



GARCIA

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Guardian

Volume 13, Issue 6 Produced for Personnel of KFOR Multi-National Task Force (East) www.tffalcon.hqsareur.army.mil July 2006

Photo of the Month

Photo by Spc. Michael O'Neal,
Task Force Alamo



Local Kosovar kids ride the 'Swing Chair' in Viti/ Vitina on a gorgeous summer day, May 27.

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 in accordance with AR 360-1 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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Photo by
1st. Sgt. Stephen Graszler,
TF Talon

Photo by Spc. Daniel J. Nichols



Photos by Sgt. Brandon Krahrmer

WHAT JULY 4TH MEANS TO 6 MNTF(E) SOLDIERSP26

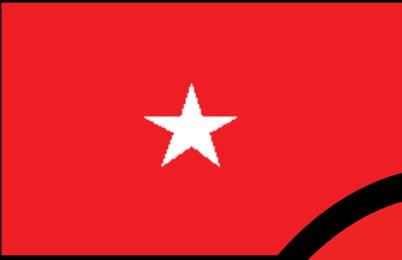


Photo by Spc. Daniel J. Nichols

Fencing on CBS.....p. 14-15

FRONT COVER PHOTO BY SGT. BRANDON KRAHRMER- 1st Lt. Samantha Garcia, officer in charge, S1, Task Force Houston, closes her eyes and laughs in front of many onlooking Soldiers during a photo shoot for the Guardian, June 23, on Camp Bondsteel. Go to page 24 to read about what July 4th means to Garcia and five other MNTF(E) Soldiers.

BACK COVER PHOTO BY SPC. MICHAEL O'NEAL, TASK FORCE ALAMO- Sgt. 1st Class Richard King, battle captain, TF Houston, enjoys a burger on June 18 during Father's Day festivities in front of the North Town chapel on Camp Bondsteel.



CGS



Photo by Spc. Daniel J. Nichols

Brig. Gen. Darren Owens, commanding general, Multi-National Task Force (East), salutes the colors on May 29 during the Memorial Day ceremony held at sunset on Camp Bondsteel.

Column

On July 4th, 1776, a small but determined group of Americans met to announce to the world the birth of a new nation - a nation that recognized the self-evident rights of man, where the power to govern rested with the consent of the people rather than with the decrees of princes and potentates. Starting with just a few words written by hand on simple parchment, these men of vision set in motion a radical experiment in democracy and free enterprise that has changed the world.

As modern Americans, who have enjoyed these blessings for so long, it is easy for us to forget just how groundbreaking this experiment really was. The founders of our nation cast off the concept of the divine right of kings that had held sway over the world since the dawn of recorded history.

The nation they created has inspired enlightened men and women everywhere -- statesmen, scientists, philosophers, and theologians -- to abandon old ways of power and privilege and to embrace new ideals of freedom and justice.

The Fourth of July is marked back home by spectacular fireworks and backyard barbecues. Here at Camp Bondsteel, let us mark the day with time to reflect on the precious endowment given to our nation -- and to our world -- by the Founders.

This endowment has not come to us cheaply. The price for it has been paid with the precious blood of patriots many times over the last 230 years. Remember the effort and sacrifice given by millions of Americans who fought, and still fight, to preserve that endowment of freedom for generations yet to come.

LONE STAR!

CSM'S CORNER



Photo by Sgt. Matthew Chlosta



Photo by Spc. Michael O'Neal, Task Force Alamo

Above, Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Boyer, command sergeant major, MNTF(E), right, cracks a smile as Brig. Gen. Darren Owens, commanding general, MNTF(E) cuts the cake at the South Town DFAC on June 14, in celebration of the 231st Army Birthday and the 229th United States National Flag Day.

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

Fellow Soldiers,

As I write this column for the Guardian I must admit that I am having trouble coming up with a topic. Actually, after just completing the DanCon march yesterday, I can only think of how every movement brings about some form of pain. Congratulations to all who participated. We had a healthy contingent of Soldiers present. It certainly gives one a special feeling to complete an event like that. A very special feeling indeed, kind of like being run over by a bus, with the added pleasure of blisters. But seriously, it was a great event and I encourage everyone who has not participated in either of the first two to take advantage of the next one, possibly in October. The next physical challenge to look forward to will be the climb up "Big Duke." We will get that scheduled sometime this summer, probably in the July/August timeframe.

With the beginning of July, we are into the second half of our deployment. The months are flying by. If you have not accomplished your goals yet (remember the goals we all set at the beginning of the deployment- lose weight, get in better shape etc?) the clock is ticking. I realize that our operational pace is quite demanding at times but we will most likely never have another opportunity like this to accomplish some of the personal goals that we have set for ourselves. Stay focused, stay safe, Soldier On!

CSM Boyer



Spc. Jordan Grady TF Dragoon 18-years-old

Spc. Jordan Grady, KFOR-7's youngest Soldier, takes a few minutes to talk about the plans this deployment postponed, what he's learned during his time here, his favorite part of the deployment so far and he gives his regards to his family back home.

Q: How long had you been in the military before you were activated for this deployment?

A: I had been in six or seven months. I just got out of AIT.

Q: What was your initial reaction to the news that you would be deploying so soon after training?

A: It was really a shock and a surprise to me, but I was ready. It wasn't but a month or month-and-a-half before I was activated. I went to Ft. Hood then Ft. Lewis for more MP training. I was one of the few guys that got to go out there.

Q: Did this deployment interrupt any of your plans?

A: Going to college. That was the whole reason I joined; to go to college and make something with my life.

Q: Since those plans are postponed for a while, what are you looking to get out of this deployment?

A: I'm looking into going to WLC (Warrior Leader Course) and that kind of stuff.

Q: What do you think you'll gain personally from this deployment?

A: A lot of experience, and mental and physical growth... just becoming a man I guess you could say. I learn a lot from these old guys over here.

Q: What were your perceptions of Kosovo before you got here?

A: I had no idea. I was thinking it was in a desert somewhere. They told me to make sure to bring my cold weather gear and I was like 'Really'? That was a relief to know it wasn't in a desert.

Q: What's your mission here in Kosovo?

A: Basically we escort VIPs, but if we're not doing that it's patrols and checkpoints and stuff like that.



Q: What do you think the people of Kosovo get out of our presence?

A: A sense of security. I think that them knowing we're here, I guess you could say it makes them sleep better at night. We're here to protect them. The people over here are striving to keep peace, and we're here to help keep the peace with the people.

Q: What's been your favorite part of the deployment so far?

A: Probably the traveling. I've been just about everywhere in Kosovo; from the urban areas to the mountains and small villages. I get to see what Kosovo's like inside and out.

Q: Is there anything you'd like to add or someone you'd like to send a message to?

A: I just want to tell my family thanks for being there for me and supporting me.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Roger Riepe, KFOR-7's oldest Soldier, shares his military experience, talks about different jobs he's performed, explains how he ended up being deployed to Kosovo, and also offers some advice about military service as a career.

Q: When did your military career begin?

A: I entered the military in November of 1968 at Ft. Polk, La. I was 24 years old; already an old man. I finished up basic training

**CW4 Roger Riepe
TF Talon
61-years-old**



July 2006

and went to flight school and graduated in November of 1969. After a 30-day leave I went straight to Vietnam and I served one year in Vietnam from December 1969 to December of 1970. 1970 was a special year for Vietnam because that was the year of Cambodia.

Q: What was your job during your service Vietnam?

