



Guardian

Volume 13, Issue 4 Produced for Personnel of KFOR Multi-National Task Force (East) www.tffalcon.hqusareur.army.mil May 2006

Photo of the Month



Photo by Pfc. Daniel J. Nichols

Sgt. Shawn Woodworth, squad leader, 1st Squad, 1st Platoon, Company A, Task Force Alamo, chills out and enjoys the view as his unit waits for their UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter pickup along the Kosovo border on April 12 during his platoon's border patrol.

Guardian is produced for personnel of KFOR Multi-National Task Force (East)

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The Guardian is an official publication of KFOR 7 Multi-National Task Force (East) published to provide command information to service members in MNTF(E). The Guardian is produced by the 4th Public Affairs Detachment. Contents of the Guardian are not necessarily official views of, nor endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, the Department of the Army, the 36th Infantry Division or MNTF(E). The Guardian is published monthly using offset press by the MNTF(E) Public Affairs Office, BLDG #1320, Camp Bondsteel, APO AE 09340. Printed circulation is 2,200.

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FRONT COVER PHOTO BY SPC. EUGENE DUBIELAK, TASK FORCE HOUSTON-Sgt. William Gasch, Company D, Task Force Houston, carries a belt of 25 mm rounds to his M2A2 Bradley fighting vehicle on Range 4 in the town of Ramjan/Donje Ramnjane on April 12. BACK COVER PHOTO BY PFC. DANIEL J. NICHOLS-Sgt. Jessie James, assistant squad leader, 1st Squad, 1st Platoon, Company A, Task Force Alamo, walks along the Kosovo border on April 12 during his platoon's border patrol as an AH-64 Apache helicopter flies by in the distance pulling security for his unit's pickup.



CG's Column



Brig. Gen. Darren Owens, commanding general, Multi-National Brigade (East)



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Kraemer

Left, Brig. Gen. Darren Owens, commanding general, Multi-National Task Force (East), stands next to his newly refurbished Humvee in April. The Humvee is emblazoned with Texas National Guard T-Patches, fitted with a personalized trunk and has decals from his beloved alma mater, Texas A&M University.

The Spring season has always been a time of renewal. The weather has finally turned warm after months of contending with snow and ice. We have completed the first four months of our time here in Kosovo with good success. Here are some things I want you to consider at this point in the deployment:

This sunnier weather is perfect for getting out and exercising. Take advantage of the opportunity to increase your physical fitness. Organized sports are a great way to vary your fitness program. Be sure to stretch properly so you can avoid injury.

Plan ahead for your pass to Greece or Bulgaria and your leave. Be a good ambassador for the United States when visiting other countries.

For all you who are in positions of leadership: take note of good behavior now. NCOERs and OERs will be due in the coming months and you will need documentation. Don't get caught having to remember the good things you subordinates and section have done over the last few months. Take time to praise reward your soldiers.

LONE STAR!

CSM'S CORNER



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Kraemer

Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Boyer, command sergeant major, MNB(E)



Photos by Sgt. Matthew Chlosta



Above, left, Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Boyer, command sergeant major, MNB(E), listens to Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston on March 19 during the SMA's visit to Camp Bondsteel. Above, right, Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Boyer, command sergeant major, MNB(E), sprints up radar hill on March 19 during the TF Alamo run with Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston.

When the Sergeant Major of the Army visited us in March, he gave me some cautionary advice. He said, "Watch your Soldiers close during the fifth through the eighth month of your deployment." He elaborated on that statement by explaining that the 5th through the 8th month is the time period that Soldiers have the most morale problems and subsequently, disciplinary issues. This is a critical time when Soldiers have been in theater for a long time but there is still a long way to go and depression and boredom begin to set in. All the amenities available to us are no longer a novelty. In addition to the routine of our daily duties, we have lifted all the weights in the gyms, run up and down radar hill till it's only half of its original height, drank gallons of cappuccino etc. etc. And we still have a long way to go.

Despite welcome respites in the forms of FMPP, the Greece retreat and R&R, we still have a long way to go. This is the time that we have to get serious about taking care of each other. Covering your battle-buddy's six is just as applicable here in Kosovo as it is in a fighting position in Iraq or Afghanistan. When you see one of your friends begin to act differently or show signs of depression, GET INVOLVED. If you know that someone is doing something or planning to do something that will get them into trouble, TAKE ACTION.

We are all responsible for each other. I could use all the well worn clichés about teamwork, but the ground truth is that we have to see each other through this deployment. Tomorrow, when you greet your friends in the morning with the customary, "how are you?" Really mean it.

Soldier On!

CSM Boyer

stand alone photos



Photo by Sgt. Matthew Chlosta

Left, 1st Lt. Matthew Horning, Task Force Talon, tussles with Spc. Michael Trejo, Task Force Viper, during Sumo Wrestling at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation North Town gym at 6:30 p.m., April 4 on Camp Bondsteel.



Photo by Spc. Michael O'Neal

Spc. Krystal Grigsby TF Falcon, postal clerk singing the hymn "Amazing Grace" which was held at the 'Open Mic Night' at the MWR South Town Gym on April 2006.



Photo by Christina M. Vanyo

An Albanian student of the Bince/Binac primary school, helps pick up trash and yard waste during the Earth Day celebration held at the school, Saturday, April 22, sponsored by Task Force Talon.



If you have photos of KFOR 7 Soldiers that you feel are worthy for publication contact Sgt. Matthew Chlosta, Guardian Editor at guardian@bondsteel2.areur.army.mil. We welcome submissions of JPEG photos with cutlines, photo credit and full identification for consideration. Photos could be published in the Guardian magazine or on the Guardian online - www.tffalcon.hqusareur.army.mil

For more photos, visit the photo galleries of the Guardian online @<http://www.tffalcon.hqusareur.army.mil>



The children from the 'Shropshire Music Foundation' sing at MedFalcon's 'Grand Round' at the South Town theater on April 8.



Photo by Spc. Michael O'Neal

Graduates of Camp Bondsteel's first Warrior Leaders Course wait patiently for their chance to walk across the stage of Camp Bondsteel's South Town theater, April 18.



Photo by Christina M. Vanyo

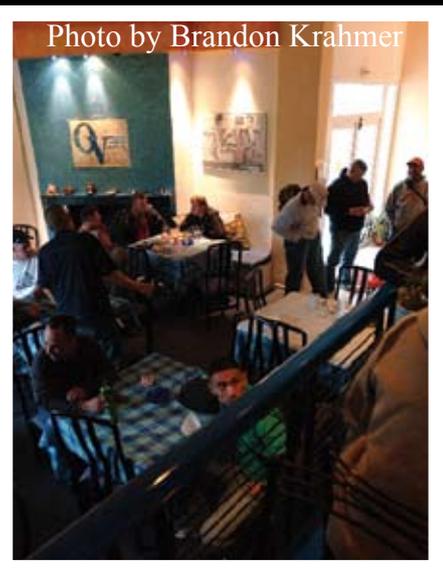


Photo by Brandon Krahmer

Soldiers from Multi-National Task Force (East) chat and take time to learn each others' first names during a brief introduction at the Ocean View Beach Hotel April 4. The Soldiers were part of the first Greek Retreat, arranged by the MNTF (E) Chaplains and Unit Ministry Teams.

Layout & Design by Spc. J. Tashun Joyce



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Krahmer

Lt. Col. Harlan Harris, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-7 Information Operations officer, TF Falcon (center-left) and Capt. Lisa Chesser, G-4 Supply & Services officer, TF Falcon (center-right) join hands along with the rest of the congregation during a multi-national peacekeeper worship service held at Camp Bondsteel's Northtown Chapel April 23. More than 130 personnel of various nationalities attended the service that was the first of its type held on CBS.

Stage 3 - Nutritional Awareness and our Metabolism

Hello again! It has been amazing to see and hear the feedback from the Fit 2 Fight readers. It is great to know that so many people care about their health and understand how important physical training is. PT is very important to helping the Army accomplish the mission.

In Stage 1, I asked each of you to set a few fitness goals during this deployment. Then in Stage 2, your mission was to work yourself into one of the Phases of Fitness. Knowing what phase you were in was very important. You might be in a different phase than your workout buddy and therefore, your PT session needs to be tailored towards your personal needs and goals. At this point if you have stuck to your plan, you should be in the middle of your conditioning phase. If you have not made it that far, do not get discouraged. Continue on and move through the phases when your body is ready.

