sacrifices are not only to appease God, or the gods, or to avoid God's punishment. Sacrifices are offered to invoke God's blessings, or protection of the gods. Sacrifices can also be offered out of love for God. Abraham was willing to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice to God, out of love for God; and God blessed him (Gen 22:9-10). Jesus offered the sacrifice of himself out of love for the world (for humankind). This was totally out of the ordinary, but it seems to me that he took pride in doing it. To affirm his unquestionable and unconditional love for us, he proclaimed, "No one has greater love than this, to

lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13). Christians believe that Jesus Christ died not only to expiate our sins, but he died out of his greater love for us. He set the criteria for going to heaven. If we receive one another, we receive him. If we reject one another, we reject him (Mt 25:31-46). Jesus knew that it was not going to be as easy as it sounds; so he calls it a "Cross". "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me" (Mt 17:24). In other words, he was encouraging his disciples of all generations to learn to make sacrifices out of love for their fellow



human beings. He was encouraging them to make sacrifices in order to be faithful disciples of his.

Sometimes we ask ourselves "Is it worth being here in the Balkans?" In one sense, we are tempted to say, it is not worth it. Sometimes, soldiers get lonely for leaving their families for such a long period of time. They miss being home; they miss being with their families and friends. I was talking to a young soldier from Fort Bragg, who was newly married. He missed his first Christmas with his young bride. He is going to miss his daughter's first birthday coming up. And worst of all, he is going to miss their

first wedding anniversary coming up. I know another soldier whose wife has left him for being away from her. I am sure all of us have our own stories to tell. And all these stories can bring about low morale.

However, when we flip the coin, we see the brighter side of the situation. We can say for sure that our being in the Balkans is worth being. We are proud Americans who never hesitate to risk, or even sacrifice our dear lives to serve our nation. We are proud Americans who will do anything good to defend our nation and to uphold the Constitution of the United States of America. We are free sons and daughters of America who are willing to share the very freedom we enjoy with our brothers and sisters of the Balkans. Many have left family, friends, fiancées, boy friends and girl friends, loved ones, and places with which they are comfortable. In spite of forgoing all these precious people and places in their lives, our soldiers realize they are here for a just cause. This is a great sacrifice. It is a God-giving mission. In the end, you will all be proud of being a part of peace in Kosovo. May God bless all of you for your great sacrifices.

CBS Worship Service	South Chapel	CMT Worship Service	Sector Worship
<p>Peacekeepers Chapel (North)</p> <p><u>Sunday</u> 8 a.m., Episcopal/Lutheran 9:30 a.m., Roman Catholic Mass 11 a.m., Collective Protestant 12:30 p.m., Gospel Service</p> <p><u>Monday</u> 7 p.m., Women's and Single Soldiers' Bible studies</p> <p><u>Tuesday</u> 7 p.m., Catholic RCIA</p> <p><u>Wednesday</u> 12 p.m., Roman Catholic Mass 6:30 p.m., Prayer Service 7 p.m., Bible Studies</p> <p><u>Thursday</u> 7 p.m., Choir Rehearsal (Gospel)</p> <p><u>Friday</u> 12 p.m., Muslim Prayer Service 7 p.m., Gospel Joy Night Service</p> <p><u>Saturday</u> 6:30 p.m., Stay Faithful Marriage Bible Study</p>	<p><u>Sunday</u> 8 a.m., Roman Catholic Mass 9:30 a.m., Collective Protestant 11 a.m., LDS Service 4 p.m., Gospel Service</p> <p><u>Monday</u> 7 p.m., Collective Protestant Choir Rehearsal</p> <p><u>Tuesday</u> 12 p.m., Roman Catholic Mass</p> <p><u>Wednesday</u> 7 p.m., Bible Study</p> <p><u>Thursday</u> 7 p.m., Bible Study</p> <p><u>Friday</u> 8 p.m., Jewish</p> <p><u>Saturday</u> 11 a.m., Seventh Day Adventist Service 7 p.m., Choir Rehearsal (Gospel)</p>	<p><u>Sunday</u> 9 - 10:30 a.m., General Protestant Service 11 a.m. - 1 p.m., Gospel Service 1:30 - 2:30 p.m., LDS Worship 7 - 8 p.m., Catholic Mass</p> <p><u>Monday</u> 7 p.m., Chapel Movie Night w/ Discussion</p> <p><u>Tuesday</u> 7 - 9 p.m., Gospel Worship Practice</p> <p><u>Wednesday</u> 6:30 - 7:30 p.m., Gospel Worship Practice 7:30 - 9 p.m., Bible Study</p> <p><u>Thursday</u> 6 - 7 p.m., General Protestant Practice 7 - 8 p.m., General Protestant Bible Study 8 - 9 p.m., General Protestant Worship</p> <p><u>Friday</u> 12 - 1 p.m., Muslim Service in Annex 7 - 8:30 p.m.</p> <p><u>Saturday</u> 11 a.m. - 12 p.m., Seventh Day Adventist Worship</p>	<p><u>Protestant</u> <u>Saturday</u> 2 p.m., Debelde 4 p.m., Binac Church</p> <p><u>Sunday</u> Camp Magrath, 10 a.m. Zintinje Church, 11:30 a.m. Klokot, 2 p.m. Mogila, 3:30 p.m. Vrbovac Church, 4:30 p.m. Vrbovac, 7 p.m.</p> <p><u>Latter Day Saints</u> <u>Sunday</u> Camp Magrath, 2 p.m.</p> <p><u>Roman Catholic</u> <u>Monday</u> Klokot, 2 p.m. Vrbovac, 4 p.m. Camp Magrath, 7 p.m.</p> <p><u>Other Activities</u> <u>Sunday</u> Movie Night- 11 p.m.</p> <p><u>Tuesday</u> Bible Study, 8 p.m.</p>