A: That was flying "slick" Hueys (UH-1 helicopters without a weapons system).

Q: What did you do after returning from Vietnam?

A: I got out of the military upon returning home in 1970. They discharged virtually all of the aviators. I was effectively out of the military at that time as a Chief Warrant Officer 2.

Q: How long were you out before you came back in?

A: I had a 16-year break in service. When I came back in 1986, I came back in as an E-5 Drill Sergeant (at age 40). I did that for two years and I found an aviation opening in Salem, Oregon flying Hueys ,once again with Detachment 1, Company B, 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation Regiment.

Q: When did you make the switch from Hueys to the AH-64 Apache helicopter?

A: I left Salem, Ore., and went to Texas to Ellington field with Co. C, 1st Bn., 149th Avn. Regt. The only reason for that move from Oregon to Texas was to fly Apaches.

Q: What other missions aside from Vietnam have you flown in before your time here with KFOR-7?

A: In the entire year of 1993 I served in Bosnia. I flew in Bosnia for SFOR-13 and SFOR-14.

Q: How did you end up getting deployed for KFOR-7?

A: They needed pilots in Pennsylvania for Co. B, 1st Bn., 104th Avn. Regt. so I applied for a position with Pennsylvania because they were being deployed to Kosovo. That's the end of the story. It's as simple as that.

Q: What are the biggest changes you've seen during your military service?

A: The biggest changes so far that I've seen that are for the better are technology; faster aircraft, more powerful aircraft and night vision systems. The biggest difference of all between this period and when I started my career is that it was a draft Army then. Nowadays you know the story is it's an all-volunteer force.

Q: Is there any advice you'd like to offer?

A: I would encourage any young man who is capable to serve in the military now, whatever service it might be, because the opportunities now are endless. Now, the world is at your footsteps in the military and it's a great place for a young man seeking a technical career to be.

Interview, photos, layout & design
by Sgt. Brandon Kraemer

Guardian



Stage 5 - Improve to MAX your APFT

It's that time of year again. Your Commanders have or are scheduling the semi-annual Army Physical Fitness Test (APFTs) and you are asking the inevitable question, "what do I do, what do I do?" Whether you've kept up with and followed my Fit 2 Fight advice or you are a new reader, either way it's everyone's desire to do well on their APFT.

Not every physical fitness program is meant for everyone. Because each of you are at a different fitness level and because everyone's body reacts to exercise in a different way, one program may not give you the results that you're looking for. I won't begin to preach that my program is going to make you score a 300 on your test. I will, however, guarantee that you have nothing to lose if you try it. Actually, I'm going to do even better. I'm going to give you a choice of two separate mini-workouts. You can decide which one to use and see if it works. If not, try the other one.

ONE – Interval Training

Interval training can help improve performance, but fatigue and injury potential can be high if workouts are done more than 3 times per week. Once "muscle failure" is reached during a workout DO NOT workout again for AT LEAST 48 hours "Interval" is defined as the rest period taken between sets. "Muscle failure" means you are unable to continue an exercise at a designated pace.

Push-ups

- Use half the number you normally do in 2 minutes and use this number for your sets
- 1-minute rest between sets
- When you can do 4 sets without failing (without going to leaning rest position), increase your reps by 10% and repeat
- One week prior to the APFT, build your confidence by knocking out 1-minute of good push-ups (you will be more than half your max by this time with a minute still left to go)

Sit-ups

- This is a speed exercise and a stopwatch is a must. Begin doing 1 sit-up every 1.5 seconds (20 sit-ups in no more than 30 seconds = 1 set)
- 1-minute rest between sets
- Muscle failure with sit-ups means your time has slowed down (continue until this happens)
- Two weeks before the APFT, speed up by doing 10-situps in 10 seconds (or faster) with 30-seconds of rest until you reached muscle failure

2-Mile Run

- Divide your 2-mile goal by 8 (14:00 two mile = 1:45 minute ¼ mile)
- Do quarter mile runs (once around the Bondsteel track) with a 2-minute rest (walk) between runs sets
- Start with 4 quarters per workout and improve to 8 quarters
- When you get to 8, increase the pace by 1-2 seconds per quarter each workout
- When you can do 8 quarters at a pace 10-12 seconds per quarter *faster* than your goal pace (1:45/quarter), you're ready.

TWO – Variation Training

Different types of push-ups work different muscles in your upper body. When the instructions are read to you at the beginning of your APFT, you are notified that repositioning your hands are authorized (as long as they remain in contact with the ground). You work more of your triceps when you do regular push-ups and your chest/shoulders when you do wide-arm push-ups. So, to train for this type of strategy, you have to do various types of push-ups; hence the title –Variation Training.

Regular, close-hand, and wide-arm are the three most common **push-ups**. If on your last APFT you did 60 push-ups, you should do 30 regular (half), 20 close-hand (quarter) and 20 wide-arm (quarter), which will equal one set. Do three sets. Once you no longer feel sore the following day, increase repetitions by 10%.

This goes for **sit-ups** as well. The regular sit-up, the crunch, the flutter kick and the leg spreader are all good exercises to help work your abs and hip-flexor muscles. Again, if you did 60 sit-ups on your last APFT, take half that and do 30 regular sit-ups. Do 20 crunches, flutter kicks and leg spreaders. All 4 exercises equal one set; do 3 sets. If you no longer feel sore the following day, increase the repetitions by 10%.

Advice on the **run/walk** portion of the APFT is challenging to explain without charts and assessments. Because this is Variation Training, don't forget sprint days, fast-run days and long/slow run days. Set certain distances for all three so that your training heart-rate is elevated enough to get a good training effect. Unlike the other events, these three variations should not be done on the same day. They work different leg muscle groups and can cause injury if combined heavily.

Whether it's the Interval Training or the Variations Training that you choose, remember safety is key. If you stretch well before any training exercise, these exercises will work better for you. Pulled muscles or strained ligaments set you back considerably. Also remember that your body needs time so you should refrain from most exercises within 48-72 hours of your APFT.

Take these tips and run with it (pun intended). It's summertime here in Kosovo, keep up the hard work all of you are doing and look forward to next month's column, – AB ATTACK.

Keep up the hard work and remember, **Stay 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 how to improve to MAX your APFT.



STATE OF THE STATUS

New column

Soldiers currently stationed in Kosovo will be familiar with the phrase ‘future status talks.’ But, what does it really mean and what is the current “State of the Status?”

The future status talks are United Nations-led negotiations between the governments of Serbia and Kosovo to determine what the political status for the province of Kosovo will be. At the heart of the talks is the question of whether Kosovo will remain part of the Republic of Serbia or gain independence.

While MNTF(E) Soldiers have no role in these negotiations or their outcome, a basic understanding of the most recent rounds of status talks is important to know when working in Kosovo communities.

Politicians from both Belgrade (capital of Serbia) and Pristina (largest city in Kosovo) have formed negotiation teams. Both teams have gathered to conduct negotiations in determining the status. Martti Ahtisaari, a Finnish diplomat, is the U.N. Special Envoy for Kosovo and responsible for the future status process.

There have been six rounds of talks thus far, in what Ahtisaari has characterized as the first phase. The first phase focused on topics such as improving conditions for minorities, decentralization of local government, and the importance of boosting Kosovo’s economy. He feels that these issues need to be addressed first before the question of status can be discussed.

The first round of talks was to have occurred in January of this year but was postponed until mid-February due to the death of former Kosovo President Ibrahim Rugova. During this initial round of talks the topic focused on the decentralization of Kosovo, a concept designed to bring government closer to the people through the creation of locally-elected municipal units.