Now it is time to talk about one of my favorite topics, FOOD! Tell me you don't like to eat good food and we will have to sit down and talk. Besides baseball, food has got to be America's second favorite pastime. But, just because we are not in the good ol' U.S. of A, doesn't mean it's no longer something we look forward to. This brings me to Stage 3: Nutritional Awareness and Your Metabolism.

Talking about nutrition and your metabolism can be a sensitive topic for some. Food experts go to school to get certified as nutritionists. A nutritionist is great to have. Unfortunately, I am not a nutritionist but I have, however, attended several courses and have at my disposal, a nutritionist at Fort Hood. They provided me with information on five common mistakes that people may focus in on and why people make these mistakes, when it comes to nutrition.

Mistake #1 – Skipping Meals: *Always put something in your stomach in the morning, afternoon and evenings. Large meals are not necessary. If you are rushed because of PT or work call, then keep healthy choices in your barracks room or in your office, i.e. cereal, milk, and fruits.*

WHY? Your body has an overwhelming ability to survive. When you skip meals, your body's metabolism slows down tremendously. A slowed metabolism makes it easy to gain weight and difficult to lose it. Most people who skip meals overeat at the next meal because they are too hungry.

Mistake #2 – Fast Foods: *Avoid fast food if you're trying to eat healthy! If you must eat cheeseburgers and french fries, eat them in moderation. Eat at the dining facility for the best healthy choices such as the salad bar, vegetables and fruit to help balance your meal.*

WHY? A double cheeseburger, large fries and large coke provide almost 1800 calories in one meal. This is almost what many people need in one day. That's only ONE meal; you do the math.

Mistake #3 – Beverages: *Drink beverages that are calorie-free. Two 20-ounce sodas per day for one week equal the calories in ONE POUND OF FAT.*

WHY? Beverages with calories include fruit juice, sports drinks, cappuccinos, sweet tea, not just soda. Liquid calories add up fast and do not contribute to a sense of fullness. Avoid them whenever possible.

Mistake #4 – Too little aerobic exercises: *If you are on profile, find a safe aerobic activity to do and do it all year around. Build up to 30 minutes of aerobic exercise at least 3 times per week.*

WHY? Cardio/Aerobic exercise decreases body fat. Be sure to build time and distance slowly and cross-train to reduce risk of injury.

Mistake #5 – Eating past the point of fullness: *PAY ATTENTION to how full you feel while you eat. Relax and eat slowly if you're a quick eater.*

WHY? Never eat until you're "stuffed" or you feel uncomfortably full. Your body is telling you that YOU ATE TOO MUCH!

There you go! I have given you 5 simple mistakes that you can avoid just by paying attention to your food intake. By doing that, your metabolism will increase naturally and you will burn more calories.

I challenge you to continue on with your goals, work through the phases of fitness and to be cognizant of what you eat. All together, you will notice a positive change, you will feel better and you will have the tools to Train the Trainer – Stage 4 of Fit 2 Fight.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Kraemer

Fit 2 Fight Columnist Staff Sgt. Michael Bennett, non-commissioned officer-in-charge, Army Physical Fitness Test, Task Force Falcon writes this month about nutritional awareness.

STAY FIT 2 FIGHT!



Q & A

Staff Sgt. Frank Hinnant

**TF Houston
NCOIC, Personnel Ops.**

Staff Sgt. Frank Hinnant took a few minutes April 13 to talk about unpredictable work schedules, not being able to see the top of his desk through the piles of paperwork on it, and the behind-the-scenes work that goes into processing enlisted and officer promotions.

Q: How is this deployment going for you so far?

A: It depends on the day of the week. It's not bad. I'm enjoying it, but today was just one of those days.

Q: What is your job in support of Multi-National Task Force (East)?

A: My job is to oversee all of the enlisted and officer actions that happen here in the task force...anything and everything that has to do with the personnel piece (of the mission), I oversee all of that.

Q: What is your favorite part of the job?

A: I really enjoy seeing guys getting promoted. There's a lot of work that goes into an enlisted promotion that people don't see. I really like taking care of the Soldiers. That was really neat to know I had a hand in that [speaking about one of his Soldier's recent promotion].

Q: How about your least favorite part?

A: This is what I really want to do in the warrant officer field. I don't really think there is a least favorite part of it...I really don't. I get frustrated, I get mad, I yell and do all of that, but there really is no least favorite part.

Q: What's a normal day like for you?

A: We do section PT (physical training) at 6 a.m. I am in the office by 7:30 or 8 a.m. The thing about it is I never know what I'm going to do (during the day). There's no set pattern as to what I'm going to do when I come in the office. The day might start at 3 a.m. when a Red Cross message comes in.

Q: What was it like to be part of the reshaping of Camp Monteith?

A: Yesterday was the first day I actually went back out there (since leaving). It was sad to see. We



Hinnant's personal goals for deployment:

1. Complete 12 semester hours of college
2. Bench Press 325 lbs. (accomplished)
3. Get 2-mile-run time down to 11:30 min.
4. Complete Warrant Officer packet
5. Complete manager's certification

went to the chow hall at lunch time and there were about eight people there. It was sad. I miss it.

Q: What do you do with your free time?

A: We close the office at like 5:30 or 6 p.m., so I do get some free time. I like to go running. That's kind of like my stress relief. I also go to the movies and do all the things (that are offered) here.

Q: Is there anything you'd like to say to someone back home?

A: I want to tell my daughter I love her. But, for the people here, there are so many things you can do here. You just have to take advantage of the opportunity.

Interview, photo, layout and design by Sgt. Brandon Kraemer

On the road with 'FYROM LNOs link MNTF(E) to Ma

Story, photos, layout & design
by Sgt. Matthew Chlosta

Hollywood has produced many "buddy team" films over the years, "Batman & Robin," "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid," and the "Lethal Weapon" movies, but we can now add "Hansen & Roberson" to the lexicon.

Master Sgt. Ed Hansen and Maj. Trey Roberson, liaison officers, for the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Task Force Falcon, are -- the -- link between Multi-National Task Force (East) and the FYROM; Army, local police and border police.

Their business cards say that their office is in the Macedonian Television Building in downtown Shkup/Skopje on the same floor as the FYROM border police, but in reality their office is a late model Mitsubishi Pajero SUV. From April 17-22 Hansen & Roberson spent exactly 25 minutes inside their actual office. The rest of the time was spent on the road or in meetings traveling from the middle of FYROM to the mountainous border region, to Pristina to Camp Able Sentry to Veles to Shkup/Skopje and seemingly everywhere in-between.

"Our liaisons down here serve as a critical interface between us (MNTF(E) and) the country team -- to make sure what we do and what they're doing on the sides of the border (are in sync). We continue to have close interaction so there is not confusion or misunderstandings," Col. Mark Campsey, chief of staff, MNTF(E) said, before a short meeting with Hansen & Roberson at the Shkup/Skopje airport at 3:55 p.m. April 22.

"It's a good mission," Roberson said. "This is something you're rarely going to get in the Guard."

We're facilitators, he said.

A lot of the mission is making contacts in FYROM and if situations arise, we know who to go to, Roberson said.

Recently, Hansen & Roberson helped with coordination and notification for joint MNTF(E) border patrols and the Task Force Alamo Cordon & Search near Kacanik in March.

"We've coordinated wheelchair donations, brought the Task Force MedFalcon doctors (down) to tour the Macedonian Army hospital," Hansen said.

We're part of Task Force Falcon and report directly to the chief of staff, Hansen said.

"The only thing I miss is the camaraderie of the other Soldiers, but other than that I can't complain," Hansen said.

"I have experience working with the state back home, that's why I was chosen for this mission," Roberson said, "(I'm) - able to talk to people; deal with the 'verbal gymnastics.'"



1:15 p.m. April 19 the FYROM Border Police Station

"We drive around, we do things, we're not stuck in the TOC (tactical operations center). You can't top that," Roberson said.