Fire safety tip's from your TFF Fire Department

Special to the Falcon Flier

When used properly, a portable fire extinguisher can save lives and property by putting out a small fire or containing it until the fire department arrives. It is very important to use the right type of fire extinguisher when putting out a small fire. Fires in paper, wood, drapes and upholstery require an extinguisher labeled A. Fires in fuel oil, gasoline, paint, grease in a frying pan, solvents, and other

flammable liquids require an extinguisher labeled B. Fires started in wiring, overheated fuse boxes, conductors, and other electrical sources require an extinguisher labeled C. Certain metals such as magnesium and sodium require special dry powder extinguisher labeled D. A 5-lb. ABC Multi-Purpose extinguisher is the recommended size and type for use in the Sea Huts and office areas. Read the operation instructions

carefully with all family members so everyone will be ready during an emergency. The higher the number rating on the extinguisher, the more fire it puts out. High rated ones are often (not always) the heavier models. Make sure you can hold and operate the one you might buy for home use or be required to use at work. Before Attempting to Fight a Fire Is everyone out of the building? The fire department is being called. You know you have a class ABC

extinguisher, and you already know how to operate it. The fire is small and contained in the area where it started. Can you fight the fire with your back toward a safe escape exit? Remember that portable fire extinguishers are not designed to fight a large or spreading fire. If you have the slightest doubt if you should fight the fire - DON'T. Just get out fast! If you have any questions about this, or any fire safety topic, call DSN 4098 and ask for the Fire Prevention section.

Iron Fist

Task Force 1-30 conducts cordon and search



Spc. Molly Jones/photo

Sgt. Mikwan Jones, team leader, A Co, 1st Battalion, 30th Inf. Regiment (TF 1-30) exits a UH-60 Blackhawk during Operation Iron Fist January 22nd in Krajni Del, Kosovo.

by Spc. Molly Jones
Staff Writer

KRAJNI DEL, Kosovo— They looked at their watches, and then up to the clear sky in anticipation of the prompt arrival of six UH-60 Blackhawks, four OH-58 Kiowa Warriors, and three CH-47 Chinooks. The soldiers of A Co., 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment (TF 1-30), Fort Benning, Ga., lined up around the airfield preparing to jump on the inbound birds as part of Operation Ironfist.

The soldiers of Alpha Company received the operation order a week prior to the mission, and prepared using snow shoes, extreme cold weather gear, and also trained on the planning and executing of helicopter operations. The day finally arrived and the mechanized company executed an air assault, and conducted a cordon and search in two separate locations. They had two elements divided by two command and control aspects of the company, according to the commander Capt. Scott Anderson.

"We're going into the town of Krajni Del to search for illegal arms, weapons and possible detainees," said 2nd Lt. Scott Mangum, platoon leader for first platoon, A Co. "It's all to prevent people from harming each other, and goes right along with our mission to provide a safe and secure environment for the people of Kosovo."

"This is exactly what we join the Army for, to do real world missions just like this one today," said Sgt. Michael Romero, of Alpha Co. The operation not only benefits Kosovo by helping decrease illegal activity, but builds the confidence of the soldiers involved, knowing that they can accomplish such a crucial mission.

This is the second search Alpha company has performed in Kosovo, but with the help of the

police working dogs, a detachment from 10th Mountain Division, and a few Psy-Ops soldiers on this operation, the mission was more of a success, said Romero.

To the casual observer, soldiers going into people's yards, barns, and so on, might seem a bit extreme, but it is all to better the future of Kosovo by helping cease the smuggle of illegal arms. "We are here for a good cause. What we did today will definitely benefit the children who are the future of Kosovo. That's what this is all about," said Mangum.

"We're very flexible and willing to go any distance

necessary to make sure the communities are safe, and that we're making sure that they're on track to having a successful transition to a peaceful and democratic society," said Anderson.

Although no arms were recovered, the soldiers made a positive impression on the townspeople with their courtesy and professionalism. "Also, the mission was a success if for no other reason than to show that we have the capability to complete any mission. Here we are, mechanized soldiers, conducting air assaults into mountain towns," said Anderson.



Spc. Molly Jones/photo

Pfc. Samuel Carbajal, 1st Platoon, A Co., 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment (TF 1-30) looks for illegal weapons during Operation Iron Fist.