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BEHIND THE LINES

It's time to get to work

Command Sgt. Maj. Edward McLane, Jr.

I am extremely excited about the 3rd Brigade Combat Team (BCT) assuming the responsibility of maintaining the peace and stability mission in MNB(E). Together we have worked long, arduous hours in preparation for this great mission.

What has greatly contributed to our success is the coaching, teaching, and mentoring from Task Force Falcon 4A. Without their constant advice and attention, this mission would be very difficult to execute. Thanks 2nd BCT, God-speed and good hunting!

Now it is time to work. We must prove to our nation and ourselves that we are qualified to continue the great tradition of other task forces that have preceded us. There are a few topics that I will address that require all of our attention regardless of rank or position.

First and foremost is safety. Every mission, no matter how large or small, must be conducted safely. Ensuring all headlights are on, vehicles loaded within the prescribed load plan, PCI/PCCs conducted to standard are just a few examples of positive safety measures. Remember, we start and end each mission and each day remaining safety-conscious.

Weapons clearing must always require our attention. Clearing weapons is not a timed event. Taking your time to ensure all weapons are cleared too standard protects you as well as the lives of your fellow soldiers. The standard in this task force is no accidental discharges. Each senior NCO bringing soldiers through the gates is responsible for their soldiers, not the guards at the gates.

Standards are the key to everything we undertake. It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that standards are met or exceeded. Whenever we turn our head away from substandard performance, we have just set another standard. NCOs are the standard bearer for our units. I hold each NCO accountable for standards within their units.

Training is the cornerstone of our Army. Each day that you are on patrol, guarding the gates, or working in your office, you are training. You must ensure, regardless of the training you are conducting, that you complete a risk assessment. Utilize the eight step training model, and integrate training into real world situations. Make your training challenging without degrading the standards.

Last item: Enjoy your stay while here in Kosovo! Utilize the fantastic education opportunities, go see a movie, work out in the gym, or interact with the local populace. This is a once in a lifetime chance to do something meaningful so take advantage of the opportunity!

Thanks for all of the hard work, but like I wrote earlier, time to go to work! Duty First!

On the cover: Photo by Spc. Matthew Lang

Spc. Renae Redenius, an Arabic linguist with Alpha Co., 101st Military Intelligence chops away at a stump to improve her fighting position on Nov. 23 at an outpost near the FYROM border.

SEE THE PHOTO OF THE DAY
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Guardian East

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CAS goes warm: Mission complete

By Sgt. Erin Elliott

CAMP ABLE SENTRY, FYROM – After almost 10 years of being an Intermediate Staging Base for the Balkans, Camp Able Sentry (CAS) will become a warm base by the first of the new year.

The base, which will have its official closing ceremony Friday, provided logistical support for U.S. operations in Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Kosovo and FYROM. It will be closed in phases, according to CAS Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Gallucci.

"We don't just come to the end of the road and drop off. The base will be closed in phases," said Gallucci. "We are closing to standard, not to time."

With the closing of CAS, approximately 650 local national and contracted jobs will be terminated. However, the civilian contractors are trying to find new jobs for as many of employees as possible in the Kosovo theater, said Gallucci.

As of Jan. 1, 2003, the base will go to "warm base" status, which means it will be maintained by a small group of civilian contractors in case operations need to be reactivated in the area , said Lt. Col Philip Marlowe, commander of CAS. Civilian contractors will also maintain the camp as an alternate route for supplies to the Balkans.

Over the past year and half, CAS has become an alternate route for supplies to the Balkans, Marlowe said. Logistic operations have been moved to Kosovo as a result of stabilization in that province.

The Pristina Airport has become the main route for personnel and supplies arriving and leaving Kosovo, replacing CAS as the primary route, Marlowe said.

"Our biggest challenge is property, making sure that the property gets to the people who need it," said Gallucci.

The property and supplies from CAS are being redistributed to the other U.S. camps in the Balkans. All property must be accounted for and redistributed before the base closes.

Photo by Sgt. Erin Elliott

Spc. Marco Lopez, a C-47 Chinook crew chief with the 159th Aviation Regiment, ties down a load of supplies that is being shipped out of Camp Able Sentry.