Initial face to face

On Monday April 17 Hansen & Roberson spent the first half of their day driving to Camp Bondsteel and the afternoon coordinating the first Kosovo Force 7 meeting between the FYROM Army's G-2 shop and Lt. Col. Steven Johnston, chief, G-2, MNTF(E).

The meeting between the G-2 (Intel) of FYROM and our G-2 is "Trying to build up a rapport with their G-2 with our G-2 to transfer information. Our G-2 asked for it. They know who's the bad guy and where he is at. Our main function as the LNO's (liaison officers) is the communication between this location (CBS) and Macedonia," Hansen said.

After the meeting took place they waited as the FYROM G-2 officers shopped at the CBS Post Exchange and then led them back across the border into FYROM before they headed back to Camp Able Sentry just south of Shkup/Skopje where Hansen & Roberson live.

See LNOs-----pg. 12

“The Facilitators”

Macedonian Army & Border Police



8:10 a.m. April 21 Veles, the FYROM

Above, Master Sgt. Ed Hansen noncommissioned officer-in-charge, liaison officer, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Task Force Falcon, drives to the city of Veles in the FYROM to link up with Soldiers from Multi-National Task Force (East). Multi-National Task Force (East) G-3 training Soldiers were on their way to check out U.S. Army use of the FYROM Army's Krivolak Training Range.

Opposite page, on left, Igor Petrovski, assistant duty police officer, the FYROM Border Police talks and drinks coffee with Master Sgt. Ed Hansen noncommissioned officer-in-charge, liaison officer, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Task Force Falcon at the Tanusevci border checkpoint.



1:05 p.m. April 20 Film City, Pristina

Left, Maj. Trey Roberson, liaison officer, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia listens to members of the FYROM's Border Police talk about the new Temporary Operating Procedures Agreement in Kosovo Force headquarters in Kosovo.

Ministry of Defense-G-3 meets G-3(plans & operations)

Tuesday April 18, 8-8:25 a.m., Hansen & Roberson started their day with a quick stop at the CAS coffee bar before driving to the main FYROM Army post, Linden Barracks in Shkup/Skopje to pickup two representatives from the MNTF(E)'s G-3 plans shop. They then drove to the FYROM Ministry of Defense building in downtown Shkup/Skopje to attend a meeting between the FYROM G-3 and the MNTF(E) G-3.

It's a very preliminary meeting about the use of Macedonia ranges for the possibility of firing Apaches and Bradleys, Roberson said. Also discussed was the possibility of senior noncommissioned officers from MNTF(E) mentoring Soldiers and NCOs at the FYROM Army Training Command and NCO Academy.

"Their Special Forces are in Iraq with our guys," Roberson said. "(They've, also had) infantry Soldiers – in Afghanistan for (the) last four years. They are a good ally to the U.S."

The FYROM Army is changing from the old Soviet style conscription service (their last conscripts were in April) to an all volunteer force based on the American-style rank structure and training schools, according to Roberson.

"I think it sounds great," Maj. Win Burkett, G-3 plans, MNTF(F) said, during the meeting. General Owens' intent for KFOR 7 to leave here better trained than when we came in, he said.

Maj. Scott Beechel, G-3 plans, MNTF(E) said the meeting was a great discovery-type meeting about opportunities for possible future training and teaching.

"I think it was good in terms of brainstorming the opportunities for our own Soldiers to come down and work with foreign militaries," Burkett added afterward.

Through Hansen & Roberson the MNTF(E) G-3 set up time on April 21 for a visit to the FYROM Army's training range in Krivolak, Veles, two hours south of Shkup/Skopje.

This is a perfect example of what we do. We put people together and watch them make things happen, Hansen said.

"It's a good initial meeting," Roberson said. "All we have to do now is

determine; a). Do we want to do it? b). can we do it? c). time and money."

Border Police visit; mountains, snow, coffee, tea and business cards

On Wednesday April 19, Hansen & Roberson moved out of CAS at 9 a.m. with a fistful of maps to navigate their way on a twisty strip of pavement to visit two FYROM Border Police compounds. The drive took more than 2 hours. There were some beautiful vistas, ominous clouds hovering overhead at times, more than a 2 dozen switchbacks, and 4,000 foot drops with no guardrails to keep the vehicle from tumbling below.

Hansen & Roberson said they usually go out to these remote sites about twice a week, but until recently, have been hampered by the only road leading out there being blocked by snow.

“When you see the G-3 (U.S.) and the G-3 (FYROM) sitting at a table talking together, that is a success. I’m an ambassador – (for) Bondsteel.”

Master Sgt. Ed Hansen, noico, liaison officer, FYROM

They talk about patrols and smugglers, offer advice, assist with border issues and drop off their cards and contact information in case the FYROM Border Police

need or want support from MNTF(E), Hansen said.

At the first concrete outpost, set back from the road, on the side of a picturesque mountain, Hansen & Roberson drank tea and sipped coffee as they listened and communicated through their Macedonian interpreter Lazar Ignator to three border policemen including two male and one female.

"Our main job (here) is to help if there is something that you need," Roberson said to the FYROM border policemen.

"We expect the worst and hope for the best," Igor Petrovski, assistant duty police officer, FYROM Border Police, said.

The final stop for H&R was at a checkpoint called Kodra Fura. The tiny outpost is on a swath of brown grass on top of a 5,000 foot mountain. There were still patches of snow that dotted the ground along the mountainside road.

Standing next to a border policeman, on top of an observation tower, Hansen squinted out over the valley below and the Kosovo town of Viti/Vitina further out in the distance through fluorescent red capped binoculars.

This day was almost done, and just as they left, the clouds hanging overhead started to spit hail down on their SUV as they descended the mountain.

TOPA at Film City

Thursday April 20, "the Facilitators" drove to Film City in Pristina, Kosovo for the Principal Level Temporary Operating Procedures Agreement meeting at Kosovo Force Headquarters.

The PLM TOPA is a meeting of the minds of all the players that deal with Kosovo border issues on both sides of the border, including: the Republic of Albania, the FYROM, Kosovo Police Service, United Nations Mission in Kosovo Border Police, MNTF(E), MNTF(SW).

Some of the areas covered in the meeting were: handling of border incidents, exchange of information, local contact points, joint patrolling & joint operations and the scheduling of the new TOPA signing later in the spring.



Left to right, Sgt. 1st Class Boots Henry, master gunner, TF Houston, Maj. Scott Beechel, G-3 plans, TF Falcon and Maj. Carl Spillers, NATO advisory team, MNTF(E) look over the FYROM Army's training range.

1:15 p.m. April 19 FYROM border post observatioin tower



Left, A FYROM Border Policeman speaks to Master Sgt. Ed Hanssen noncommissioned officer-in-charge, liaison officer, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Task Force Falcon while standing on top of the Kodra Fura border police observation tower overlooking the Kosovo town of Viti/Vitinacheckpoint. Below, second from left, Maj. Trey Roberson, LNO, FYROM, gets range specifications from several FYROM Army officers.



1 p.m. April 21 Krivolak Training Range, Veles, the FYROM

“What needed to be changed (in the new TOPA) has already been worked (the) only difference will be the name on the maps. This meeting covered issues that are happening on either side of the border and the different agencies involved,” Roberson said. “Our job (here) is to represent MNTF(E) with the government, military, civilian entities in Kosovo and the (Shkup/Skopje) NATO headquarters”

Quick Reaction Force

At 4:42 p.m., on the drive home from Film City, Roberson received a cell phone call from Lt. Col. Bruce Postma, chaplain, MNTF(E). A Soldier misplaced his KFOR badge during the Greece retreat and Postma needed Roberson to work his contacts on the border of Greece and FYROM to get the Soldier through the checkpoint. Roberson put in a quick call to the LNO’s interpreter, Ignator. Ignator lives in southern FYROM and was able to drive down to the border within an hour and negotiate passage for the stranded Soldier.

“The fact that he had a cell phone was good,” Postma said. “It all worked out well other than it was about a ninety minute delay. I’ve put the FYROM LNOs’ phone number in the retreat SOP (standard operating procedure). So if you come upon issues at that particular border again you can call them to resolve the issues.”

“That’s what we do a lot, receive a call about a problem in Macedonia and we fix it,” Roberson said.

