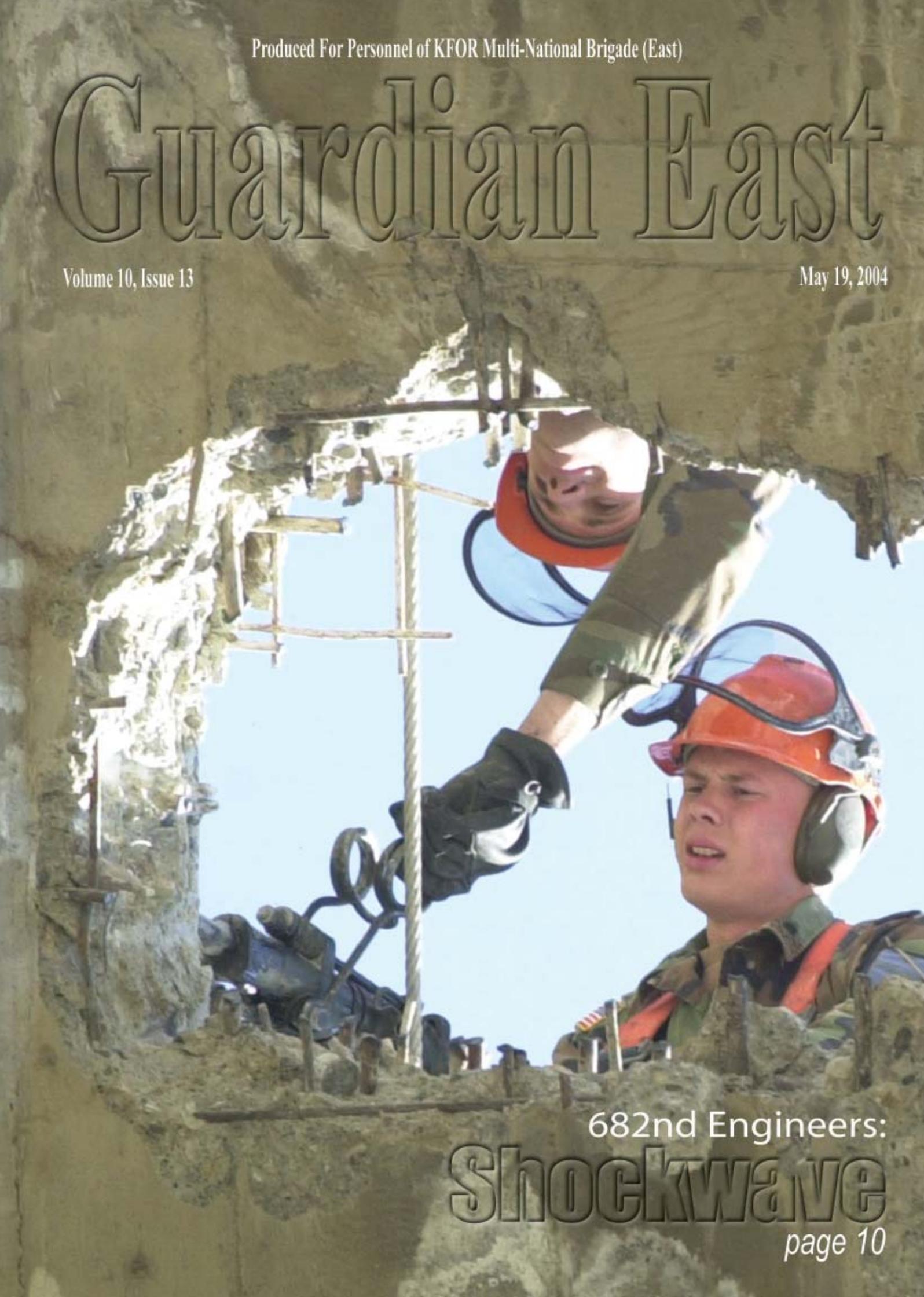


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Guardian East

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May 19, 2004



682nd Engineers:

Shockwave

page 10

Message to the troops



Ready and Bold

By Lt. Col. Charles L. Phillips, Provost Marshall

“Never in recent memory has our Army Values, the Soldier’s Creed, and our Warrior Ethos been more important for us to reflect upon than today. Our Army is serving our Nation with great courage and honor during very dangerous times. We enjoy Great Support and the confidence of the American People, whom we serve, and we are respected around the globe. In view of current events, we must redouble our efforts – hold our heads high – and drive on to accomplish our individual tasks and collective missions. Integrity is non-negotiable. Everyone has leadership responsibilities when it comes to the Legal, Moral, and Ethical. Discipline is doing what’s right when on one is watching. We are proud of you and our Army. Drive on!”

-- Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker, United States Army Chief of Staff and R. L. Brownlee, Acting Secretary of the Army

What better way to start of an article than to use a quote? The reason I felt this appropriate was that after watching the media events on prisoner detention this past couple of weeks, General Schoomaker made a statement to the effect that, no matter what training, leadership or Standard Operating Procedures were in place, those soldiers involved in the abuse of prisoners made a conscious decision to participate, and that was wrong.