"As long as we have U.S. soldiers on the ground, we will have support for them," said Gallucci.

The closing process is in full swing thanks to the hard work of the soldiers at CAS, Marlowe said.

"We've been closing up several shops, and moving them out in the Chinooks," said Pfc. Dawn Buchanan, a Chinook mechanic with 159th Aviation Regiment (Big Windy), out of Giebelstadt, Germany.

Said Marlowe, "We have a real positive group of soldiers here, they hit the ground and run real hard. I think that's what is going to make this a smooth warm basing."

"CAS has served its purpose in FYROM. The soldiers get to go home knowing they have completed their mission here," he added.

Peacekeeper profile

Travis Albert

Age: 25
Rank: Spc.
MOS: 92Y, Unit Supply Specialist
Unit: HHC, 2-2 Infantry Bat.
Camp: Monteith
Hometown: Hampton, VA

What do you like to do when you're off duty? Playing the bongos.
What do you like to do when you're off duty? Read, play guitar and the bongos
Why did you join the Army? To support my wife and child.
What advice would you give soldiers coming into Kosovo? Think positive and you might even like it here.

Staff Sgt. Scott Carter, an MP dog handler with the HHD 793 Military Police Battalion, commands his partner Karo during daily training at Camp Monteith.

Who let the dogs out?

Story and photos by Spc. Matthew Lang

Britt is one of the high flying dogs of the HHD 793 Military Police Battalion.

CAMP MONTEITH, Kosovo- In war and peace, from mine detection to locating a wounded soldier, the services of Military Working Dogs (MWD) and their handlers are impressive.

These dogs, along with their trainers and handlers, continue to provide a wide range of services in several disciplines to further the commitment to a safe and secure environment in MNB(E).

"Peacekeeping is their main mission," said Staff Sgt. Scott Carter, a military police dog handler with Headquarters, Headquarters Detachment, 793rd Military Police Battalion stationed at Camp Monteith. "We make sure inside and outside facilities are safe and secure. We also perform cordon and searches of areas in our sector when needed."

The use of canines by the military dates back to the Korean War. They have been used in Vietnam, the Persian Gulf and more recently in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

In Kosovo, the canines assist soldiers with explosive sweeps, base security and force protection exercises at Camp Monteith, Carter added. They are used for their highly developed sense of smell, which is much more advanced than a human's.

There are three military working dogs attached to the unit, two German Shepherds ("Karo" and "Britt"), and a Belgian Malinois named "Bradley."

"They (canines) also add a great psychological deterrent," said Sgt. Gunnar Pedersen, an MP dog handler with the section.

To be able to perform such tasks, both the handler and canine must be well trained. Soldiers like Pedersen are selected on a volunteer basis to become handlers.

The handler must first complete the regular Military Policeman course, Pedersen said. Then he has to complete a two and a half month handler's course given by the Department of Defense at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

The course is split into two parts. The first part is learning basic obedience and controlled aggression. Phase two of the course consists of detection training. During the detection phase, handlers learn how to read dogs and their change of behavior, along with learning how to search different locations, Carter said.

> **"Peacekeeping is their main mission. We make sure inside and outside facilities are safe and secure."**
>
> ***Staff Sgt. Scott Carter, 793rd Military Police Battalion***

The canines also undergo extensive training on learning the basic fundamentals of being a military dog, Carter said. Once the dog arrives at its duty station, it is taught at an advanced level.

"Here they have to meet a training time line," Carter said. "They have to do 16 hours of detection, and 16 hours of obedience and patrol training each month. Each dog also has to be certified once a year unless they haven't trained for consecutive 30 days. Then the dog team may be de-certified."

To work together, a dog and his handler must see eye to eye.

"You have to have a lot of trust in your dog for it to do its job well," said Carter, who handles Karo.

Pedersen, who handles Britt, said, "The more you train with your dog the more trust you will have with him or her."

A strong bond between the handler and his dog often develops, said Pederson, who handles Bradley.