Visit to Veles Part 1

Thank God Its Friday, April 21. This day kicks off early for Hansen & Roberson as they roll out the gates of CAS at 7:45 a.m. for the 2.5 hour drive to Veles. This whole day was planned and set up by Hansen and Roberson after the April 18 meeting at the FYROM Ministry of Defense. First stop for the day was at the FYROM Army Training Command in downtown Veles.

FYROM Lt. Col. Meskoski, talked to Roberson, Hansen and Maj. Carl Spillers, unit advisor, Special Operations, NATO Advisory Team, MNTF(E), about possible future training opportunities for MNTF(E) senior NCOs.

“I’ve seen some of the training here,” Roberson told Meskoski. “I’ve been very impressed. It is very diffi-

cult to leave one system and change to another.”

“(As) a model for development we have the U.S.,” Meskoski said. “We will continue our cooperation with NATO members. We try to asorb as much knowledge base as possible.”

Visit to Veles Part 2

After the brief, Roberson, accompanied by Spillers, went ahead to the Krivolak Traing Range south of Veles.

Meanwhile Hansen and FYROM Army Col. Cazim Kundevski, went back to the toll booth link up with Beechel and Sgt. 1st Class Boots Henry, master gunner, TF Houston.

Henry and Beechel made it to the range on their own about 25 minutes after Roberson and Spiller. Roberson then put in a call to Hanson. Everyone was assembled about 30 minutes later and once again coffee, tea and water was drunk and the meeting began.

After watching a training video; receiving a brief by several FYROM officers, and then doing a question and answer on range specifications, the group headed outside for a look.

Beechel and Henry asked many questions, took photos and said they were glad for the first hand visit. But now they need to see what is feasible and what isn’t for possible Apache fire, Bradley gunnery and a TOW missile range.

Once again Hansen and Roberson’s day wasn’t finished quite yet.

Approximately 3 hours later at CAS, working on a still empty stomach, Hansen and Roberson secured overnight billeting for Beechel and Henry. As the sun sets over CAS and the warm evening breeze rustles the green grass, another day done, “the Facilitators” have completed another LNO mission.

“I don’t like all the driving,” Hansen said. (But), it’s never the same.”

We measure success, Hansen continued, “when we’re actually having meetings and see the progress. When you see the G-3 (U.S.) and the G-3 (FYROM) sitting at a table talking together, that is a success. I’m an ambassador – (for) Bondsteel.”

going somewhere? Task Force Houston moves



Sgt. Ryan Sullivan and Spc. Waylon Montague, headquarters platoon, B company, TF Houston load their belongings into a M-927 A-1 vehicle in preparation for their movement from Camp Monteith to Camp Bondsteel.

After months of planning, United States Army Europe and Kosovo Forces have finalized a decision to reduce the extent of its operations at Camp Monteith. As a result the majority of Soldiers from Task Force Houston; the task force who operated the smaller base camp along with a company sized element from Task Force Dragoon have been relocated to the more vast and less convenient Camp Bondsteel in an effort to use mili-

tary facilities and resources more efficiently.

Having occupied the cozy, centrally located facilities of Camp Monteith since the start of the KFOR 7 rotation and growing accustomed to nearly every amenity being a short walking distance, Soldiers have quickly adapted to their new surroundings.

Formerly a Serbian Army post in the city of Gjilan/Gnjilane, Camp Monteith was originally established in June 1999. It was to be used as a staging point for the bulk of US Soldiers in Multi National Task Force (East).

Story, Layout & Design by: Spc. J. Tashun Joycé
Photos by: Spc. Eugene Dubielak

from CMT to CBS



Camp Monteith received its name in honor of 1st Lt. Jimmie W. Monteith Jr., who was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroic deeds during World War II.

The decision to restructure Camp Monteith was made in full coordination with Kosovo Force and will not have any adverse effects on the safe and secure environment in Kosovo. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is not planning to reduce its operational capability in Kosovo. Multinational Task Force East will continue to maintain security within the area; according to a press release from KFOR.

No decision has been made to close Camp Monteith altogether and a smaller contingent was left behind to operate what will be referred to as Forward Operating Base Monteith.

"The reason we're doing this is to decrease the overall footprint in Kosovo without decreasing our capacity," Lt.

Col. Charles Aris, commander, TF Houston said.

To ensure a smooth transition, the move was executed in phases that took roughly six weeks, Aris said.

"We met with the Gjilan/Gnjilane president and we did all we could to lessen the impact on the community, especially dealing with layoffs from Camp Monteith," said Aris. "Overall, things have gone remarkably well."

"The reason we're doing this is to decrease the overall footprint in Kosovo without decreasing our capacity," Lt. Col. Charles Aris, commander, TF Houston said.

Sullivan carries the remainder of his personal items from his room prior to his movement to CBS.



Although the majority of TF Houston is now at CBS they remain responsible for the areas that they have operated in previously.

"Obviously the drive is a little longer but we've changed the way we do business," Aris said. "The Soldiers at FOB Monteith are doing longer patrolling. We kept our Liaison and Monitoring Teams and scout platoon and formed a scout company to increase our abilities to cover these areas."

All members of the FOB Monteith scout company are volunteers that were selected through an interview process, Aris said.

"Our goal is to provide a good picture of the community, how they think and feel, and to be proactive toward things that may be about to go on," Capt. Mike Caranfa, scout company commander, TF Houston. "The formation of the scout company enhances the role of the LMTs and will help to provide an early warning system for our battalion."

"He (Caranfa) has had a lot of success in areas that were the biggest problem areas so we thought it would be best to build around his company," Aris said.

"Originally I was uninterested," Caranfa said. "I wanted to keep my company in tact and maneuver on the ground. Then I realized how important the scout company is. If the scout company doesn't work well the battalion doesn't work well."

"Everyone notices that Kosovo is making progress and because of the success of our Soldiers and those of previous rotations we are able to move without adversely affecting Kosovo."

GREEK RETR

SOLDIERS FROM MNTF(E) TOOK FOUR DAYS TO TOUR SOME OF GREECE'S MOST POPULAR TOURIST ATTRACTIONS APRIL 4-7. AMONG OTHER THINGS, SOLDIERS HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT MANY DIFFERENT SITES IN GREECE AS THEY TRACED THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE APOSTLE PAUL.

Standing atop the acropolis of Phillipi, looking out over the ancient city, you can see where the battle that helped shape the Roman Empire occurred, the cell in which the Apostle Paul chose to stay after an earthquake shook the door open, and off in the distance, you can see where the first Christian convert in Europe was baptized.

For many people, the opportunity to tread the soil where so much history happened could be considered the experience of a lifetime.

On April 4-7, a group of 49 Soldiers from MNTF(E) made this experience a reality.