This past month, Municipal leaders from our area of responsibility and Task Force Falcon commanders and staff participated in a daylong seminar titled “Reconciliation in the wake of ethnic and racial conflict”. The two speakers focused on various points they observed after visiting areas of Kosovo. One of the speakers stressed that we as soldiers must not take sides in our mission here in Kosovo, but that we must try to understand the suffering of each side. It’s human nature to take sides, and this makes the situation and our mission difficult.

As we continue to accomplish our mission here, decisions will be made that will affect the future of individuals, families, communities and Kosovo. Conscientious efforts must be made to make the best decisions. Another



Lt. Col. Charles L. Phillips

point presented in the seminar was that conscientious decisions should be based on three considerations: is it safe, is it popular and is it polite. The best guidance should be: is it right, do the right thing.

Relationships help cultures to live and respect each other. During our deployment training in preparation for our mission, several times we were told to build relationships. Not just among our own units, but among the communities and with soldiers from other nations working with us throughout the mission. Soldiers of KFOR are deployed here in a multi-ethnic environment and the soldiers within MNB(E) and the other regions of Kosovo represent a multi-ethnic force. Many of you have established trust and friendships with people within the local communities and among fellow soldiers from other nations, learning from these new experiences, and understanding each other’s capabilities. One thing that I am very proud of is to see the efforts of our soldiers that “do the right thing”.

READY and BOLD

Send submissions or story ideas related to the MNB(E) mission to MNB(E) PAO, Attn: Editor, Camp Bondsteel, APO AE 09340; send e-mail to guardianeast@bondsteel2.aur.army.mil.

COVER: Soldiers with the 682nd Eng. Bat., Staff Sgt. Nathaniel Porisch, left, and Spc. Joseph Karels, prepare to break apart a support on a bridge in Kacanik. Photo by Spc. Sean McCollum.

See page 10 for the story

Guardian East

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Camp Bondsteel Soldiers qualify to carry pepper spray with painful results.

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During a course that qualifies Soldiers to carry pepper spray, Spc. Matt Kramer, a driver with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 34th Infantry Division, kicks a padded shield held by one of the course instructors, Spc. Anthony Cugino of the 514th Military Police Company. Photo by Spc. Tim Grooms. See page 18 for the story.



Using a volunteer from the fire department, Spc. Logan Haller, a medic attached to the 2-136th Infantry demonstrates techniques for clearing obstructed airways.

MEDICAL

Story and Photos by Sgt. Jon Soucy

The tall man wearing dark blue stood up and put his hands to his throat. A piece of hamburger was lodged in his throat, preventing him from breathing. At that moment a shorter man positioned himself behind the choking man, wrapped his arms around the taller man's midsection and administered two quick abdominal thrusts. Once the piece of food was dislodged the two men switched positions and the taller man became the one to dislodge an obstruction from the other man's airway.

The hamburger and blocked airway weren't real and the two men were members of the Kamenice/ Kosovska Kamenica Fire Department who were undergoing a modified Combat Lifesaver Course taught to them by medics attached to Alpha Company, 2-136th Infantry. As a way to improve on the knowledge base of those at the fire station, the Soldiers have been spending two hours each Monday evening teaching combat lifesaver skills since mid-April.

"We really hope to raise their level of confidence and competence with their medical skills," said Spc. Logan Haller, a medic from Anchorage, Alaska, who was attached to the unit and was teaching a class on airway management.

The firefighters at the station had about two weeks of training on medical tasks about five years ago, said Sgt. Jerome Brodmarkle, a medic from Aitken, Minn., who was also attached to the unit.

"The fire chief stated that he was concerned with the perishable skills that his fire department has," said Brodmarkle, who was largely responsible for organizing the training. "He wanted to make sure that they stayed trained and perhaps grow in some training and expertise rather than lose them," said Brodmarkle.

The classes are largely based on the Army's Combat Lifesaver Course, but with a few modifications.

"What we're doing is a modified form of the Combat Lifesaver Program, gearing it more toward the firefighter," said Haller. In addition, unlike the Combat Lifesaver Course the Soldiers don't cover how to give intravenous injections because of health and safety concerns, said Haller.

The response from the fire department members has been very positive.

"It's been great," said Haller. "They've got a lot of enthusiasm. They really want to learn. Practically every time we teach them they want to know more and they want to know more, and then we run out of time."

And the experience has been equally positive for the Soldiers involved in teaching the classes.

"It's been really enlightening and rewarding," said Brodmarkle. "This is what I came to Kosovo to do, to teach and to help out."

But perhaps more importantly, the Soldiers are taking steps to ensure that the program continues on after they rotate out of Kosovo.

"I'm trying to put this program together so that it can be taught years from now," said Brodmarkle. "My goal is to make sure the fire chief has a copy of it and to make sure that the task forces that come after us can teach it too and keep the recertification going."

And for the Soldiers, this is a way to make a lasting, positive change in the region.

"I have something concrete I can do," said Haller. "I can leave guys with skills. It really helped me see the difference I'm making here. We have something out there that says 'Hey, we came here, we helped them out and now their lives are better. Now they can help their fellow men out'."

And that, according to the Soldiers, is the ultimate goal of the program.