The second round of talks, on March 17, focused on municipality financing, interconnection between municipalities and the connection of Serbian majority municipalities with Belgrade. Members of the Serbian negotiation team Leon Kojen and Slobodan Samardzic felt that these rounds of talks were useful despite the difference in each negotiation team’s stances.

The 3rd round of talks, which took place on April 3, centered around the creation of municipalities, discussions ventured into local authority in reference to health, education, culture, as well as police and justice.

May 4 marked the 4th round where the discussion of decentralization or the creation of new municipalities was revisited.

However, in the end no agreement was made and has not been made on that issue thus far.

Column by 1st Lt. Rachel Ramos
Layout & Design by Sgt. Matthew Chlosta

At the present time parties involved are attempting to resolve this issue.

The round which showed the most success, were the 5th round of talks that occurred on May 24. The center of these discussions was dedicated to the protection of cultural and historic monuments in Kosovo, and to have freedom of movement for religious clerics. Both sides agreed to these issue. Besides the negotiation teams, there were three Serbian orthodox clerics; Bishops Irinej, Artemije and Teodosije, present at these discussions.

The latest round of talks focused on economic issues such as privatization, which is the administration, sale and distribution of socially-owned property, and Kosovo debt management. Progress was difficult, as economic issues are closely tied to a future status determination, which has not yet been made. The 6th round of talks ended on May 31, completing Ahtisarri’s first phase of talks on status-neutral issues.

The negotiating teams and Ahtisaari are now moving into the second phase, expected to begin in mid-July. This phase will attempt to tackle the tough question of Kosovo’s future political status. All parties have a strong political and cultural stake in the outcome.

The important thing for Soldiers to know is that the future status talks are a political process, and the process is in the capable hands of professional diplomats. Stay informed about the “State of the Status” through your unit leadership.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Krahmer

New “State of the Status” columnist 1st Lt. Rachel Ramos, chief, open source intelligence, Task Force Falcon will update readers each month on the most recent goings on in relation to the future status of Kosovo.

What do we mean by “Kosovo Status,” what has occurred in previous status talks and where the talks are now in determining that status, are questions that will be answered in this new monthly column.

Stand Alone Photos

photo by: Spc. Michael O'Neal, TF Alamo ↓



In front, Spc. Albert Reyes, Co. A, TF Alamo, runs forward at the ready during individual movement technique training at 'Falcon-4 Range' on May 27 while Spc. Ruben Briones, Co. A, TF Alamo follows acting as a safety.

photo by: Spc. J. TaShun Joycé ↓



Sgt. 1st Class Morris Bryant, HHC, S-6 communications, TF Houston, warms up prior to the Memorial Day weekend horseshoe tournament held at the South Town recreation area on May 27.



Photo by: Sgt. 1st Class Tom Cruce, TF Talon

Sgt. David Huffman, A Co., TF Alamo is given the Oath of Reenlistment by Maj. Christopher Link, S-3, TF Alamo aboard a Blackhawk helicopter over Kosovo on June 21.

photo by: Spc. Josh Dooley, TF Dragoon



Spc. Alan Myers, Task Force Dragoon, sights down his Squad Assault Weapon as he provides overwatch to his squad as they cross a road early June 17, during an assault for 11 Bravo MOS school on Camp Bondsteel.

photo by: Spc. Emmanuel Torres ↓



Right, Sgt. Eric Reuther, 685th Finance Battalion, TF Falcon from team Bondsteel United observes his team's performance on June 24 during the Camp Bondsteel Mini World Cup soccer tournament with Lt. Col. Mario Alayon, chief safety officer, TF Falcon (center) and Sgt. Mark Shaw, HHC TF Alamo (left) at the Bergstrom Sports Field Complex.

Layout & design by: Spc. J. TaShun Joycé

photo by: Spc. Michael O'Neal, TF Alamo ↓



Sgt. Alexander Janey, Company A, receives his DA1059 for successfully completing BNCOG at 10:47 a.m. on June 15 at the South Town theater.

photo by: Spc. Michael O'Neal, TF Alamo ↓



A little girl from Viti/Vitina/ waves to the camera at 2:46 p.m. on 'Market Day' on June 1.



Operation Big Stampede corrals illegal woodcutters

Story & Photos by Spc. Eugene DuBielak, Task Force Houston
Layout & Design by Sgt. Matthew Chlosta



Working at the tactical command post in support of operation Big Stampede Maj. Mitch Osburn, executive officer, Task Force Houston, receives a situation report from Sgt. Anthony Logiudice, 1st Platoon, Company B, Task Force Houston.

The silence of another dull night was interrupted by a radio transmission at 9:45 p.m., June 20. Sitting in his Humvee Sgt. Robert Labare, squad leader, 1st Squad, 2nd Platoon, Company B, Task Force Houston received a report from one of his team leaders, Cpl. Christopher Speaks, 1st Sqd., 2nd Plt., Co. B, TF Houston.

The observation post established on a hilltop outside of Zegra/Zheger had observed tractors towing wood-laden trailers.

Labare instructed his team to move from their OP and establish a vehicle control point on the observed road. The team quickly moved to comply with his instructions.

Within minutes of setting up the VCP, 2nd Plt. was in business. Four tractors heavily laden with wood and moving slowly approached the VCP, unaware of the waiting Soldiers.

When the drivers of the tractors finally realized what was in the road in front of them it was too late for most of them.

The last tractor had time to react and reversed his heading. He had evaded capture, but only for the time being.

This was the reason they were out there.

Operation Big Stampede's purpose was to disrupt criminal activity.

While the cutting of wood is not illegal in Kosovo, a permit is required from the forestry department. Although the wood had yet be to be examined for stamps and permits it seems odd that legal wood cutting would be done under the cover of darkness.

The team called in a



Below, Spc. Daniel Fredenthal of 1st Plt., Co. B, TF Houston takes a look at the identification of a traveler at a VCP set up on the ABL as part of Operation Big Stampede.



Above, Spc. Daniel Fredenthal, 1st Plt., Co. B, TF Houston thanks a driver for his cooperation at a vehicle control point on June 20.

At a VCP in support of operation Big Stampede Spc. Daniel Fredenthal 1st Plt., Co. B, TF Houston checks the identification of a Kosovar traveling from Serbia across the administrative boundary. In the background Sgt. Carlos Hardeman, TF Houston begins inspecting the vehicle.

situation report to Labare. The team then began the process of establishing identities and whether the wood was indeed illegally harvested.

“Nobody we detained had any identification on them,” Speaks said. “We separated them and questioned them individually. Not one of their stories matched up.

“Legally cut wood is supposed to be stamped when it is cut and none of this was” Speaks said.

Once it had been established that the wood was definitely harvested illegally Speaks again contacted Labare who was retransmitting. When they received the report they

promptly called the Kosovo Police Service.

With the suspects detained, they were now the responsibility of KPS. KPS officers arrived shortly thereafter to escort the suspects to the Gjilan/Gnjilane station. The suspects as well as their tractors and trailers were formed into a small convoy including both KPS and 2nd Platoon for the trip to Gjilan/Gnjilane.

After KPS left, Speaks’ team returned to their OP atop the hill. It was not long before they were contacted. A radio call from the Co. B commander would have them inspecting large stacks of wood found on the roadside. It was there that the luck of the fourth tractor driver finally ran out.