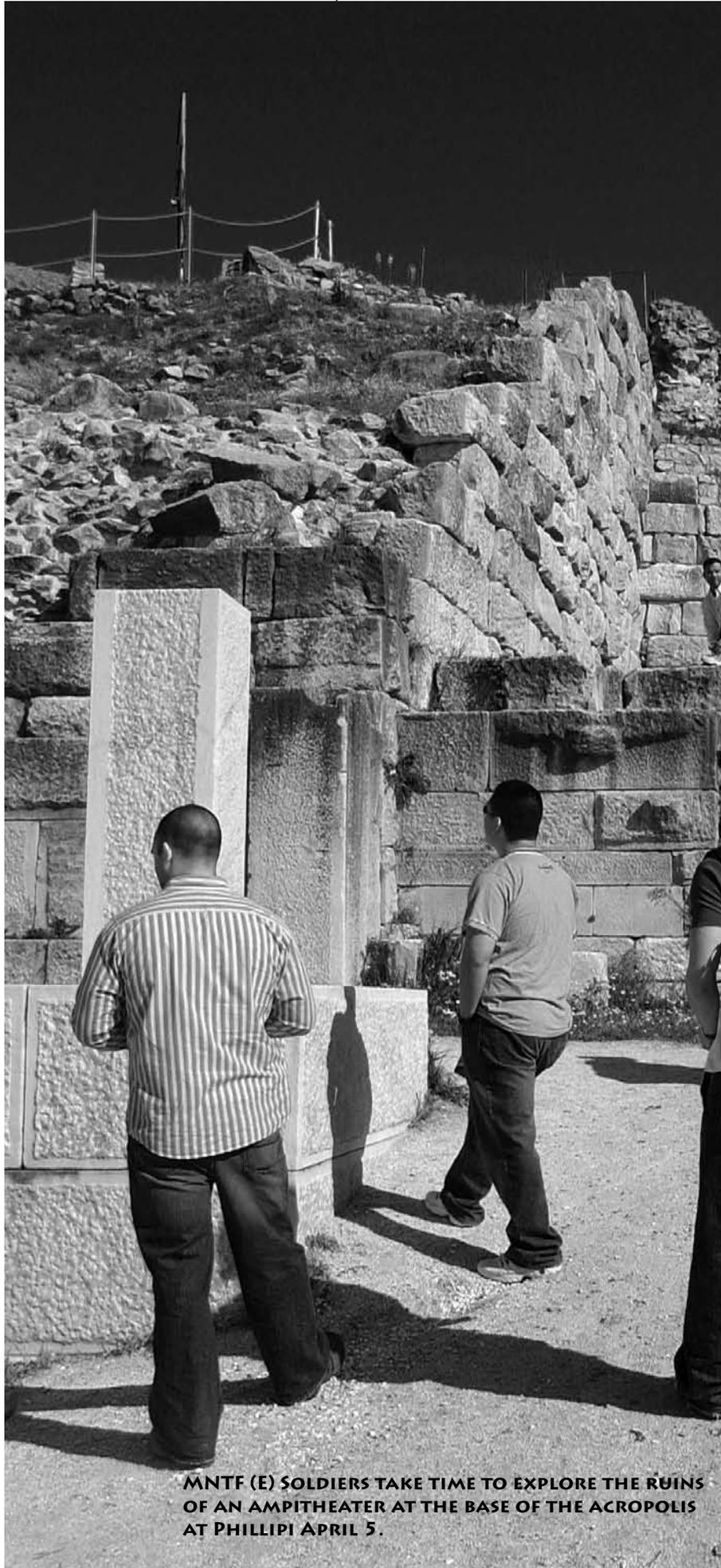
The Greek Retreat program, managed by Sgt. John Ambrosen and Lt. Col. (Ch.) Gordon Oglesby, was put together to provide Soldiers the opportunity to walk in the historic footsteps of the Apostle Paul.

The spiritual retreat offers Soldiers guided tours of historic and modern attractions, free time to explore, and personal devotional times scheduled throughout the retreat.

The *Odyssey of Paul* video series, available for viewing at various times at both Camp Bondsteel chapels, is meant to help prepare Soldiers for what they will experience in Greece.

“The videos help prepare you from a biblical standpoint, but I think there’s really no way to put into words the experience of walking in places where biblical history took place,” said Oglesby.

“For me, following the route was like taking a trip through time,” said Sgt. Heather



MNTF (E) SOLDIERS TAKE TIME TO EXPLORE THE RUINS OF AN AMPITHEATER AT THE BASE OF THE ACROPOLIS AT PHILLIPI APRIL 5.

See GREECE, page 18

REAT

FOLLOWING THE FOOTSTEPS OF PAUL



*Story, photos, layout and design by
Sgt. Brandon Kraemer*

"I DON'T THINK THAT ANYONE WILL WALK AWAY WITH THE FEELING THAT THEY WASTED THEIR TIME. SOME MAY BE RELIGIOUS, BUT FOR THOSE OF US WHO ARE NOT, THERE EXISTS THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPERIENCE THE HISTORY AND CULTURE OF GREECE." -SGT. HEATHER LITTLEFIELD

KAVALA, GREECE



ABOVE: THE MODERN DAY CITY OF KAVALA, GREECE, AS SEEN HERE FROM THE TOP OF THE CITY'S ACROPOLIS (HIGHEST POINT) STILL HAS STRUCTURES THROUGHOUT THE CITY THAT DATE BACK TO AS EARLY AS 400 B.C.



LTC. JOHN BUTLER (LEFT) AND COL. MANUEL ORTIZ, BOTH SOLDIERS WITH TF FALCON, TALK DURING A "MEET AND GREET" SESSION HELD AT THE OCEAN VIEW BEACH HOTEL AT THE BEGINNING OF THE RETREAT APRIL 4.

...GREECE, continued from page 16

Littlefield, a Task Force Talon Soldier who participated in the first retreat. "By following in Paul's footsteps, we were able to experience, in small part, the world of his era."

"I'm a history buff, so I really enjoyed the sights that we were able to see during the retreat," Littlefield said. "And because it was so well organized, we were able to hit everything on the agenda with still some time to relax."

During the retreat, Soldiers follow a schedule for certain events, and are allowed plenty of opportunities to take personal time to reflect on the sights they see and any thoughts they provoke.

"My favorite part was the trip to Phillipi," Littlefield said. "The view from the top of the acropolis was amazing, and seeing the old city being rebuilt was like looking back thousands of years."

The Greek Retreat program is adopted from previous Kosovo Forces rotations, but the current retreat has been being planned since the beginning of the KFOR-7 rotation.

"We've been planning the trip since we landed (in Kosovo)," Ambrosen said.

"The program falls under the free exercise of religion in the Army," Oglesby said. "And it demonstrates the commander's support of that doctrine."

Ambrosen visited Greece several times during his work to coordinate and arrange the program, and also acted as the first groups guide during the retreat.

"It's still work, but I get a little free time," he said of his participation in the retreat.

Since the event is a religious retreat, Ambrosen had some advice for Soldiers who are attending future retreats.

"Have an open mind," Ambrosen said. "It is a spiritual



RIGHT: SPC. BART COLEMAN, OF TF FALCON, CHECKS OUT A SHRIMP FROM THE PLATE HE ORDERED FOR DINNER APRIL 4. FRESH SEAFOOD IS A POPULAR MENU ITEM AT SEAFRONT RESTAURANTS IN GREEK CITIES.

retreat, so you never know now it's going to touch your life. I've learned that things don't last forever, and that civilization is a lot older than what is in the states."

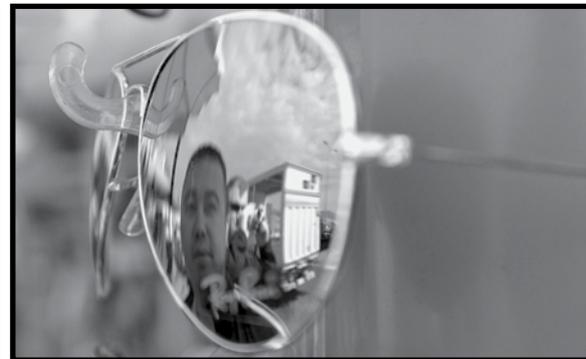
Littlefield mirrored his sentiments. "My advice is to be open-minded to these experiences. Even if you are not a religious person, you can get so much from seeing the history that these sights represent," she said.

And even though the trip is a religious retreat, most Soldiers will find some deeper meaning by making the most of their opportunity to tour Greece.

"I don't think that anyone will walk away with the feeling that they wasted their time. Some may be religious, but for those of us who are not, there exists the opportunity to experience the history and culture of Greece," Littlefield said. "This experience helps bridge the gap that naturally exists between people of different nationalities, and helps us all to understand one another better."



ABOVE: HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND OTHER SITES, SUCH AS THIS ANCIENT ROMAN AQUEDUCT, ARE STILL VISIBLE THROUGHOUT MANY GREEK CITIES.



ABOVE: SGT. JOHN AMBROSEN, TF FALCON UNIT MINISTRY ASSISTANT, IS SEEN IN THE REFLECTION OF A PAIR OF SUNGLASSES WHILE HE PERUSES A SHOPPING CENTER IN AMPHIPOLIS APRIL 6. LEFT: STAFF SGT. VICTOR ALCOCER REACHES FOR HIS ADMISSION TICKET TO THE GREEK RUINS AT THE CITY OF PHILLIPI APRIL 5.





Walk The Line

Story and Photos by
Pfc. Daniel J. Nichols

TF Alamo Patrols The FYROM Border

On the afternoon of April 11 1st and 2nd squads from 1st Plt, Company A, 1st Platoon, Task Force Alamo marched out to the airfield on Camp Bondsteel to board helicopters for a border patrol on the south side of Kosovo.