Cpt. Glenn Kallevig, an optometrist with Task Force Medical Falcon, fits a Kosovar woman for glasses at a MEDCAP held in Kishnapole/ Kisno Polje.

Redhorse

MEDCAP

Story and photos by Spc. Sean McCollum

The town of Kishnapole/Kisno Polje was a hub of activity recently as humvees with red crosses emblazoned on their side

made their way to the local community center. Residents of the town and others from miles around converged on the building as the Soldiers of the 1-113th Cavalry and Task Force Medical Falcon took part in a Medical and Civilian Assistance Program.

“It’s one of the major social things going on that day,” said Col. Basil Leblanc, the task force surgeon with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 34th Infantry Division, who is from Sartell, Minn. “The better the weather, the more people that show up.” Over 300 citizens of the surrounding area showed up on a sunny Saturday, with health needs ranging from a simple wellness exam to the more complex.

In addition to the festive atmosphere a MEDCAP creates, many more intentional objectives are achieved.

“Medcaps are really part of the overall strategy of the task force commander,” said Leblanc. Local doctors are on hand, he said, to reinforce the idea that local residents can receive medical care regardless of their ethnicity or that of their doctor.

In addition to the local doctors, military doctors, physicians assistants, and combat medics are on hand. The medics question the patients first, recording their symptoms and taking their vital signs. Doctors and physicians assistants then diagnose the problem and dispense medication. For serious health issues, patients are advised to go to a hospital. But for those they can treat, the occasion is a valuable learning experience for the combat medics of the 1-113th.

“Our platoon sergeant rotated us so that we could work closely with the doctors on actually treating the patients, see if they would need any meds, that type of thing,” said Pfc. Melissa Alexander, a combat medic from Urbandale, Iowa, who is with the 1-113th.

Along with the experience, there is the feedback that the Soldiers get from the people they treat. For Alexander, the day can be summed up in the actions of one child.

“I had a little kid that came in with a little scratch on his face. I put some antibiotic cream and a little American flag Band-aid on it. He gave me a high five and blew me a kiss as he was walking away. It was very nice.”

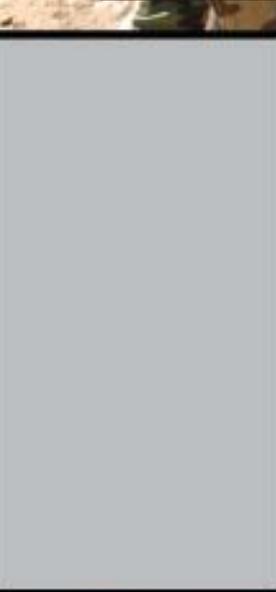
As 3:00 p.m. rolled around the town, whose name means “Field of Rain” in Albanian, lived up to its name as the showers came. Alexander’s new friend disappeared along with the rest of the children in the yard and the Soldiers packed up to leave. The party, it seemed, was over for the day.

Spc. Lindsey Leuschen, a combat medic with the 1-113th Cavalry, takes the vital signs of a Kosovar patient during a MEDCAP held in Kishnapole/Kisno Polje.





Staff Sgt. Stephen Sarvi, left, a squad leader with Alpha Company, 2-135th Infantry, speaks to a Kosovar woman through an interpreter about a report she filed with the Kosovo Police Service while 2nd Lt. Nick Denny, a platoon leader with the unit, looks on.



▲
Sarvi speaks to a local woman about the issues affecting her in Binaq/ Binac.



◀
Sarvi shakes the hand of a KPS officer who he called to help resolve a resident's issue.

A TRUST ISSUE

Story and Photos by Spc. Tim Grooms

Binaq/ Binac is a small, ethnically-mixed town on the outskirts of Vitina/ Viti. Soldiers of Alpha Company, 2-135th Infantry have the task of patrolling the area to maintain peace and try to help local residents with their problems.

For one Soldier in particular, who is the mayor of Watertown, Minn. and City Administrator of Victoria, Minn., being here helping the local population is relative to what he does back home.

"Yeah, I deal with basic infrastructure, working on projects, basic community building, trust, and working on small and large projects," said Staff Sgt. Stephen Sarvi, a squad leader with Alpha Company, 2-135th Infantry.

Sarvi's squad started patrolling the area in April and immediately started working with people. One of their first acts was to invite a speaker to the area to try to convince the local Serbs to work with local Albanians.

During the unit's training in Hohenfels, Germany, Sarvi said one of their instructors, Col. (Retired) Ed McCarthy, taught the unit's leadership how to communicate with local civilians to get them to overcome their differences and work together, and the information was so helpful the unit wanted him to speak to the community leaders of Binac/ Binaq.

"Col. Ed McCarthy put on a seminar for [non-commissioned officers] and officers about how to talk to people who live over here, and it was real helpful," Sarvi said. After McCarthy spoke to the community, Sarvi said the local Serbs and Albanians created a talking group to work on local issues.

Sarvi said one of the main differences between the work he does in Kosovo and the work he does as a mayor and city administrator in Minnesota is that here he has to work with the different ethnicities and the challenges of getting them to work together and trust each other.

"Here we have to have a lot of patience," Sarvi said. "We have to be willing to take on their problems and concerns and be willing to follow things through."