"You grow attached, but you know that the canine will not be yours forever," he said.

4th CAG assesses local villages:

Gleans successes and challenges of MNB(E)

Story and photos by Spc. Christopher Gookin

A home on the outskirts of the Donja Bitinja is part of a village assessment performed by 4th CAG, Civil Affairs Team Alpha 1.

KOSTANJEVO, Kosovo — The hardtop road leading up to this village of 10 families, roughly 120 people, skirts the edge of a steep hillside, and gradually turns into a quagmire of wagon ruts – a reminder of this province's heavy reliance on traditional ways.

A fence constructed of hand-woven saplings not much thicker than a thumb announces the beginning of Kostanjevo, a kind of cul de sac of small homes and a small barn north of Camp Drajkovce in the Polish-Ukrainian sector of MNB(E).

Rounding a slight bend that offers a pristine view of the Nepodimka Mountains, the first structures appear.

Handmade tools and farm implements lean against the barn wall – pitchforks, scythes, a sled and wooden wheels and axles.

Roosters and chickens run across the common area. Cows moo in the small barn. Mothers with children clasping on to their skirts fill jugs with water at a trough outside.

A place like this, just off the beaten path, could easily be overlooked by a modern world. But for the 4th Civil Affairs Group, Civil Affairs Team Alpha 1, United States Marine Corps, these tiny hamlets offer important insights into the successes and challenges of MNB(E) in the KFOR peace-keeping mission.

On a cool and overcast November morning, the 4th CAG conducted a village assessment in Kostanjevo. The assessments, conducted throughout the MNB(E) sector, are designed to identify factors that may impact on the goals and objectives of the maneuver element commander, which in this case is the commander of the POL/UKR Battalion. An integral aspect of the civil affairs mission is to provide the maneuver command element information concerning the status of a village.

The assessment consists of a series of questions directed towards the village leadership, which may take the form of a council or an individual. These questions cover a wide variety of issues that include environmental, transportation, medical, political and personnel.

Village assessments occur every six months with each rotation. The statuses of the villages are updated to ensure the maneuver command element is aware of issues concerning the municipality.

In Kostanjevo, residents greeted the 4th CAG with welcomes while children peered tentatively from windowsills and the safety of their mother's hand.

The village chief, Sami Selmani, showed the team into a warm and compact room lit with a bare light bulb, but complimented by a large window facing the valley below. Selmani immediately sat them on upholstered cushions and shared his hospitality. The cushions were arranged to provide a center area that would facilitate greetings and the questions that are an integral part of the village assessment process.

While tea was being brewed in another area of the home, Selmani began the session by thanking the team for this important visit. Soon after the translator conveyed the exchange of nicetie, the door to the room opened and exposed smiling curious faces of children who were bashful earlier in the day. The tea was served on silver dollar sized pewter saucers. Cigarettes, grape juice and walnuts were offered as well.

Staff Sgt. James Deel began the assessment with a series of questions delivered through an interpreter. One of the most important questions was, how were Selmani's people prepared for winter?

Selmani answered that this part of the village was in bad condition and had been neglected.

Through the interpreter, he also said that several foreign organizations had visited some time ago with clothing and shoes. But that was a while ago.

Selmani's main concern was the road, which was not much wider than a humvee and precariously close to a steep drop-off. The condition of the road, he believes, has precluded non-governmental agencies (NGOs) and other relief agencies from reaching his portion of the village.

Additionally, the village road does not go by the local school. The children are escorted by adults along a path for fear of the wolves, bears and wild pigs that inhabit the area.

The other concern for Selmani was the need for medical aid. Apparently, it had been a longtime since his village received any medical attention.

He gently asked the CAG team if they could help develop the road and provide assistance with food and winter clothing.

On the subject of electricity, Selmani said that his village was having problems. He believed it was not connected properly to the source.

The conversation between the CAG Team and the village chief continued discussing other issues such as financial matters and the number of livestock. The question and answer session lasted a little more than an hour.

Many villages in this and higher elevations are difficult to reach during the winter due to their remoteness, said Maj. John Church, team leader of 4th CAG.