What would have been a two hour ride in a Humvee turned into a quick 10 minute flight to the mountains that run along the border of Kosovo and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

“We find that the Humvee’s would be more cumbersome than advantageous,” 2nd Lt. James Benson, platoon leader, 1st Plt., Co. A, TF Alamo, said. “So what the aircraft allows us to do is quickly reach an area that would be extremely difficult to reach by a Humvee,” he said.

Upon landing, the troops dismounted the aircraft and ran straight into the

prone position, treating the mission with all the seriousness of a combat situation. After the helicopters had picked up and flown off, the Soldiers moved into the nearby woods to set up security, and planned their movement through the rest of the patrol.

Sgt. John Rowell, HHC, TF Alamo, who was part of 1st squad on the patrol said, “The air missions are a big part of our unit.” Our sector, is very mountainous, very hilly, and mostly inaccessible. We have a large sector of border that needs to be covered. The air missions benefit us by getting us to these locations where we need to perform a border patrol, Rowell said.

After checking radio communication and their current grid coordinates, the team picked up and moved down a rough dirt trail through the woods.

“For the majority of the mission we were within a hundred meters of the border,” Benson said. The patrol made quick stops every 500 meters to check their location to ensure the patrol didn’t cross the border of FYROM.

As the patrol moved up and down the mountainous terrain, signs of woodcutting and the muddy tracks of animal drawn carts were visible everywhere. The area was littered with bare tree trunks cut too short, and the tracks of pack animals made the purpose of the Soldiers’ patrol apparent.

“The things we look for on a border patrol,” Benson said, “are signs of vehicles, and by vehicles we mean not just motorized vehicles, horse drawn carts are usually what they use up there.”

Smugglers rely heavily on these types of carts in order to move from FYROM over the hills into Kosovo.

“They can bring smuggled goods across from Macedonia where the roads are better, down those trails into a couple of the towns in the mountains and distribute it all over Kosovo,” said Benson.

After a few hours and about four kilometers of rough terrain later, the patrol halted to call in the helicopters to arrange pick up at the helicopter landing zone.

The landing zone was located on top of a far away hill that was in view for most of the patrol. “It would take two hours to get Humvee up there,” Benson

ABOVE: 1st Sq, 1st Plt., Co. A, TF Alamo, moves through the woods down dirt cart trails near the FYROM border. Evidence of illegal woodcutting could be seen all throughout the patrol.

TOP LEFT: Radio communication and land navigation skills were vital assets during the patrol.

BOTTOM LEFT: 2nd Lt. James Benson, 1st. Plt., Co. A TF Alamo, establishes radio communication with air support during the border patrol.

RIGHT: After the patrol had marched five kilometers along the border they arrive at the Helicopter Landing Zone where they move out to board the helicopters back to Camp Bondsteel.

See BORDER.....Page 29

VETCAP



Above and Right; Deworming is one of the most common procedures done on VETCAPs, as well as among the highest in demand. Here, a sheep is given a 'drench', which will keep her worm-free for two to six months.

Story & Photos, Layout & Design
By Pfc. Christina M. Vanyo

In the small village of Kisno Polje/ Kishnapole, Soldiers from Task Force Falcon civil affairs, G-5, and Task Force MedFalcon, walked to the houses of the village's farmers. Tuesday March 28 marked the 36th Infantry Division's first 'VETCAP'.

Much of the livestock in Kisno Polje/ Kishnapole and other Kosovar villages are in need of veterinary care.

Local departments of agriculture have been working with Kosovo Forces 7, Multi-National Task Force (East) to assess the levels of care needed throughout the sector.

From 9:00 a.m. to approximately 4:30 p.m., local veterinarians and Soldiers provided and promoted proper veterinary care and development.

Five farms were visited, each with 150-200 sheep. Also, 350-400 cows were scheduled for treatment.

TF MedFalcon assisted in providing veterinary supplies; things needed to administer 'deworming' medicine, in this case. CA handed out reading material for the farmers on proper care.

Capt. Andrea S. Mullen, TF MedFalcon veterinarian, said getting the information on paper into the hands of the farmers is the best in educating them about their livestock.

"If it's written down," she said, "it's so much longer lasting. Giving these translated handouts, in Albanian and Serbian, is the most lasting aspect of the VETCAP."

Mullen gives credit to Maj. Linda Eilks, 353rd civil affairs command, TF Falcon.

"We all had the idea," she said, "but Maj. Eilks got the information into the hands and homes."

Last rotation, there were a total of five VETCAPs, Mullen hopes to more than double that number this rotation.

"We're the second group here for a year," she said. "I want to make it happen."

Tasks done on the VETCAPs primarily are deworming and providing vaccinations.

The most common method of deworming is called a 'drench', which is given orally.

Large animals, for instance the sheep, respond well to the drench.

"The drench is what we're using for the sheep," Mullen said, "and a topical dewormer for cattle."

The dewormer remains active from two to six months, within the animal's body.

"The topical dewormer is applied to the skin and goes directly into the bloodstream and kills the worms," she said.

Other ways to deworm are by a shot or pill, but oral and topical are the chosen methods, she said.

"You could go back to the old way," she said, "but if you have a lot of livestock, this is more efficient."

"You can give it to the dogs too," Mullen added.

She said worms are contracted through the environment in which the livestock lives.

From an early age, we're taught that animals need care, people need care, Mullen said. The veterinarians are trying to engrain this as a priority in the farmers.

Mullen explained that the VETCAPs are a resort used when the farmers cannot properly care for their animals on their own.

"If they do the right thing, they're not going to need VETCAPs," Mullen said. "Often times they're just given an animal and they don't know how to take care of it."

Mullen recalled one story of a farmer who had seventy-five percent of his goat herd die unexpectedly. She was called about the emergency of a possible infectious disease, when the culprit was parasites.

"The farmer never dewormed his goats," Mullen said. "Another reason these handouts on 'herd health' are so important- herd health management."

In the states, there are organizations such as Future Farmers of America and the 4-H, both mainly volunteer-based. These clubs aid in the education of all areas of agriculture, such as raising and keeping livestock.

Get fit!!

Seminar promotes physical fitness and a healthy lifestyle

Story, photos, layout & design
by Pfc. Christina M. Vanyo

To promote the importance of physical fitness and a healthy lifestyle, 353rd Civil Affairs and the network leaders of 'One Voice', a civic society organization, held a fitness seminar at the Camp Bondsteel South Town gym.

The event began at 9:30 a.m. Saturday March 25 and lasted until 3:00 p.m., including a break for lunch for all who attended.

"We want to promote a healthy lifestyle," said Sgt. 1st Class Mario Franco, chief of operations, 353rd CA. "You were created with one body, why not respect it. Our intention for this seminar is to focus mainly on the Soldiers. Being physically fit is a component of being a Soldier," Franco said.



Above; two Kosovar students whom attended the seminar, talk their way through a boxing demonstration.

"As a 35-year-old man, father of four and with my job working with young adults," he said, "it's important to live positive, live strong."

The seminar was sponsored by a local Urosevac/Ferizaj based company that produces energy drinks.

Franco said, "Our sponsor has donated 600 energy drinks."

Franco said he wants to encourage young people to stay in school and lead an active lifestyle.

"Being physically fit is not the only way to relieve stress," Franco said, "but it helps. We want to kindle that fire in your heart to be active. It's important to deal with stress and (deal with) the work-load."

Before the seminar began, Franco introduced several very important people.

The VIPs were made up of local-nationals from the Kosovo Protection Service's training-school, and members from the Kosovo body-building federation located at the Roni gym in Urosevac/Ferizij.