Most people may not think of Soldiers as community builders, but Sarvi said that idea makes sense to him.

"Soldiers are good at setting goals and willing to achieve them," he said. "Instead of kneeling in bunkers and clearing buildings, we're establishing trust and dealing with the future."

While on a recent patrol, Sarvi and his squad were given a chance to demonstrate their trust-building skills when they came upon a woman who had wood stolen from her and was waiting for KPS to follow up on the report she filed, said Sarvi. The patrol went to the KPS station in Vitina/ Viti to have the officer visit the woman for an update on the incident.

One of the missions of the patrols is to help Kosovars with relationships with local authorities.

"One of our main tasks here is to get the people to have faith in the civil authorities," said Sarvi.

With good relations between all, trust can be gained and good things can happen, Sarvi said.

"We find a little problem, find a seam and close the loop," said Sarvi. "When other people see we are doing things for them we hope that it establishes that trust [needed for improvements to happen]."

Either getting police to come and finish a report, or trying to get local leaders to talk to each other, Sarvi and his team members are working with the local community to try to make it better.

"We can only help them solve their problems if we know about them," said Sarvi. "They will only share their problems if they trust us and have faith that we will try to help."

"One of our main tasks here is to get the people to have faith in the civil authorities."

-Staff Sgt. Stephen Sarvi-



Spc. Joseph Karels, a combat engineer with the 682nd Engineer Battalion, breaks apart a support joint on a bridge in Kacanik in preparation for the bridge's demolition.



operation
shockwave

story and photos by Spc. Sean McCollum

Operation Shockwave



Spc. Michael Vogt, a combat engineer with the 682nd Engineer Battalion, sees through a reinforcement bar supporting a bridge in Kacanik in preparation for the bridge's demolition.

It's not every day the combat engineers of the 682nd Engineer Battalion participate in blowing up a bridge.

A squad from the battalion's Charlie Company recently assisted in the destruction of a 129-meter-long, 30-year-old concrete bridge in the Kacanik area in a KFOR project dubbed Operation Shockwave. The estimated 2,000-ton structure was targeted for demolition due to its inability to support trucks carrying heavy loads, and an 80-person, multi-national group that included, besides those from the 682nd, engineers from Germany, Argentina, Bulgaria, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, and seven members of the Kosovo Protection Corps, completed the project.

"Pretty much since we've been here we've been drilling holes for the demos they're going to do," said Spc. Joseph Karels, a combat engineer with the battalion who is from Bellingham, Minn. For the project, the Camp Monteith-based unit moved to Camp Bondsteel and worked every day for over three weeks until the project was finished. It is the biggest project the unit has worked on since deploying.

"We practice but we never actually get to do it," said Karels. "This is the biggest thing we've worked on."

Collapsing the bridge, however, was not as easy as placing explosive charges and walking away.

"The main thing is we couldn't blow it like we would in a military manner, which is blowing up the bridge so the enemy can't use it," said 2nd Lt. Joshua Henslin, a platoon leader with the unit and from Brookings, S.D. The bridge lies between a train bridge and a cliff face, and spans the Lepenac River. Disturbing any of these factors would have caused disaster for the region, so more explosives was not the answer.

"If we used the amount of explosives that we normally use, we would damage the railroad bridge and cause a landslide that would dam the river and turn Kacanik into a lake," said Henslin. The solution was to cut out sections of the bridge and place explosives at strategic points, he said, a long process complicated by the fact that the engineers were working without plans.

"There's no schematics for this bridge whatsoever. When you think you know what's going on, you find things," Henslin said. "Like instead of there being three steel reinforcements there are six. Problems arise with that. You need more explosives, or you have to cut some by hand. It's an odd bridge the way it's constructed."

After almost a month of weakening support structures, cutting metal bars reinforcing the structure, and bringing the estimated weight of the bridge to 1,500 tons, the bridge was detonated May 2 with no damage to the neighboring railroad bridge. The Charlie Company engineers, with their mission accomplished, returned to Camp Monteith and their original duty of patrolling the Administrative Boundary Line with Serbia.



Video capture of the Kacanik Bridge at the time of detonation.



Spc. Isaac Hoffman, an infantryman with Alpha Company, 2-136th Infantry, lays in the prone position after exiting a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter during a patrol in an area near Desivojce.



Off the Beaten Path

Story and photos by Sgt. Jon Soucy



Soldiers of Alpha Company, 2-136th Infantry, patrol the hilly terrain near Desivojce.



Sgt. Matthew Larson, an assistant squad leader with Alpha Company, 2-136th Infantry, inspects an abandoned storage area for illegal weapons and ammunition.



Spc. Shaun Leshovsky, an infantryman with Alpha Company, 2-136th Infantry, scans the attic of a home in an area near Desivojce during a patrol.



Off the Beaten Path

The Soldiers let out an audible sigh of exasperation as another in a seemingly endless series of rocky hills loomed before them. Sweat soaked uniforms clung to their bodies as a few caught their breath before continuing up the steep incline. As the straps from rucksacks that carried food, water and other items needed for the mission dug into their shoulders, the Soldiers continued up the hill, each step taken with tired muscles and aching feet. But this hill was the last hill and the top of it was the patrol's final destination where they would be extracted from the area by UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters, just as they had been inserted for the patrol some eight hours earlier.