Speaks’ took his team to the location of the suspicious wood stacks.

The team was shortly met by Maj. Daniel Garcia, Co. B commander, TF Houston.

While Garcia received a report of what the Soldiers had found, footsteps were

heard in a field alongside the road.

A quick scan with a flashlight found a single man walking through the field.

The individual was the driver of the fourth tractor. He had abandoned his tractor and fled on foot. He was trying to make his way back to where he had left it.

After being quizzed by Speaks about what he was doing in the field at this hour of the night, he admitted to illegally cutting wood and owning the fourth tractor spotted earlier.

The suspect was escorted to the Zegra/Zheger school, where they linked up with the rest of the convoy to Gjilan/Gnjilane.

Labare summed up the operation.

“It was nice to be able to be a part of a successful operation,” Labare said. “I think the training opportunity it afforded my squad was invaluable,” Labare said.

“We succeeded in interrupting criminal activity and had the chance to improve on our tactical operations,” Labare said.



Spc. Daniel Fredenthal and Spc. Derrick Kelly, 1st Plt., Co. B, TF Houston confer with their interpreter as they examine a traveler’s identification card on June 20.



Fencing at Bondsteel

Story, Photos, Layout & Design by
Spc. Daniel J. Nichols

There are a number of activities and sporting events that Soldiers at Bondsteel participate in during their free time, but one is a little different: fencing.

"You'll hear it called rapier, you'll hear it called period fencing, which is the term I use, or you'll hear it called dueling," Spc. Robert Haeffner, unit supply specialist, Task Force Falcon, said.

Haeffner is just one of a handful of fencers in the 36th Infantry Division that has been deployed to Kosovo. The small group first discovered each other while stationed at North Fort Hood during Kosovo Force 7 mobilization training.

"It came up in a conversation actually," Haeffner said. "It turned out there were three of us who fenced, and fenced in the same style. So all of us sort of were like, 'Well, when I go home I'll bring my stuff back!' And we all did," he said.

A little under a year later, they are still fencing regularly at Camp Bondsteel. Soon, they intend to begin teaching other Soldiers interested in learning how to fence.

"We're working a deal out with MWR (Morale, Welfare and Recreation) to use the gym down at South Town," Haeffner said. We're going to work on setting up classes for beginners, to teach the basics and safety, he said.

In the mean time, the fellowship of fencers can usually be found on Sunday afternoons in Mid-Town outside their barracks, practicing.

"We've been fencing mostly out doors," Haeffner said. "We get a lot of walk by traffic and we get a lot of people interested and we mulled it over (the idea of giving lessons) and

thought, why not?"

After the basics are learned, the time afterwards is used dueling other opponents and building an individual style of fencing.

Although the idea of learning how to fence from a fellow Soldier overseas may sound like an unbelievable situation, everyone seems to discover fencing in a unique way.

"Errol Flynn is my hero," Spc. Gene Ritnour, platoon medic, Co. B, TF Alamo said with a smile. "Ever since I was a little kid I always loved the swashbucklers and the Three Musketeers and things like that."

"I knew about the SCA, the Society for Creative Anachronism, and I knew they did fencing and things like that. So one day I finally looked it up on the Internet and found out they had a group in San Antonio," Ritnour said.

"They basically welcomed me right from the start," he said smiling. "They put a sword in my hand and said 'here, let me show you how to use this,' and I've been fencing from then on."

"I actually discovered it during an Army National Guard recruiting event," Sgt. Gregg Etter, personal security detachment, noncommissioned-officer-in-charge, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, TF Alamo said.

We had taken a Bradley out to a community event and were showing everyone the Bradley when two guys in full armor carrying swords came up, said Etter. "They were more interested in the Bradley and I was more interested in the swords they had," Etter said with a laugh. "Turns out





SIDE PHOTOS: Spc. Gene Ritnour, Co. B, Task Force Alamo, (left) and student Spc. Peter Rucker, G1, TF Falcon, (right) spar during a fencing lesson June 9, in Mid-Town on Camp Bondsteel.

LEFT SIDE INSERT PHOTO: A close up view of the rapiers used by Ritnour and Rucker during the practice meet June 9.

CENTER: Sgt. Gregg Etter, TF Alamo, conducts point control drills using a railing beam on the

they were from the SCA, and they invited me to come to an SCA meet," he said.

Although images of old pictures or video from the Olympics of two fencers fighting on a line may come to mind, the style of fencing the Soldiers use is somewhat different.

"It's more realistic for one thing," Haeffner said. "With Olympic fencing you fence on a line, everything is done along a straight line. This is more real, you'll go to the left you'll go to the right, anything is open," he said. "Also, with Olympic fencing you don't see two weapons, as in double sword, or sword and dagger, sword and shield or sword and cloak."

"You're only limited by your imagination," Haeffner said.

Fencing, like many other sports, requires a basic set of gear to properly participate in the sport.

"In my bag," Haeffner said, "I have my jacket, hood, mask, and gloves which is your basic fencing equipment. I also have a cup, a saber blade and my epee."

The majority of the gear is protective and is put to use for safety reasons.

"The society that we all fall under (the SCA) has issued a set of safety regulations, they're basically there to make everything as safe as possible," Haeffner said. "There's a minimum standard you have to meet to fight, and all of us here are meeting or exceeding that."

All of your armor is tested for safety, Haeffner said; I have to have them tested every year.

"They do what's called a punch test for if a sword broke, they test to make sure a broken sword blade with a reasonable amount of force won't penetrate the material," Haeffner said.

"And then the hood, they put 25 pounds of pressure on your mask to make sure it

doesn't break," Haeffner said, "They do it with a weight with a point on it and then drop it on the mask. If you look on my hood you'll see a little tiny dent where they keep punch testing my mask."

Despite the unique gear required to fence, it doesn't cost as much as you might pay for a set of golf clubs, or football pads.

"Jacket, hood, mask, gloves, blade: one hundred fifty, one hundred sixty bucks. It's sort of a one-time purchase. Once you buy that gear that gear will last you several years before you need to replace anything," Haeffner said. "I'm still using the mask I bought six years ago, and it was one of those same quote unquote 'starter level' helmets, and it's been serving me just fine."

For now, the group has been lending out gear during meets for those who are learning who don't have their own gear.

"I'm not a traditional rapier fighter," Ritnour said, who has taught over 50 people since he began fencing.

"I don't say 'this is the way the Italian masters did and this is how you must do it.' I say 'these are the basics, here's some good ideas, let's see what you can do with it and we'll refine it as you go along,'" he said.

"If you want to do it the way the masters do it, it will take years. If you want to do it the way you're comfortable with it, it shouldn't take you very long," he said. "It's a matter of practice, once you see that they (students) have those basics down you can teach them different techniques. There's several different ways to parry and riposte or thrust and lunge. Once they have the basics down you can show them the different ways to try to trick your opponent."

"Rapier isn't just about being able to 'kill' your opponent as fast as possible," Etter said. "It's a matter of getting the crowd, or whoever is watching on your side, and being able to defeat your opponent with style."



BREAKING NEW GROUND CLEARING OLD



Story, Photos, Layout & Design E

Once home to both Kosovar Albanians and Serbs, Babush i Serbeve/Srpski Babus has been inhabited solely by Albanians since the destruction of Serbian homes in 1999 during acts of ethnic violence.

A small village near Ferizaj/Urosevac, the abandoned community has stood for many years as a symbolic graveyard, with the barely standing skeletal remains of Serbian homes sprinkled throughout.