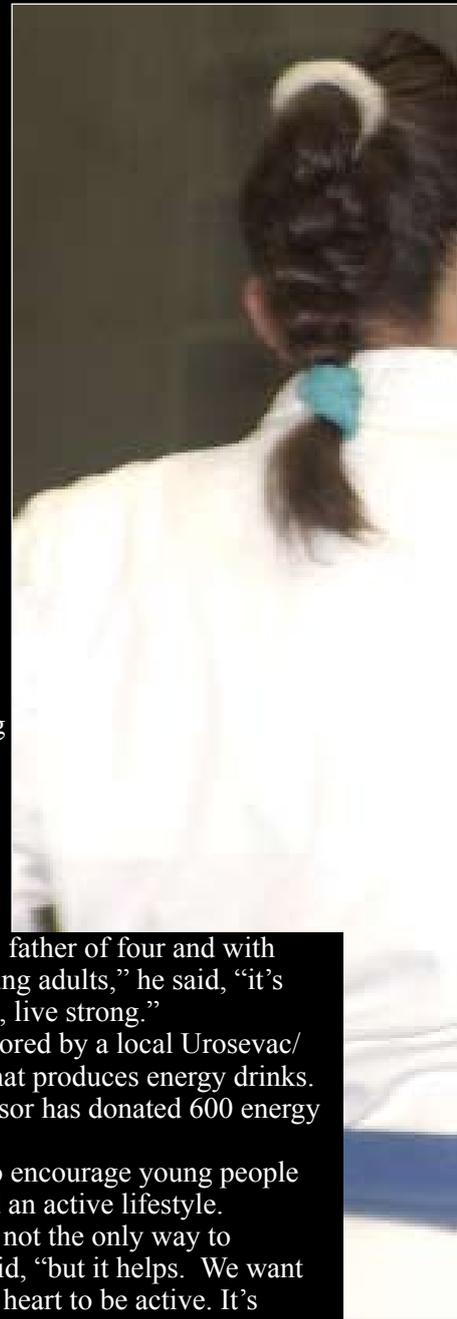
Participants and demonstrators were Soldiers from the Task Force Falcon Personnel Service Center.

Broadcast-videographers from a local television station showed up at the gym to provide coverage.

"There's going to be a thirty minute television special featuring the seminar," Franco said. "It will be aired on Kosovo TV."

The first block of instruction was presented by Franco and Maj. Alba Villanueva, deputy for civil military operations, TF Falcon.

"Being a Soldier for seventeen years, we understand waking up at five a.m. and six a.m. in the morning can get one; boring, and two; monotonous," Franco said.





Above; Zogjani, Female Kosovo and European Karate champion, shows attendees of March 25th seminar a few moves with the help of one of her pupils.

He made everybody aware that he did not want the seminar to be ‘one way’, meaning, questions as well as advice for the instructors was welcome. He said the event will hopefully foster friendships and assist in exchanging training techniques and advice.

Franco started by advising those who want to lose weight, to decrease their calorie intake and increase the level of activity. He also explained ‘super-setting’, which is alternating two exercise activities consecutively until your desired number of sets is complete.

The first super-set Franco demonstrated was the arm-curl, which works the biceps, he said. After 10 to 12 repetitions of the exercise, Franco switched immediately to a triceps exercise.

“Maximize your effort,” he said. “While at the gym, instead of a two hour social event, concentrate on your repetitions and activity.”

“If you follow the fitness world,” Franco said, “there’s a lot of focus on the core. This helps definitely for sports.”

He emphasized the importance of paying attention to your abdominals and posture during your entire workout.

Safety tips, such as making sure to bend from the waist and not the back, were given. Also, the instructors said to breathe deeply and consistently throughout all exercise and never forget to stretch prior to and proceeding physical activity.

Franco dabbled with the ‘medicine-ball’, which looks like an oversized volleyball filled with sand and varying in weight. The medicine ball workout works many muscles at the same time, he said.

“The medicine ball burns a lot of calories!” Franco said.

MNTF(E)

Company 1SGs share experiences with the KPC

Story, photos, and layout & design by Spc. J. Tashun Joycé



Command Sgt. Maj. Jimmy Broyles, TF Houston converses with first sergeants from the Kosovo Protection Corps with the aid of a translator at the TMK building in Gnjilane/Gjilan. Broyles was present to observe the training provided by 1st Sgt. Richard Milford, D company, TF Houston.

On April 7, company first sergeants from throughout Multinational Task Force (East) united to share their leadership expertise and assist the Kosovo Protection Corps as they create their new noncommissioned officer corps.

The KPC is comprised mainly of veteran members of the Kosovo Liberation Army which was disarmed and disbanded in accordance with UNMIK Regulation 1999/8, turning them into a civilian emergency response organization.

“Although members of the KPC are not an army; they have continued to operate using the rank structure that is common in most eastern block countries,” Sgt. Brian Cavin, noncommissioned officer in charge, KFOR Inspectorate for the KPC. “What they have is officers and non-officers.”

In addition to facilitating this training, Cavin oversees the NCO training of the KPC as they move toward the inception of an NCO Corps, a concept that is completely new to this organization.

“They like the way we are structured and would like to adopt our model, so we are showing them how NCOs execute,” Cavin said.

Working for KIKPC has given Cavin the opportunity to instruct junior NCOs at the training and doctrine headquarters

in Pristina/Prishtine twice a month. Training for KPC members is provided using procedures outlined in the US Army model of the officer development program and NCO development program, he said.

“The training we provide consists of regular functions and leadership tasks used in daily Army operations,” Cavin said. “It is important to remember that the KPC is not an army, therefore, we do not cover any tactics or techniques of a military organization.”

While Cavin is qualified to provide instruction up to the E-7 level, lacking the personal experience of a senior NCO moved him to go to Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Boyer, command sergeant major, MNTF(E) for assistance in recruiting personnel to assist him in his task.

Boyer sent Cavin to Command Sgt. Maj. Jimmy Broyles, command sergeant major, TF Houston and requested that he assist KPC Command Sgt. Maj. Blerim Remusholli. Remusholli needed help in training his senior NCOs.

Although Broyles mainly provides guidance and instruction for the Kosovo war veterans, he has provided instruction for KPC members who will fill the positions of senior NCOs.

In March, first sergeants were appointed to each unit in order to develop an effective NCO Corps and assist the KPC command in daily operations. The goal is for the KPC to have a fully functioning NCO Corps that resembles the US military.



KPC members participate in a block of instruction explaining the enlisted rank structure and chain of command. These newly appointed first sergeants will be working closely with company first sergeants from MNTF(E) as the KPC continues to build its noncommissioned officer corps.

“They have received very little leadership training for their first sergeants,” 1st Sgt. Richard Milford, Company D, TF Houston said. “My role as a primary instructor was to prepare them for whatever leadership roles they may fill in the future.”

“It’s difficult to teach a class in one language to someone who speaks another language,” Broyles

said. “First Sergeant Milford did an excellent job.”

“Having a good translator made things go smoothly,” Milford said. “They were very receptive and grateful to us for coming out and giving the training. It’s a good experience to teach other first sergeants from another country to do what we do. It’s wonderful that they want to better themselves and take on these new additional responsibilities.”

BOXING CHAMP TRAINS WITH SOLDIERS

Story, photo, layout and design by Pfc. Christina M. Vanyo

The Moral Welfare and Recreation relies on volunteerism to perpetuate off duty activities for Soldiers. Here on Camp Bondsteel, like most other foreign duty stations, Soldiers are away from their homes and often times, their hobbies. It takes a passionate volunteer to help the Soldiers keep their motivation levels high and spirits up.

Enter, Andrew Small, MWR boxing instructor. For one year, Small has been an active MWR volunteer.

“Last year,” he said, “was the first time I’ve put on the gloves since giving it up.”

“My primary reason for walking away,” Small said, “for giving it up, was when my mother pulled through an illness.”

Small, now 45, was 24 when he walked away from the pugilist life.

“I’ve been in the boxing game since 1976,” he said.

For seven years, Small boxed as an amateur, but won the New York State Gloves in 1983.

Small said he has also boxed with well known heavy weight champion Mike Tyson.

“Mike Tyson was my sparring partner,” Small said, “when he was fifteen-sixteen- years old, before he was famous.”

Now, Small focuses on his students and volunteer instruction. His three-days a week classes cover various areas of boxing conditions and instruction.

“Body positioning, working with the medicine ball,” Small said, “are our warm-ups.”

“Later in class, we do a little sparring,” he said.

The numbers of students tend to vary each class. Small said in the beginning stages, there were 40 students on a good day,



Small, photographed in the Camp Bondsteel South Town gym, speaks to an audience on fitness and specifically boxing. He is a firm believer that boxing delivers fantastic physical and mental results.

now, that number holds steady around 20.