The Soldiers, infantrymen from Alpha Company, 2-136th Infantry, had covered roughly 10 kilometers of terrain that featured mostly steep hills while patrolling the area near Desivojce and conducting permissive searches of homes, outbuildings and other areas looking for illegal weapons, ammunition and explosives.

Though the steep terrain was what stood out in the minds of many Soldiers on the patrol, for some the most memorable part of the mission was the mode of transportation to the patrol's start point.

"It ruled," said Spc. Isaac Hoffman, an infantryman from Grey Eagle, Minn., of the flight in the Blackhawk, which for him was his first in a helicopter. "It was a lot cooler than riding in a plane. The way you take off is cool. You fly a little lower and you're not up as high as when you are in a plane."

And others agreed with Hoffman.

"It's always good to ride in a helicopter," said Sgt. Matthew Larson, an assistant squad leader from Eagan, Minn. "We're a mechanized unit, so riding in a helicopter is always exciting."

The helicopters were used to transport the Soldiers to their destination because of the terrain in the area to be patrolled, which included two villages that are difficult to access by vehicle, said 1st Lt. Bryce Erickson, a platoon leader from Minneapolis, Minn.

In addition, using the Blackhawks cut down on the traveling time.

"It's close to two hours driving," said Hoffman, "but it's a 10 minute flight. You can be in and out really quick."

During the patrol the Soldiers searched for illegal weapons and ammunition. For those in the unit, the searches are one way of keeping the peace in Kosovo.

"If [local residents] know we're going to check anywhere, at any time, it deters them," said Larson.

Though the searches do have their downsides.

"Sometimes you have to search people's homes and you know they're not doing anything wrong," said Larson. "But you have to search their home. It's not fun. No one likes doing that."

However, while conducting the searches it allows Soldiers to get to know individuals on a one-to-one basis and most understand why the searches are being done, said Larson.

As many of the Soldiers reached the summit of the last hill a cool breeze greeted them and raindrops fell from darkened clouds. Many sat leaning against rucksacks dropped on the ground and rested tired muscles. The raindrops stopped soon after they started and the sound of inbound Blackhawks could be heard in the distance. All that was left of the grueling patrol was a flight back to Camp Monteith. And as the sound of incoming helicopters grew louder, one Soldier reflected on the mountainous terrain the unit had traversed.

"How could it be uphill both ways?" he asked of no one in particular as he got his gear ready for the trip back.

Burning to Qualify

Soldiers from units around Camp Bondsteel gathered near the North Chapel in preparation for a painful experience. They knew what was coming to them after sitting through a class in the morning, but still were not prepared for how bad their eyes and face were going to burn.

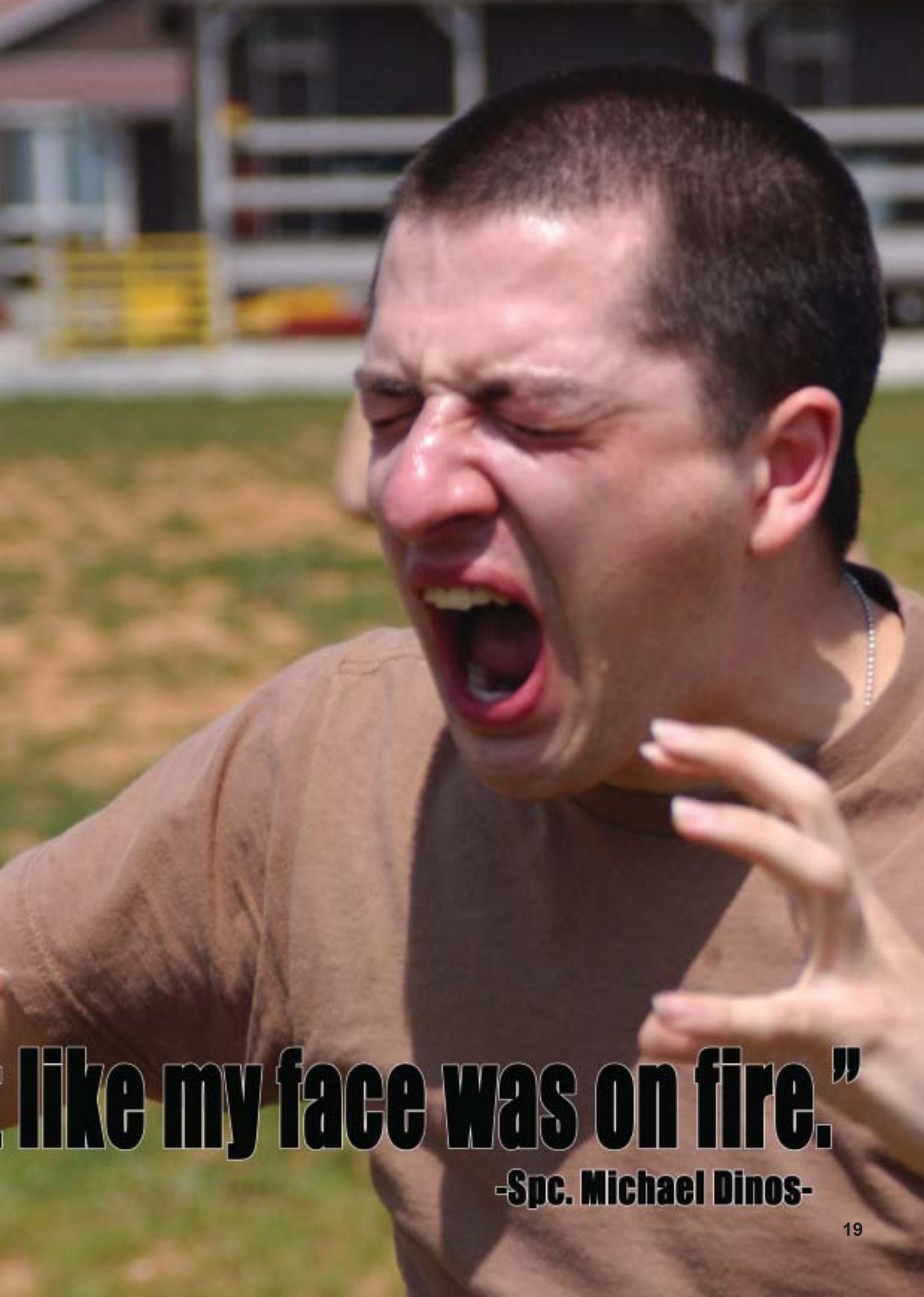
(See *PEPPER* page 20)