On June 6 Soldiers from Multi-National Task Force (East), whose sector contains this tiny and dilapidated hamlet, began work on the clearing and rebuilding project during an official ground breaking ceremony.

The cleanup is designed to bring some physical closure to the land, as well as help bring some emotional closure to some of it's internally displaced persons.

"This is to begin demolishing bombed-out and destroyed Serbian homes," Lt. Col. Jose A. Perez, assistant chief of staff, G-5, Task Force Falcon, said.

"New homes will eventually be built in their place, for displaced persons. Today's events are to recognize the start of the demolition of destroyed Serbian homes that will eventually be replaced with new homes for displaced persons" Perez said.

The project has received 2.7 million Euro through the international community and European Perspective, a Greek Non-Governmental Organization, which is the United Nations High Commission on Refugees implementing partner for the project.

EP acts as the 'project manager' and controls the funding, Maj. Charles O. Starnes, deputy, G-5, TF Falcon, said.

One goal of this project, Starnes explained, is to make the land ready for reconstruction.

The initial phase, clearing and removing debris, is being done to prepare the damaged portion of the village for reconstruction so displaced persons can return to their former homes."

There are 83 families on the returns list, Starnes said, although EP predicts only 73 families will qualify to fully rebuild their homes and regain property.

According to Starnes, the 73 qualified families have met all of the requirements to have their homes reconstructed.

The other 10 families are currently having difficulty with legal issues, Starnes said.

These matters, such as lost records and poor documentation of ownership, are unfortunately common. Starnes said re-installation of utilities is also part of the rebuilding process.

Electrical infrastructure, rebuilding the main road running throughout the village,

BY GROUND



By Pfc. Christina Vanyo



Above, on right, Col. Mark Campsey, chief of staff, TF Falcon, MNTF(E), speaks with a member of the KPC June 6. TF Hellas and TF Falcon will clear dilapidated houses to make room for newly constructed homes.

Left, a member of the Kosovo Protection Corps looks out over the local landscape from the former Serbian village of Babush i Serbeve/Srpski Babus, near Ferizaj/Urosevac on June 6.

secondary roads, such as driveways, water source and sewer infrastructure, all must be figured into the reconstruction.

Starnes said different elements of MNTF (E) are working together with civil authorities to complete this project successfully. For example, the Kosovo Inspector of the Kosovo Protection Corps, together with TF Hellas and EP, has aided the KPC in acquiring machinery to move the rubble. This is TF Hellas sector," Starnes said, "They're here today and involved in this whole project."

The former homeowners are being encouraged by EP to maintain jobs during the return and reconstruction process.

In fact, arrangements have been made by EP for the heads of households to work during the rebuilding stage, Starnes said.

Remaining employed will promote income and sustainability of the returning people, he added.

While the houses are being constructed, returning Serbian families have been offered residence in the Serbian town of Bablak/Babljak, Kosovo, almost directly across from Babush i Serbeve/Srpski Babus.

The KPC said they hope to be done clearing rubble from the site within 30 days.

Following TF Hellas and the KPC's

completion of rubble clearing and demolition, private contractors will be brought into the area to begin installation of utilities.

The village is one of many IDP sites throughout Kosovo where residents, regardless of ethnicity, were involuntarily forced to leave their homes. Babush i Serbeve/Srpski Babus is the largest returns project in Kosovo for this year.

Col. Mark Campsey, chief of staff, TF Falcon, MNTF (E), attended the ground breaking as a representative of Brig. Gen. Darren Owens, commanding general, MNTF(E).



Photo Illustration by
Sgt. Matthew Chlosta

TF Hellas and Kosovo Protection Corps are clearing the rubble from the Kosovo Serbian village of Babush i Serbeve/Srpski Babus, near Ferizaj/Urosevac.

Local Leaders Learn, Texas Style

Story by Cpt. Sunset Belinsky
Photos by Spc. Michael O'Neal, TF Alamo
Layout and Design by Spc. Daniel J. Nichols

A groundbreaking training session for municipal leaders from south eastern Kosovo was held at Camp Bondsteel June 6.

Municipal assembly presidents and chief executive officers gathered with leaders from Kosovo Force's Multi-National Task Force (East) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to share initiatives in good governance.

Transitioning to civil authority is one of KFOR's main missions. The seminar provided an opportunity to exchange good ideas and better ways for the civil authorities to conduct the business of running a municipality.

"The event gave the municipal assembly teams an opportunity to exchange success stories and how they were able to make their projects a success, and learn from each other," Maj. Alba Villanueva, deputy, Civil Military Operations, Task Force Falcon, from Austin, Texas, said.

KFOR and OSCE planned the event with the help of Liaison Monitoring Teams.

1st Lt. Carlos Cantu, LMT 6, TF POL/UKR, of Harlingen, Texas said, "We worked in coordination with OSCE municipal monitoring teams to help give information about the seminar to municipality leadership."

According to Villanueva, OSCE is taking a bigger role in Kosovo and assisting with developing good governance and rule of law in Kosovo. "OSCE provides insight about legal issues and how the municipality should be run," said 1st Lt. John Degeest, LMT 2, TF Houston, from Austin, Texas.

Preparing and advising municipal leadership to make the most of the seminar was a team effort. The municipality president of Novoberde/Novo Brdo gave a presentation on successful multi-ethnic leadership. Degeest and his OSCE counterpart were able to help "discuss effective communication strategy" in preparation for the presentation.

Leaders from the Kosovo municipalities of Kamenice/Kamenica, Gjilan/Gnjilane and Shtime/Stimlje discussed open government, focusing on



Musa Misini, Municipality Assembly President for Viti/Vitina, (left) tries his hand at the lasso after a few pointers from Sgt. Curtis Murray, Co. A, Task Force Alamo (right) outside of the South Town DFAC after the earlier municipality meeting.



LEFT: Municipal leaders and selected Soldiers enjoy a traditional Texas-style barbecue at the South-Town dining facility after the meeting.

BELOW: Soldiers try their hand at 'roping cattle' under the watchful eye of Sgt. Curtis Murray, Co. A, TF Alamo.



compliance with the official language policy, a central location for access to public services, and initiatives to involve local leaders and inform citizens through the Internet.

Local leaders from Ferizaj/Urosevac, Kacanik/Kacanik and Viti/Vitina explained their initiatives with citizen involvement. They talked about the returns process, road construction supported by communities, and village leader networks.

The Strpce/Shterpce leader focused on spatial planning, or zoning. Hani I Eleziti/Deneral Jankovic, a pilot municipality, shared their dedication to improving the community with a fire station.

Following the presentations, the group was treated to a traditional Texas-style barbecue. The casual setting allowed participants from all groups

to relax and talk to each other. Sgt. Curtis Murray, Co. A, TF Alamo, from San Antonio, Texas, gave lessons to all takers on calf roping, which provided smiles all around.

“It was a good forum for them to socialize and talk to each other. It was encouraging to facilitate the inter-ethnic communication. It was good to see the leaders of different ethnicities interacting, where otherwise that may not be happening,” Cantu said.



Brig. Gen. Darren Owens, commanding general, Multi-National Task Force (East), right, presents a Texas cowboy hat to Gafurr Ymeri, vice president, Municipal Assembly Ferizaj/Urosevac during the municipality meeting at the South Town DFAC VIP room, on June 6.

Ymeri was attending in place of Feizaj/Urosevac Municipal President Faik Grainca, who attended the ground breaking for the Babush i Serbeve/Srpski Babus site on the same day.