Selmani's concerns will eventually be reported to the command element of the POL/UKR Battalion.

Speaking about his work as a member of the 4th CAG , Cpl. John Pignone said, "What I like about civil affairs is that it is at a more personal level — you get absorbed into your (area of operations). For us it is very personal. You want to help those kids with just the basics. I see kids wearing the exact same clothes every time we visit a village."

Church paraphrased Gen. Charles Krulak USMC (Ret): "The modern Marine needs to be able to fight a three-block war," Church said. "One as a high intensity conflict warrior, the second as a peacekeeper and the third as a humanitarian. The challenge is to go from one block to the next and adjust."

Civil Affairs is currently fulfilling two of these roles in attempting to assess 17 villages before the onset of winter in Kosovo, Church said.

The Civil Affairs community maintains one of the highest operational tempos in the Selected Marine Reserve, Church added. There are two Civil Affairs Groups; the 3rd CAG based in San Diego, Calif and the 4th CAG is in Washington DC.

Marines are trained with their army counterparts at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School at Fort Bragg, N.C.

"The modern Marine needs to be able to fight a three-block war. One as a high intensity conflict warrior, the second as a peacekeeper and the third as a humanitarian. The challenge is to go from one block to the next and adjust."

Maj. John Church, team leader of 4th CAG

"In 1940, the Marine Corps Small Wars Manual was published. It was a result of decades of involvement in Central and South America, and contains a chapter on Civil/Military Operations," Church said. "The Army has a longer history of Civil/Military Operations."

Speaking about the Army-Marine Corps connection, Church added, "The 415th Civil Affairs Battalion has really reached out and made the Marines feel welcome. We really appreciate the way the 415th has made us feel like part of the battalion. We've enjoyed nothing but good support from them."

From left, 4th Civil Affairs Group Cpl. John Pignone, Maj. John Church, Interpreter Enver Jashari, and Staff Sgt. James Deel perform a village assessment.

Spc. Arcelia Vargas gives a toy to a student at the Ramandan Rexhepi Elementary School in Urosevac/Ferrizaj on Nov. 26. The donations were a part of the Headquarters, Headquarters Company's adopt a school program.

A little TLC

can go a long way...

Story and photos by Spc. Whitney Hughes

UROSEVAC/FERIZAJ, Kosovo – Before NATO established a peacekeeping presence in Kosovo, the Ramanda Rexhepi Elementary School in Urosevac/ Ferizaj was a sad testament to the ethnic strife in this small province.

The walls of the school were riddled with bullet holes and the schoolyard was filled with mines.

"It was sad," recalled Ekrem Hasani, the school's principal. "They even had a little memorial for the kids who stepped on mines by accident."

Three years later, the school has become a symbol of the international peacekeeping effort here, and a daily reminder of how committed the U.S. and multi-national troops of MNB(E) are to the safety and well being of the Kosovo populace. The schoolyard is mine free and the school has windows and heat. The walls have been refinished and are adorned with pictures of MNB(E) soldiers together with the teachers and children they have befriended.

On Nov. 26, five soldiers from the Headquarters, Headquarters Company and one from Task Force Medical Falcon, delivered school supplies and toys to the students, continuing a tradition that HHC started during the first year of the KFOR mission.

"(The soldiers) feel that their role is very limited," said Capt. Daniel Edwan, HHC commander. "So whenever they have the opportunity to get out and have a sense of helping the children and teachers and the community, it builds a sense of community within them."

After meeting with Hasani and looking though his photos of the school taken during the ethnic conflict, the soldiers handed out the donations to the children.

"It is important to let (the children) know that we're here to help," said Spc. Arcelia Vargas, a transportation specialist with HHC.

Although the school and the neighboring community are without electricity, the people consider "living under the lights of Bondsteel" a privilege in itself, said Hasani. He credited KFOR's presence for the renewed sense of security and community.

Before the soldiers left, they played soccer with the children in the schoolyard.

"There was a lot of admiration in their eyes," said Sgt. Craig Sanford, a member of HHC. "They wanted to interact with us so badly, they were fighting with each other for our attention."