After being sprayed in the eyes with pepper spray, Spc. Michael Dinos, with HHC's Forward Logistics Element, prepares to kick and punch his way through foam-padded shields as part of the qualification course required to carry the spray.

Story and photos by Spc. Tim Grooms



"It felt



...like my face was on fire."

-Spc. Michael Dinos-

(PEPPER from page 18)

The first troop was selected and she stood and took her dousing of pepper spray to the eyes. Quickly, her face turned red and her eyes were closing from the burning as she headed for the first obstacle.

The Soldiers took part in a one-day course which qualified them to carry Oleoresin Capsicum, also known as pepper spray, and ended with the Soldiers getting a feel of what it is like to be doused and try to fight back while affected.

The Soldiers were taught about the spray's capabilities, how to safely deliver and use it, and first aid treatments for its effects. Then they took part in a practical exercise in which they were sprayed in the face before running through a course where they had to kick, punch, be hit by foam-padded shields and force a simulated rioter to the ground. The training is used to show how to fight back if you are accidentally sprayed, said Sgt. Mark Radford, course instructor with the 514th Military Police Company, and resident of Asheville, N.C.

OC, an inflammatory agent derived from cayenne peppers, inflames mucous membranes of the face and eyes and causes all the moisture in the area to evaporate, which causes an instant closure of the eyes and temporary blindness. The effects of the spray can last for up to twelve hours after initial contact, said Radford.

"OC is very effective for blinding a suspect or taking them down from their will to fight so they can be at a lower level of resistance so we can take them into custody or into another area," Radford said.

Soldiers here learned first-hand how effective pepper spray can be.

"I have never been through the pepper spray course. I was pretty scared, anxious, and I didn't know how I was going to react," said Concord, N.C. resident, Spc. Nicole Lankford, an MP with the 514th. "It's like a really bad sunburn, and when you go back out in the sun it's like being sunburned all over again."

"It felt like my face was on fire. No matter how much I tried I could not open my eyes," said Spc. Michael Dinos, fuel lab non-commissioned officer in charge from Knoxville, Iowa, with Headquarters and Headquarters Company's Forward Logistics Element.

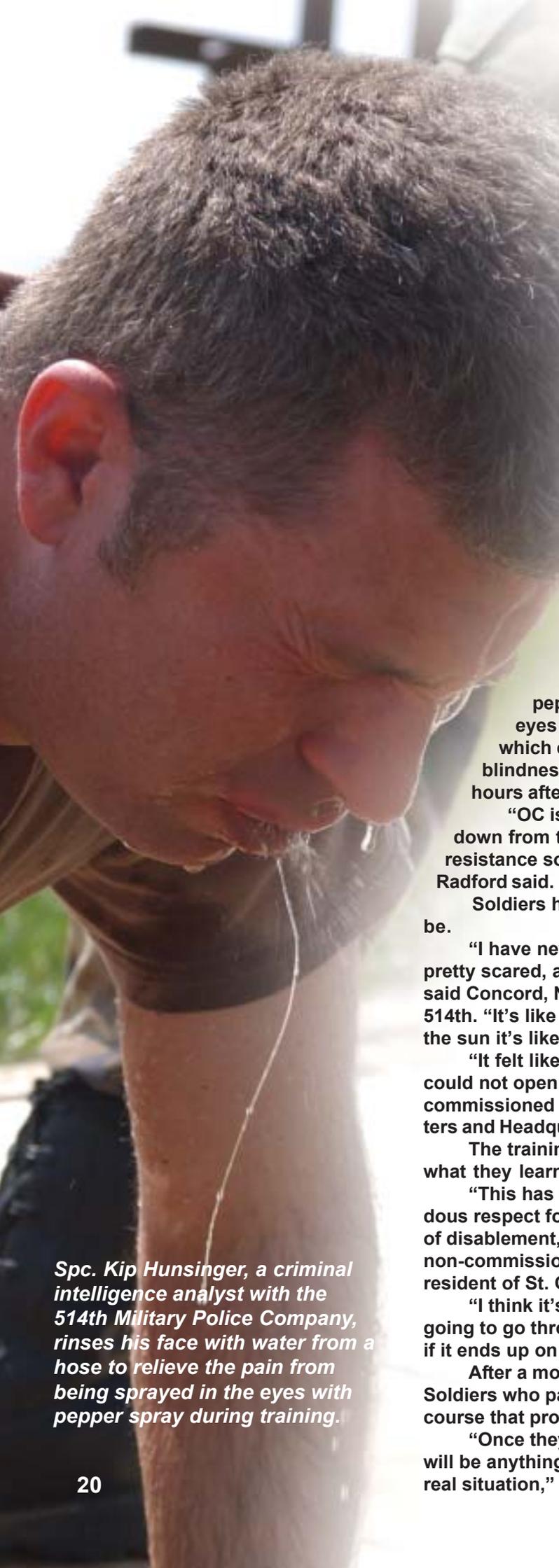
The training had a painful ending, but most said they enjoyed what they learned.