Choreographed chaos can't stop CBS

Story by Pfc. Christina M. Vanyo
Photos by Spc. Michael O'Neal, TF Alamo

Layout & design by
Sgt. Matthew Chlosta

Fort Apache mass casualty exercise proves no match for CBS's first responders

Camp Bondsteel's movie theater was a scene of organized chaos June 14, as medics, firemen, and military policemen practiced responding to a simulated bomb attack in the parking lot.

The exercise, part of Multi-National Task Force (East) operation "Fort Apache," was designed to rehearse emergency procedures and give emergency teams a chance to practice their life-saving skills under tough training conditions.

The day began with role-players arriving in the early morning at the South Town theater and ended with evacuations and treatment at the CBS forward operating hospital.

Sgt. 1st Class Chester Beaver, battle captain, Task Force MedFalcon, started off his morning making-up the wounded.

Beaver worked with Staff Sgt. Kelly Jacoby, S-2/S-3 TF MedFalcon, at the theater making-up the casualties's wounds with fake blood, rubber-organs and flesh, sand, and blood red paint.

"I'll be one of the folks helping direct patient flow," Beaver said. "This exercise is above and beyond what we've dealt with so far."

Even though TF MedFalcon plans a MasCal once a month, this will be quite a test, he said.

The mood was light as the casualties joked among themselves in anticipation for the exercise.

"My wound came out, but I'll be alright," laughed Staff Sgt. Edward Cammon, G-1 and retention, TF Falcon, whose shrapnel wound needed more adhesive.

"I took some shrapnel to the neck," he said.

Spc. Joseph Mendez, Co. A., TF Houston, was unfortunately tagged as 'Killed In Action.'

"We got assigned to this," Mendez said, "but it's been a lot of fun so far."

After the role-playing casualties were finished in make-up, Beaver took them outside into the parking lot



Above, inset, Sgt. Delia Nieves, military policeman, Provost Marshal's Office, Task Force Falcon, center, role plays as she is carried to a patient collection point by two CBS firemen after a simulated explosive detonated.

See MASCAL...P.30



July 2006

Camp Bondsteel emergency crews



Warning:
Fake blood used during Fort Apache MasCal Exercise

Above, left, A Task Force Talon Soldier role plays as having severe injuries from a simulated bombing attack during the Fort Apache mass casualty exercise June 14 on Camp Bondsteel. Staff Sgt. Radames Robles, military policeman, Provost Marshal's Office, Task Force Falcon, tends to the pretend ankle wound as two cars burn and spew flames in the background.

CBS Art Fair highlights Kosovo

Artists

Story by Pfc. Christina M. Vanyo
Photos by Spc. Eugene Dubielak, TF Houston
Layout & Design by Sgt. Matthew Chlosta



Hajrush Ramiqi, an artist from Pozheran, showed mostly paintings, which he created with acrylic and oil paints. He also had drawings done in cray-pas, or, oil pastels. The artisans who presented their work at Bondsteel's Art Fair, brought many different types of pieces.

Despite the overcast skies and drizzling rain, local Kosovar artisans gathered at the South Town gymnasium and basketball courts here on Camp Bondsteel June 10 - 11, to show and sell their work.

The artists' work was done in various mediums including oil, acrylic and water-color paint. There was also photography, charcoal sketches, fabric and textile pieces, as well as jewelry, displayed on long tables and along the gym walls.

The art fair was designed to bring something different and culturally exclusive to the Soldiers on CBS.

Staff Sgt. Alicia Brown, administration specialist, Task Force MedFalcon, took a trip down to the art fair to browse and spend a Sunday afternoon.

"I just came down today, to see the paintings," Brown said.

She had also done some shopping while browsing the fair.

"I bought a purse for my daughter," Brown said. "And a few dust covers for my home." The dust covers were small pieces of hand-embroidered lace made especially for mantle or table tops.

"I also bought a small painting," she said.

Kosovo artist, Aferdita Merovci, 26, from Prishtine/Pristina, presented her work both days of the art festival.

Her pieces consisted of paintings, graphic designs and small tapestries done on fabric, Merovci's art is an offshoot of her interior design work.

"Tapestries," she said, "are done in traditional Albanian designs, I combine with modern technique."

Merovci said she is happy to present here, at a low-key show, before her upcoming and more serious exhibitions.

"I have a show, an exhibition to celebrate the International Day of Children," she said. "My work will be displayed at the 'Gallery of Ministry of Culture' in Pristina, through June 15."

At her table, Merovci also had a book of photographs showing her work currently displayed at the GMC in Prishtine/Pristina.

"I've been painting for about fifteen years," she said, with a smile.

Merovci added that she has most been inspired by the work of Jackson Pollock.

"He is more modern," she said, regarding Pollock's style and impression left on the modern art world. "And I like to present modern art, myself."

In the future, Merovci said she'd like to stick with her modern approach, but invest more time in her home-interior artwork.

"This has been a good experience, here in Bondsteel."

Merovci said she enjoys receiving the opportunity to meet other professional artisans, and her first major exhibition will be this fall, in Skup/Skopje, Macedonia.



Merovci sits among her pieces in the South-Town gym.

"I've been invited to an exhibition in Macedonia," she said. "There will be many other artists there from all over the Balkans, Slovenia and Kosovo."

The showing of the artists' work at Bondsteel was not all for profit, Merovci said. It was more of a chance to show one's work and meet people.

Magbule Xhemalli, a painter and photographer from Gjilan/Gnjilane, combines her paintings and photographs into graphic prints, which she likes best.

"I have some of these graphics in the Kosovo Art Gallery," she said, "although, I have only participated in group exhibitions."

"I have sold one piece," she said, "but we (the artists) are getting to know one another."

Xhemalli said the show has given her a chance to meet other local artisans.

Field Trip

Task Force Med Falcon hosts health high school students at Bondsteel

Fifty students from the Shkolla E Mesme E Mjekesise health high school in Ferizaj/Urosevac received a tour of the Task Force Med Falcon hospital facilities on Camp Bondsteel, June 3.

The students, who are expected to go into a health-related field of work after completing high school, were able to see everything at a real working hospital first hand.

"They got to go to dental, they stopped in physical therapy, the X-ray department, emergency medical team, intensive care unit, and the operating room," said Major William Roland, operating room nurse, TF Med Falcon.

"At each station," Roland said, "we had set up a display, not just to show this 'this is an OR (operating room) table', we actually put out instruments at the OR, a mannequin on the bed. At each station they did something special."

As the students passed through the different stations of the tour, the students were able to see an X-ray performed at dental, climb inside the interior of a helicopter used for medical evacuations, among other things.

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Our intensive care unit showed them how to



Spc. Thomas Gammarano, dental hygienist, Task Force Med Falcon, demonstrates the process of taking a dental X-ray on a patient during the visit of students from the health high school.

perform IVs and patient assessment, Roland said. The emergency medical technicians conducted EKGs (electrocardiograms) and how they assess an emergency case. The X-ray

station had a number of X-rays hanging up so they could show those to the students, he said.

The students took a break halfway through the event to enjoy an outdoor

barbecue lunch with the Soldiers.

“Once we broke the ice our Soldiers had as good a time as the students did,” Roland said. “They’ve always thought of the Army as straight up, in uniform, high and tight or however you want to say it, but this gave them a different point of view,” he said.

“The kids definitely seem to be enjoying themselves,” Sgt. Shawn Kuller, combat stress control, TF MedFalcon, said.