"It was sad. They even had a little memorial for the kids who stepped on mines by accident."

Ekrem Hasani, Principal of Rexhepi Elementary School in Urosevac/Ferizaj

1st Sgt. David Janney, of Task Force Medical Falcon has a push-up contest with a student at the Ramadan Rexhepi Elementary School in Urosevac/Ferizaj on Nov. 26. Janney was at the school to give donations as a part of the 3rd Brigades Headquarters, Headquarters Company's adopt a school program.

501st takes lead role in "FOM"

Spc. Whitney Hughes

UROSEVAC/FERIZAJ, Kosovo – As they lower their profile as peacekeepers, Greek soldiers of the 501st Mechanized Battalion continue to take a leading role in providing a safe and secure environment in MNB(E).

The Freedom of Movement program (FOM) and Shopping Days program, in which Greek soldiers periodically provide a military escort for a bus taking Serbians to a market in Strpce, have both contributed to the success of KFOR.

"Greek soldiers train hard, both back home and here so that when they are called upon to serve they can execute," said Lt. Col. George Kostulas, commander of the 501st.

The battalion's primary mission is to provide a safe and secure environment in Urosevac/Ferizaj. The success of 501st Mech's operations are evidenced by the intiating the FOM program in their sector and a model "Go and See" visit in Bablijak.

Its role in KFOR continues a proud tradition. The 501st traces its beginnings back to the Greek Independence War of 1897 and the Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913.

During World War II, the battalion participated in the Greek-Italian War, conquering the city of Tepeleny on Dec. 20, 1940. In September 1944, the unit was reorganized as the 1st Battalion of the 3rd Mountain Brigade.

In 1976, it was renamed the 501st Mechanized Battalion under the command of the 34th Mechanized Brigade. The 501st arrived in Kosovo in June of 1999, setting up "Rigas Fereos," a base camp just outside of Urosevac.

"We have a good relationship with all parties involved—the local population, the local authorities, the civilian police and the United Nations," said Capt. Michail Kardizis, an operations assistant for the 501st.

The draw down, which has included the closing of four outposts manned by the 501st, are a welcome indicator that unfixing or the transition to civil authority is working.

"We have made good progress in the last two or three months," Kardizis said. "We will continue to lower our profile under directive from KFOR."

Photo by Spc. Whitney Hughes

Cpl. Michael Ziriois, a transportation specialist with the Greek 501st Mechanized Battalion, checks the oil during a vehicle maintenance class at Camp Rigas Fereos on Dec. 2.

Peacekeeper profile

Michael Koutsoupias
Age: 24
Rank: Sgt.
MOS: Armor Chief
Unit: 501st Mechanized Bat.
Camp: Rigas Feraios
Hometown: Naoussa, Greece

What are you good at? My athletic ability

Why did you join the Army? As a Greek citizen, I must join the Army to help my country like all the citizens do.

What advice would you give to soldiers coming to Kosovo? The only thing they have to do all the time is help these people, because they need us. We can feel it, if we put ourselves in their position.

Brezovica Ski Trip Sunday, Dec. 22

Bus departs at 0800 and returns 1730 to Camp Bondsteel

Sign-up at the Southtown MWR Community Center, NLT 24 hours prior. Command approval required.

Uniform: Kevlar, body armor, civilian clothes, gortex or ski gear, no weapons.

Cost:
Ski Lift Pass: 15 Euros
Ski Rental: 10 Euros
Ski Lessons: 10 Euros

MWR
SERVING AMERICA'S ARMY

Turkey Trot Race

The Annual 5K Turkey Trot at Camp Bondsteel held on Nov. 24 drew a field of more than 250 runners. The next run is the Jingle Bell Jog scheduled for Dec. 22. Camps Monteith and Magrath held similar races. (Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Landry and Sgt. Erin Elliott, 114th MPAD.)

Pfc. Benjamin Horner, 1st MP Co. and Capt. Melanie Barley, TFMF, won the mens' and womens' division.

Staff Sgt. Wendy Cooper of the 200th MMC stops her watch as she crosses the finish line.