"This has been a great opportunity that has given me tremendous respect for the capabilities of this widely implemented method of disablement," said Staff Sgt. Danielle Oredson, special operations non-commissioned officer with HHC, 34th Infantry Division, and resident of St. Charles, Minn. "I'm proud to be part of the exercise."

"I think it's good training and you should know what you're going to go through," said Lankford. "You need to know how to react if it ends up on anyone else."

After a morning spent in class and an afternoon spent in agony, Soldiers who participated in the OC class can say they took part in a course that proved to be very challenging.

"Once they have been through this I doubt very seriously there will be anything harder they have to go through in life unless it is a real situation," Radford said.



Spc. Kip Hunsinger, a criminal intelligence analyst with the 514th Military Police Company, rinses his face with water from a hose to relieve the pain from being sprayed in the eyes with pepper spray during training.

Building Army Values in You

By Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Tim Peterson

I like reminding people of the United States Army Values. I know you've heard them before, but all of us can benefit from hearing them again:

Loyalty: Bear true faith and allegiance to the U.S. Constitution, the Army, your unit, and other Soldiers.

Duty: Fulfill your obligations.

Respect: Treat people as they should be treated.

Selfless Service: Put the welfare of the nation, the Army, and your subordinates before your own.

Honor: Live up to all the Army Values.

Integrity: Do what's right, legally and morally.

Personal Courage: Face fear, danger, or adversity (Physical or Moral).

The Army Values are not optional for American Soldiers. We are all required to accept them and to put them into practice.

There are times when Soldiers are put in situations where it is difficult to live up to these values. I know that I need God's help to be faithful to them. When I received my commission as a United States Army Officer, I promised

to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States. This promise ended with the words "So help me God." I want and need God's help, so that I can be faithful in my duty as a United States Soldier.

Being on this deployment is a good time for me to rededicate myself to the Army Values. How can we build these Values in our lives? Here are a few suggestions:

- Memorize the Values, if you haven't already done so. Every Soldier should be able to list these 7 key Values.
- Think about the Values. Go through them in your mind every day, to remind yourself of who you are as a Soldier.
- Think about whether or not your actions as a Soldier are in accordance with these values.

God in Heaven, help me to be the Soldier you want me to be! Help me, as a Soldier, to grow in Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage. Help me, God. Amen.



Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Tim Peterson

Army unveils modified Chinook

By Kelly Tyler

RIDLEY PARK, Pa. (Army News Service, May 11, 2004) — Army special operations forces received their first MH-47G Chinook helicopter during a rollout ceremony at aircraft manufacturer Boeing's compound in Ridley Park, May 6.

The military's newest rotary-wing airframe, updated and better equipped than its Chinook predecessors, will be flown exclusively by the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne), headquartered at Fort Campbell, Ky.

To kick off the event, an older MH-47D model flew directly over the thousands of Boeing employees who had gathered to watch the ceremony. Landing nearby, the Chinook discharged its cargo of three special operations Soldiers and a Ground Mobility Vehicle, which rolled slowly across the flight ramp as the door to a hangar opened and the new brand-new MH-47G was rolled out.

Patrick Shanahan, vice president and general manager for Boeing Rotorcraft Systems, then handed the first set of symbolic "keys" to the modified aircraft to Chief Warrant Officer Andrew Sentiff and Staff Sgt. Michael Luna, both of the 160th SOAR.

"All of us at Boeing are extremely proud of the Chinook and its record of service with the U.S. Army, Army special operations and our allies around the world for more than four decades," Shanahan said. "The Chinook's unique capabilities show clearly why the Chinook is and will continue to be a central war-fighting asset for your armed forces."

The MH-47 is more than just an airframe, Shanahan said. "The design and manufacturing of this aircraft (have) been a labor of love and a model of working together," he said. "Teamwork has characterized our program from the start."

