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## CHIEF OF MISSION VISITS AMERICAN SOLDIERS PARTICIPATING IN RAPID GUARDIAN

By Spc. Matthew Lang, 114<sup>TH</sup> MPAD

**CAMP BONDSTEEL, Kosovo** – On Jan. 28, the Chief of Mission from the U.S. Office in Pristina (USOP), Reno Harnish, visited soldiers from the 2<sup>nd</sup> of the 503<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment, 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade, who are training near Observation Post Thunder in support of Rapid Guardian.

Harnish said he was impressed with the training and professionalism of the 173<sup>rd</sup> soldiers, who are stationed in Vicenza, Italy.

The soldiers of the 173<sup>rd</sup> have been living in tents since they parachuted into Krusevo Airfield on Jan. 15 to start Rapid Guardian, a monthlong operational exercise that showcases KFOR's ability, readiness and will to protect all ethnic groups in Kosovo.

During the visit, Harnish was equally impressed with the soldiers' equipment. Harnish became the USOP Chief of Mission in August 2002. Previously, he served as Deputy Chief of Mission in Cairo, Egypt.

The United States Office in Pristina opened in 1999 and is responsible for maintaining the day-to-day relations between U.S. and local leaders, United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), KFOR and Office for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

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