Although the event was a success, TF Med Falcon’s involvement with the students of the health high school does not end here.

We adopted the health high school and began teaching classes there a few months ago, Roland said.

“We do two classes a month,” Roland said. “They’re closing for the summer and then we’ll start up again in September, teaching through September, October and November.”

We’ve fixed up some computers for the school because their computers were all inadequate, and we are hoping to fix up the grounds outside of the school this summer,” Roland said.

*Story & Photos by
Spc. Daniel J. Nichols
Layout & Design by
Spc. Daniel J. Nichols and
Sgt. Matthew Chlosta*



Photo by
Maj. Paul Pecena



ABOVE: Maj. Warren Stump, Task Force Talon, and high school student Burim Nazifi from Ferizaj/Feriaj share a laugh during the helicopter demonstration, where the flight medics allowed the students to climb inside and see everything first hand.

LEFT: Staff Sgt. Stephen Phillips, TF MedFalcon, gives a presentation to students on the different bones in the body using X-rays.

What July 4th means to me.....

“Our forefathers paid the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom and Soldiers both past and present to continue to do the same. I’m proud to be part of the U.S. Armed Forces.”



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Krahmer

**Sgt. Raymond Boyd,
Task Force Dragoon,
Bentonville, Ark.**



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Krahmer

“To me it’s a day to celebrate, as a country, our nationalism and what it means to be an American.”

**Sgt. Charles Cullins,
Task Force Houston,
Corpus Christi, Texas**

“When I think of the 4th of July, I think of independence and what it means to live in America; my hometown, San Antonio, Texas. America is the land of the free. We still



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Krahmer

**1st Lt. Samantha Garcia,
Task Force Houston,
San Antonio, Texas**

remain one of the few countries with enormous freedom of religion, politics, and belief systems. Many people die for independence. It is great what Soldiers do and the sacrifices they make to keep our independence or help others gain it.

This 4th of July I will be celebrating with the friends I have made on this deployment. I will enjoy being off and joining in the festivities and relaxing for the rest of the day. Last year I spent the day with my husband in North Carolina beside a pool with his friends; enjoying some hamburgers and hot dogs. The best part was being with my husband at night watching the fireworks.”

Photo by Spc. Daniel J. Nichols



**Sgt. First Class Harold Roberts,
Task Force Dragoon,
Gravette, Ark.**

“We got deployed, got no choice. We’d rather be home with our families, enjoying the holiday, watching fireworks at night.”



Photo by Spc. Daniel J. Nichols

**Spc. Nicole Deschenes,
Task Force Talon,
Bison, Kan.**

“As a military member, there’s not a better way to spend it than serving.”

Photo by Spc. Daniel J. Nichols



**Sgt. First Class Francisco Delarosa,
Task Force Houston,
Grand Prairie, Texas**

“I’m going to miss my family and the gatherings, the barbecues and the fireworks. Of course I have my friends here too, and being over here you have time to reflect and think about all the good times back home.”

Layout & Design by Sgt. Matthew Chlosta

Both the Command Sergeant Major and I have recently conducted “sensing sessions” with junior Soldiers. To the best of my knowledge, there is no formal Army doctrine for these types of sensing sessions. It is just a simple and direct way we can find out the issues and concerns of soldiers.

The key to addressing those concerns is communication. Sometimes we use “information” and “communication” as if they mean the same thing. Think of information as an item or resource that has value. Communication is the successful delivery of that resource to the person who needs it or can use it.

Lack of accurate communication about major topics, like our transition of authority to KFOR-8 and return home, can cause feelings of frustration and disappointment. Some Soldiers, especially those from states other than Texas, are also concerned that they will return to Fort Hood and will stay there until we have a brigade redeployment ceremony. This is not the case. The re-deployment will work much like the deployment, except in reverse. Soldiers will move back to their mobilization station - Fort Hood for most of us, but Fort Benning, Ga., for those who deployed as individuals and Fort Lewis, Wash. for our Soldiers who stayed from KFOR-6B. You will be at the mobilization station for about one week, then go back to your home armories for another three days before release from active duty. There will be unit re-deployment ceremonies either at Fort Hood, at home station armories or both (the exact guidance on those has not yet been published). The plan is to get every Soldier to his or her home of record by Christmas, this year.

“The plan is to get every Soldier to his or her home of record by Christmas, this year.”

Sometimes concerns are fueled by rumors. Stopping a rumor, once it has started, is like putting the toothpaste back in the tube. One rumor that was passed around Camp Bondsteel recently is that we will move into tents later in the year to make room for KFOR-8 personnel. The actual plan is to minimize disruption by integrating KFOR-8 soldiers into our current room plan and making maximum use of the living containers, so that none of the KFOR-7 Soldiers will have to move out until it is time to go home – although you will almost certainly have a few extra roommates for up to two weeks.

All Soldiers like to know “why” they are being asked to do something, especially American Soldiers. I was asked during one recent sensing session about shopping trips into town. A brief visit to a local store or restaurant in the course of an actual military mission has been permitted, based on our current force protection level. A trip into town just to go shopping is not allowed. The reason is force protection. One way to think about this is to use the terminology our police officers use when approaching a vehicle. There are known “High Risk” situations. The alternative to “High Risk” is not “Low Risk” or “Routine,” but “Unknown Risk.” Allowing shopping trips would invite complacency. There has also been some discussion about hosting trips to local cultural sites but no decisions have been made.

The final concern from recent sensing sessions is regular time off, either for relaxation or attending classes. The commanding general has communicated with the commanders about this concern. His guidance is that Soldiers get one full day off on a predictable basis for rest, and enough time off to attend at least one course a semester. Missions will still have the priority and sometimes prevent this from happening. However, this should be the exception, not the rule.

The goal of the sensing session will always be honest, open communication – both from Soldiers to leaders and from leaders back to the Soldiers. Soldiers and leaders at every level in this organization can help out by making sure they are communicating clearly and accurately on a daily basis.

-Col. Mark Campsey-
chief of staff, MNTE(E)

Safety Office's Monthly Message

This month's safety slogan is, “Don't take unnecessary risks”

Unnecessary risks-We have been doing a decent job of keeping the number of accidents lower than last year for the same month. An issue of concern is the severity of the few accidents that we have had; several accidents could have been prevented if the Army motor vehicle commander would've slowed the AMV speed, thus not causing severe damage to the AMV. Soldiers involved in these accidents were wearing seat belts and did not get injured. Driving cross country + excessive speed = Severe damage to AMV. I call this unnecessary risk, and is uncalled for, unless it is a life or death situation.

High Risk Behavior-Soldiers who disregard written policy are at higher risk to become victims. Statistics have shown that high risk behavior usually result in severe vehicle damage and possible bodily injury. So far in this mobilization we have not sustained any injuries. Let's keep our soldiers safe and avoid risky behavior. Drive defensively. Learn the necessary skills to avoid accidents and, most important, the local drivers and pedestrians.

The NCO support channel is working. Thanks for keeping the Soldiers safe and remember; Stress safety in everything we do!

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



231st Army Birthday

Photos, Layout & Design by
Spc. Daniel J. Nichols



Photo by 1st. Sgt. Stephen Graszler, TF Talon

June 14th 2006...

The 231st birthday of the United States Army was celebrated world wide by US Soldiers everywhere on June 14. At Camp Bondsteel, KFOR 7 Soldiers recognized this event with a number of different activities throughout the day.