Lt. Gen. Philip R. Kensinger Jr., commander of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg, N.C., also spoke to the crowd.

"Not only have we all gotten a personal introduction to our 'work horse,' but we have also had the opportunity to shake hands with everyone who helped make this possible," Kensinger said.

Kensinger reminded those gathered — civilian and military — that the aircraft itself is secondary.

"As magnificent as this aircraft is, it is only as good as the people who design it, build it, fly it, and support it," Kensinger said.

Kensinger told the gathered Boeing workers that anyone who contributed to the construction of the aircraft was also contributing to victory in the Global War on Terrorism.

"The equipment (the 160th SOAR flies) is what gets the boots on the ground to fight the Global War on Terrorism," Kensinger said. "It is also the equipment that gets them back safely to their families."

Soldiers deliver water to Baghdad neighborhood

By Spc. Bryan Kinkade

CAMP BLACK JACK, Iraq (Army News Service, May 10, 2004) — A crowd of villagers moved toward the vehicles as they watched the 400-gallon water buffalo slowly cruise past them.

The Soldiers from Battery C, 4th Battalion, 5th Air Defense Artillery Regiment were back, to provide water to the citizens of Sheik Fahed's Village, right outside the Baghdad International Airport.

This was the second time the Soldiers had been to this village. During their first visit, they spoke to the village's sheik and asked him how they could help his people. He said they would be grateful to have clean water.

"We thank them very much," the village's elder, Fahed, said in Arabic. "It's hard to get water here."

The children rushed out with giant buckets and old containers to hold the water as the truck stopped in front of their house. Some containers were little, old oil jugs and some were giant plastic trashcans. Most children remembered how the water buffalo worked, so once the truck stopped they were quickly filling their jugs with the fresh water.

"The reaction was a good success," Capt. David Carlile, the company commander, said. "We're providing them a much needed resource."

When the company first entered the village, the citizens were wary about their presence, Carlile said.

"Now, the majority is glad to get the water from us," he said. "They [usually] get their water out of a canal and it's pretty dirty. They're pretty happy to get fresh, potable water."

The unit plans to deliver water to the village until their water treatment center is fixed.

"Hopefully it will be up and running in a week or so," Carlile said. Civilians contracted out by the battery are fixing the treatment center.

While the Soldiers helped the children fill the containers, they spoke to them as well as they could. Some Soldiers spoke as much Arabic as they knew to the children and some of the children spoke a little English back. They also gave candy to the children.

Once the buckets were filled up and the buffalo was empty, the Soldiers were on their way back to camp. The mobile watering hole would reopen again in a few days

Remembering a Red Bull Soldier

In October 2003, Staff Sgt. David W. Dahl, who was part of the advance party to Ft. Stewart preparing for deployment to Kosovo, was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor. He passed away at his home in Pine City, Minn., on May 1. Below is a letter he wrote to the Soldiers of Task Force Falcon.



Staff Sgt. David W. Dahl

11 October 2003

To all I hold as my family and friends,

I have dedicated the last eighteen years of my life serving both part-time and full-time in the military. It is my deep belief that the protection of our country's values and life-style is worth any sacrifice. I am not a perfect or idealistic man, but I am proud to say that I am serving in the Minnesota Army National Guard. In reflection, my Grandfather was my inspiration into the service and now I have done the same for my son. He has enlisted in the Michigan Army National Guard and I can only say that I am proud of him and believe that he will grow to be a better man for it.

On 10 October 2003, I was ordered to deploy as part of the security mission to Kosovo. This mission with the 34th Division means a lot of time away from my family. My wife is a strong woman, and this deployment on her is no easier than the challenge placed upon me. We have shared a loving 16-year relationship and her composure has always brought me strength in these times. I can only say that this separation will temper our love. The best of my family, friends, and neighbors also provide me with strength. The best do not miss the call for help to my family during these times.

But now I must give you the reason why I am sharing these thoughts. As fate would have it, I am soon to return to Minnesota to fight a different battle. I feel regret for leaving my fellow soldiers of the 34th Division and I am walking away from the mission and the obligations to which I am assigned. My return home is the result of things that I have not planned for. My flight to Fort Stewart on 06 October 2003 gave me unexpected headaches. For two days I waited for these annoying problems to pass. Finally, I decided to go to the TMC, so I would be able to perform my duties 100% for the Division. The doctors of WINN Army Community Hospital linked my headaches to a parietal brain tumor and this unexpected situation has ordered my return to home. I am to meet a neurological surgeon at Fairview Hospital on 15 October 2003, who specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of brain tumors.

Where do I go from here and how do I prepare for this fight? I am unsure. I was mentally and physically ready to meet my deployment challenges. I have to believe that these past eighteen years of military service will give me the same fight for this battle.

Some might say that the KFOR mission is being met only the ordinary; I say there is more to it than that. Your personal commitment to your country through service is the measure of your soul and that of your families. Good luck to all of you. I wish you a safe return.

David W. Dahl
SSG, MNARNG

Scenes of Kosovo



A dirt road snakes it's way through hills near Donja Budriga/ Budzike e Poshtem.
Photo by Sgt. Jon Soucy