Spc. Keauna Havvard, Trial Defense Services runs a good race.

"And they're off!" Over 250 runners sprint off the start line in unseasonably warm weather.

FOR THE TROOPS...

Drew Carey and Improv All-Stars crack up Kosovo

By Capt. Gregory Heilshorn
Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Dan Landry and Spc. Matthew Lang

CAMP BONDSTEEL, Kosovo – It has been a week since comedian Drew Carey and his Improv All-Stars busted the gut of U.S. and multi-national service members at Camps Bondsteel, Magrath and Monteith with three Thanksgiving performances that left little room for seconds.

The shows drew more than 1,500 troops and poked fun at everything that was once a sacred inside joke about the American soldier and his experience in Kosovo. From the porcelain viewing platform to the Kosovo Air Force, Carey and his team managed to relate the ironies of life in Kosovo in a way that left troops feeling like someone from the outside finally *got it.*

"I laughed more today than in all of the last couple of months, said Sgt. Robert Hord, a foot soldier with the 2-2 Infantry stationed at Camp Monteith. "He knows what it's like to be away from home."

There were spontaneous moments of enlightenment that will probably stay with the troops for the rest of their military careers. They learned that infant fruit comes from the infantry. The Big Red One is actually a three-syllable word and one of Carey's former stage names.

During his monologues, Carey was generous enough to offer the troops advice on what to tell loved ones if they suffered a minor injury such as a twisted ankle, dislocated shoulder or a sprained elbow.

In a way, Carey was in on the gag all along. Before his career as a comedian skyrocketed, Carey served six years in the Marine Reserves. He was a radioman for a mortar platoon where he recalled, "I was the lieutenant's cell phone."

It seemed as if his supporting cast of Gregory Proops, Jeff Davis, Sean Masterson, Kaitlin Olson, Julie Larson, and Jonathan Mangum had a pretty good idea too. Their give and take with the troops was just as intimate.

"Drew begged me to come," said Larson before the third and final show at Monteith. "I didn't want to go, but I am so happy I did. I am really enjoying this. I really feel proud to be here."

Larson, a producer and writer for "The Drew Carey Show," wore a pair of Army fatigue pants given to her by a female specialist stationed at Bondsteel.

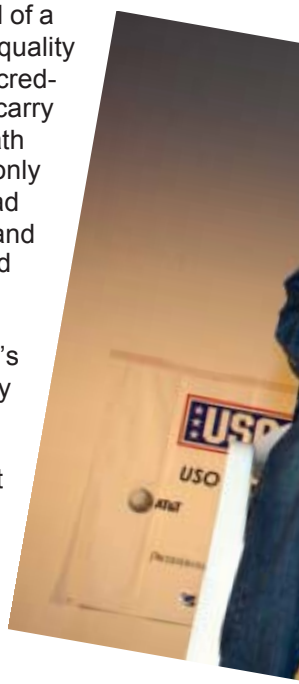
"I saw these soldiers march a group of people home from church," Larson recalled. "It was sweet and brave."

Masterson acknowledged that the cast wasn't exactly pro-military, but he admitted his view has changed since they visited troops in southwest Asia and most recently in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

"I will never question the need of a military," he said. "The level of quality and professionalism – it's incredibly impressive how they carry around that life and death situation every day. I only wish all Americans had the chance to meet and greet and understand the depth of our military."

From the troop's perspective, Carey and his All-Stars left an enduring impression that had more to do with how they got here than for their actual performances. They traveled on their own dime.

"I hope he knows how much we appreciate that," said Sgt. Heather Leetsch, a truck driver for the Joint Visitors Bureau. During the Bondsteel performance, Davis and Mangum serenaded Leetsch with a hilarious opera entitled, "Heather, The Army Truck Driver."



Above: Drew Carey performs a push-up.
Left: Sean Masterson, an improv comedian serenades Sgt. Heather Leetsch, a driver with the Joint Visitors Bureau.
Left: Sgt. Danny Neal, a truck driver with the 2-2 Infantry Battalion, helps Drew Carey perform during his show at the MWR field house at Camp Monteith on Nov. 28.