ABOVE: In the morning a 5 kilometer morale run was held. Soldiers who participated in the event were given 231st Army Birthday T-shirts provided by the Morale, Welfare, Recreation center.

LEFT: In the evening Soldiers were invited to the Camp Bondsteel movie theater for a short ceremony and a showing of 'We Were Soldiers.' During the ceremony Spc. Annika Chambers, postal detachment, TF Falcon, sang the National Anthem and the oldest and youngest Soldier in KFOR 7 were honored.

BELOW: During lunch, two huge cakes were available for Soldiers, with one at each dining facility. Brig. Gen. Darren Owens, commanding general, MNTF(E), cut each cake after sharing a few words about the importance of the Army Birthday and Flag Day.



Photo by Spc. Michael O'Neal, TF Alamo

Rescue workers get a crash course in communication; cooperation in Kamenice/Kamenica

Story, Layout & Design
by Spc. J. TaShun Joycé



Photo by: Spc. Michael O'Neal, Task Force Alamo



Photo by: Spc. J. TaShun Joycé

One fire-fighter shields the two role playing accident victims, while the other firemen take off the vehicle's roof prior to extracting the injured for medical attention from the Health House.

Kamenica/Kamenice firemen use a large mechanical clamp to cut the metal connected to the roof of the vehicle involved in a simulated accident so it could be removed to extract the victims of that accident.

After six months of planning between the 353rd Civil Affairs Command and the Kamenice/Kamenica Fire Department, Health House, and Kosovo Police Services, a First Responder's Training Exercise was performed on June 23, to validate the joint responder training they have received in the past months.

"This is to see how well they work together," Saint Joseph, Michigan

native Sgt. Paul Neuman, 353rd CA command said.

After staging a two vehicle accident in front of the Vlora Restaurant, directly across the street from a crowded marketplace, the various agencies performed different tasks which included crowd control, providing medical attention, vehicle extraction, and injured personnel transport.



Photo by: Spc. Michael O'Neal, Task Force Alamo

Medics from the Kamenica/Kamenice health house perform first aid on interpreter Besnik Jakupi, prior to placing him in an ambulance to be evacuated for further medical treatment.

MASCAL.....continued from P.21

He told the casualties to cluster in groups once the exercise began.

“Make teams of twos and threes,” he said to the actors, who were mostly volunteers from TF Alamo, with several from TF Falcon and TF Dragoon. “Basically I’ve got to show these guys where they’ll be standing,” Beaver said.

“The casualties were told how to respond to the medics,” Jacoby said, as she completed some final strategic touch-ups on her actors’ injuries. She said there were specific treatments the medics planned to practice.

“It’s indirect fire,” she said, “and one thing we’re pushing for is needle decompression, so we made sure, for example, we had a collapsed lung.”



Beaver explained to his casualties that they’d be taken care of during the exercise, meaning if they needed anything, to let the medics know.

He then asked around to make sure everybody had their spot and knew where to go.

“There will be some ‘psych’ patients as well,” Beaver said. “They will disrupt what’s going on.”

Beaver instructed the psychological trauma patient, played by Sgt. Eric Salisbury, motor pool, NCOIC, TF Falcon, to act very confused and pester the medics as they worked on the critically injured casualties.

“Their part of the exercise,” Beaver said to Salisbury, “is to try to contain you and calm you down.”

“You’re the ‘problem child,’” he said.

Maj. Scott Byers, TF MedFalcon, said 15 casualties made up ‘the cast’ during the exercise.

Some actor Soldiers will role play as casualties and some will have pretend to have acute injuries.

“EOD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) is coming out,” Byers said. Controlled explosions and two vehicle fires will be the backdrop of action for the exercise taking place in the theater’s parking lot.

Byers also said mortuary affairs is participating.



Photos by Pfc. Christina M. Vanyo

Above, left-Sgt. 1st Class Chester Beaver works on a simulated casualty’s fake wound just before the start of the MasCal Exercise.

Above, right-Staff Sgt. Kelly Jacoby pins an injury tag onto Spc. Joseph Mendez while in the theater. The injury tags let the medics, MPs and other TF MedFalcon personnel know the condition of each victim.

“It should be some exciting stuff,” he said.

Once the casualties were out of the theater, the fire department brought in smoke machines to fill the theater with ‘smoke,’ to further mimic an explosion, Byers said.

The action cue for the casualties to take their places were two loud explosions, courtesy of EOD. The smoke alarm could also be heard going off from inside the theater.

The military police were the first to arrive on the scene, as the vehicles continued to burn.

The casualties cried ‘medic!’ One in particular screamed out in pain due to the simulated loss of his foot.

Master Sgt. David Dumeng, provost marshal’s office, TF Falcon, radioed the immediate need for medical personnel.

“The MPs are doing the right thing by not getting sucked in,” Byers said. “Not allowing themselves to be overwhelmed.”

Within minutes, an ambulance arrived at the theater.

Byers explained that the fire department would oversee the action in a situation like this. They would also be responsible for putting out the fires in the parking lot.

“The fire chief of the fire department should be in charge of the whole scene,” he said. “The MPs should be securing the area so when the medics arrive, they can concentrate and stick to the casualties. The fire department will continue to evacuate personnel from the theater.”

Byers said the civilian paramedics attached to Camp Bondsteel’s fire department are participating as well.

“We’re on this morning,” Dumeng said. “We’re ready and are going to take care of these guys.”

He said the main approach to the theater is occupied by personnel from the PMO, to keep the area secure.

“We’ve called in investigators to the scene,” Dumeng said, to examine the fires and explosions.

The medics, after assessing the injuries, began evacuating the casualties from the scene based on the extent of injuries.

They maintained steady communication with the patients, making them as comfortable and reassured as possible.



In the emergency room on Camp Bondsteel, a simulated victim is moved from a litter, as the staff quickly determines the best immediate treatment, June 14 during the Fort Apache MasCal exercise.



Spc. David Underwood, medic, 1st Platoon, Company B, Task Force Alamo, helps with the injured.

Back at TF MedFalcon, ambulance teams came rolling up to the hospital’s emergency room. The teams were working quickly to move casualties inside, clearing each individual’s weapon before entering.

A hand-held metal detector was also used to make sure each casualty was free of ammo and weapons before being brought into the ER.

The paramedics remained working directly with TF MedFalcon during the casualty movement. Litters were set-up outside the ER, ready for new patients to arrive.

Maj. Andrea Mullen, veterinarian, TF Falcon, acted as the triage officer during the exercise.

“Triage officer means I’m the one who sorts them (the casualties) out,” she said. “I determine if they need immediate care, and assess each patient right before they come into the hospital.

They use the dentist and the veterinarian, Mullen said, because their medical skills can also be used on humans and this frees up medical doctors and staff

to begin emergency treatment.

The action wound down as the exercise neared the a finish, after a six-hour ordeal.

Just when the personnel thought the end was in sight, along came another test. However this staged event and action gave the best prep for a possible real-life chaotic situation.

Some casualties arriving later were simulated to be ‘drugged up’ on morphine.

Another arrived with a suspected improvised explosive device hidden on his body, which caused the TF MedFalcon staff to keep him behind a concrete barrier until declared ‘safe.’

The Fort Apache exercise proved once again the time honored saying, to be ready for anything, one must train for everything.



Guardian

Volume 13, Issue 6 Produced for Personnel of KFOR Multi-National Task Force (East) www.tffalcon.hqsareur.army.mil July 2006