Small said during the sparring sessions with his students, he wears a ‘body protector,’ which absorbs a little less than 50 percent of the impact.

He teaches his students as a coach would train his athletes.

“I never ask them to do anything I couldn’t or wouldn’t do,” Small said.

Small never served in the military, although his father retired as a Marine Corps colonel.

“This is a way for me to support the troops,” Small said.



Above; Small, pictured wearing an impact-sensitive suit, spars with one of his students, Sgt. 1st Class Mario Franco. Right; a student hugs a medicine ball while wearing wrist wraps, which stabilize the hands during boxing, and keep the fingers close together.



At the beginning of this deployment, I tried not to think about being gone for just short of a year. I tried to break it down into smaller blocks of time that would, hopefully, pass quickly and add up to a longer block of time passed without me realizing it.

The first block of time that came and went was our time at Hohenfels, Germany. After that I started looking forward to the rest and recuperation leave. Sitting here at my computer thinking about it, the short time spent at Hohenfels seems like it was just the other day, and the 15 days spent during the relief-in-place (right-seat left-seat ride) training feels like it just ended the night before.

I got the opportunity to leave Kosovo for a few days on the first Greece retreat April 4-7. And, I must say that getting away from Camp Bondsteel was completely awesome. Four days away might not really seem like much, especially compared to the two weeks we'll get on R&R leave, but I was amazed at how recharged I felt after those few short days.

Upon my return from Greece I realized, without being actively aware of it during my pass, I went on and returned from a pass that I had been looking forward to for almost five months. One of my Soldiers recently returned from his R&R leave, and it occurred to me that our deployment to Kosovo is nearing the mid-way point. I'm trying to maintain a balance between the elation of being so far into the deployment and facing the reality that there's still a long way to go before we head home.

Even considering how much time I spend marking days off my calendar and counting down the days to my return to Fort Hood, part of me already realizes that I will miss the opportunities this deployment presents.

Never in my life would I have had the opportunity to tour Greece for four days, much less four days at a total cost of just over 250 Euro. And I will also have the opportunity of a second pass in Bulgaria following my R&R.

When a friend serving in Iraq heard about my trip to Greece, he thought it was amazing that I was taking my R&R in Greece...but he was even more amazed (and maybe a little envious) when he heard that it wasn't my R&R, but a pass in addition to R&R. After his initial reaction to hearing that, I don't know if I'll tell him about the additional trip to Bulgaria.

What I'm really starting to come to terms with is the fact that I'm actually enjoying this deployment. In spite of the sometimes day-to-day grind here on Camp Bondsteel, being in Kosovo is great.

So, for the rest of my time here, I'm going to take it day-to-day and make sure I experience everything being here in Kosovo, especially at such an interesting period of time for the province, has to offer. I hope every other Multi-National Task Force (East) Soldier can do the same.

~Sgt. Brandon Kraemer~

Safety Office Monthly Messages

Spring is ending and summer is beginning. The softball and soccer fields have been reseeded, the outdoor volleyball court is clear and ready for use; our teams are practicing for the upcoming season. As we are becoming more active, so are the local nationals around this region. We will face the following challenges with the changing season;

Vehicular traffic. Civilians tend to drive recklessly. We share the roads with these reckless drivers and must be more careful when conducting mounted operations. Slow down and drive defensively and make sure our risk assessments reflect any other control measures taken to mitigate these risks.

Pedestrian traffic. Lack of sidewalks and respect for vehicles increases the probabilities of pedestrians being hit by our vehicles. When encountering children and other pedestrians along the road, we must SLOW DOWN and give them the right of way. Be especially careful when traveling around schools and outdoor market areas. EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED.

Sports Injuries. Sports-related injuries continue to be the number one problem with the task force. Follow the rules of the game, and stretch prior to and after each game. Team coaches; encourage your Soldiers to stay fit, play the game properly, and have fun. But more importantly, be safe.

The MWR has made risk assessments, be sure to review these hazard controls prior to the games. Don't allow your Soldiers to play in the fields under less than optimal conditions.

Thanks to all for a job well done during the winter months. Enjoy the season and be safe.

*Lt. Col. Mario M. Alayon,
chief safety officer,
Task Force Falcon*

said.

After radio communication had been established, the patrol pushed forward, abandoning their current trail to move up the side of the mountain they had been skirting. Being at such a high elevation, the trail switched from dirt to snow as they moved higher and higher towards the HLZ.

They ‘popped smoke’ to signal their location to the ‘birds’ that were already flying overhead. The patrol moved out across empty fields in a wedge formation.

“There are no bullets flying here, and that gives us the opportunity to go on a real world patrol with a training focus,” Benson said.

Pretty much all the other deployments, said Benson, Soldiers are going to Iraq, Soldiers are going to Afghanistan, Soldiers are getting shot at the entire time and that becomes the focus. “But here you get a chance to get really, really good at the nuts and bolts of what the infantry is,” he said.

A few minutes later, the patrol arrived at the HLZ. After establishing radio communication with the helicopters, the patrol received instructions that their ride would be arriving early. The team double timed it and boarded the aircraft that would bring them back home.

RIGHT - Soldiers from 1st Plt., Co. A, TF Alamo establish radio communication with their air assets towards the end of the border patrol.





Local-national veterinarians assist Task Force MedFalcon and CA on the deworming of sheep, in Kisno Polje/Kishnapole.

However, volunteerism is a concept new and unfamiliar to many Kosovars, making it a challenge to institute any such programs here, Mullen said.

The local veterinarians work with the Soldiers, Mullen added.

“They want to keep their hands in the job, locally,” she said.

She explained that money, as in the local veterinarians being paid, is an issue.

“The care is relative,” Mullen said. “They come out see a goat herd, for example, to give vaccinations, but might not get paid.”

Mullen has advised the local veterinarians to ask for payment from the farmers first, before providing care.

Here in Kosovo, goats are used for their milk while sheep are raised for their wool and meat.

Talking with one of the farmers after his

herd had been dewormed for an extended period of time, Mullen was told he noticed the changes.

The farmer said the sheep had more and thicker wool, and more meat, both on less feed.

Mullen mentioned an organization; Heifer International, that aids in international livestock farming and education.

She explained that in such a case scenario, a single animal is given to a family. Afterwards, a peace-keeper and volunteer from the organization will proceed to live with the family to teach them the proper care for that specific animal.

The people of Kosovo could benefit from something similar.

As far as expectations for the future are concerned, Mullen focuses on completing more VETCAPs, and also, getting more people from the task forces involved.

“The medicine ball burns a lot of calories!” Franco said.

Franco and Villanueva demonstrated an exercise with the medicine ball by holding it over their heads, bending at the waist, and touching the ball

“Being a Soldier for seventeen years, we understand waking up at five a.m. and six a.m. in the morning can get one; boring, and two, monotonous,” Franco said.

to their toes.

“While it elongates the quads,” Franco said, “you’re also working lower back, biceps and triceps.”

The next guest instructor was Shqipe Zogjani, Female Kosovo and European Karate Champion. Following Zogjani, was past-professional boxer Andrew Small, the Morale Welfare and Recreation boxing instructor.



Above; Students of Andrew Small, MWR boxing instructor, take turns hitting the 'heavy bag'. Each students would perform a combination of moves common to what would be done in class. Small called out various sequences and the Soldiers quickly acted out. Below; Franco, and Villanueva demonstrate exercises done with the medicine ball.



Small said it’s been one year since he had begun volunteering to teach boxing, and that this was the first fitness seminar he has seen here on Camp Bondsteel.

Boxing keeps it’s participants from being couch-potatoes, builds endurance and self-confidence, Small said. It also gives discipline to one’s life, encourages personal respect and a sense of camaraderie, he added.

In 2000, Franco organized a boxing seminar at a Kacanik/Kacanik high school. The event hoped to capture the attention of the students, encouraging them to turn to physical fitness and competitive activity rather than drugs and crime.

The event was very successful, he said, then and now.



Guardian

Volume 13, Issue 4 Produced for Personnel of KFOR Multi-National Task Force (East) www.tffalcon.hqsareur.army.mil May 2006