"It was phenomenal," said Leetsch afterward. "I never thought I'd meet anybody that I see on TV."

One young Marine was so impressed, he recalled the way his father, an Army veteran, used to reminisce about the thrill of seeing Bob Hope and Marilyn Monroe on their United Services Organization (USO) tours.

"Now I am fighting for my generation," said Cpl. John Pignone, a member of the 4th Civil Affairs Group stationed at Bondsteel. "I appreciate more that he is a former Marine coming out here, especially during the holidays. It makes it sweeter."

Pignone, along with his unit commander, Maj. John Church and Staff Sgt. James Deel, presented Carey with an old-style Marine cover and a new, digital print cover during a dinner in the North Dining Facility. It was hosted by MNB(E) Commander Brig. Gen. Daniel Keefe and included about 30 soldiers.

All three Marines were wearing digital print fatigues.

"I thought you were Swedish," Carey said.

It did not matter that Carey was without his trademark horn-rimmed glasses or that his flattop had grown out a few inches. After all, Carey said in a later interview, *that* Drew Carey is the character on his shows. He has two: "The Drew Carey Show" and "Whose Line Is it Anyway?"

The Drew Carey who bought his own ticket to Kosovo was the regular Drew. The one who was born and raised in Cleveland. The one who struggled to make ends meet and joined the Marines because he needed a job. The one who is now rich enough to afford LASIK surgery, and the one who cares enough to spend his holidays with the troops.

"It's all I can do," said Carey, a half-hour before his first performance at Bondsteel. "I'm not going to call my recruiter and get a rifle. What a waste of talent that would be."

Earlier this year, Carey and his All-Stars were in southwest Asia. Before their performance in Kosovo, they spent three days with troops in Bosnia-Herzegovina. According to the USO Web site, Carey was scheduled to visit troops in Norway this week and is slated to spend Christmas with troops in Diego Garcia, a small island in the middle of the Indian Ocean.

"Drew loves this more than anything else," Larson said. "When we were in Vienna, he insisted on going to dinner with the Marines. He just wants to go be with the guys."

Before and after his performances, Carey spends hours signing autographs and posing for pictures. He sleeps between stops, usually en route to the next show.

In Kosovo, he was visibly upset when an autograph session had to be cut short after an hour because of a time crunch. For a man who is at the top of his game, it is obvious that Carey has not forgotten his roots.

"I was at Kandahar International Airport," Carey recalled. "It was all bombed to hell. There were craters in the runway. I found this Marine all by himself. I told him, 'Hey, we really appreciate what you're doing for our country.' Here I am getting choked up. I was really starting to get teary-eyed and he went, 'Hey, it's not like I am in the middle of a combat zone.'"

Some facts about Drew Carey: He is 44-years-old. He was in the Marine Reserves from 1980 to 1986. He dated "Ice," one of the American Gladiators. "The Drew Carey Show" is in its eighth season and will reach episode 200 this year, ranking it 6th for ABC's longest running sitcoms. His 1997 book, "Dirty Jokes and Beer: Stories of the Unrefined," spent three months on the New York Times bestseller list. His big break in show business came when he appeared on "The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson" in 1991. He did so well, Carson bestowed the rare honor of inviting Carey over to his couch.

"That made my career," Carey said.

It has been all gravy since. Looking ahead, Carey is in the enviable position of doing nothing.

"I don't know what's next," he said. "I love hanging out with these guys and performing."

It would be premature to say Carey is a shoo-in for the next USO Ambassador of Good Will, an honor Bob Hope has carried for decades . There are a host of entertainers doing their share for American troops overseas. But a strong case could be made for Carey.

"We had 1,000 pictures to be autographed in Bosnia and we ran out before it was over," said Capt. David Mills, a tour manager with Armed Forces Entertainment who has been traveling with Carey's show. "I've been out doing this job for two years and the biggest crowd I've seen was at Camp Eagle (Bosnia)."

Carey was bigger than the Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders. Not bad for a former radioman in the Marines.

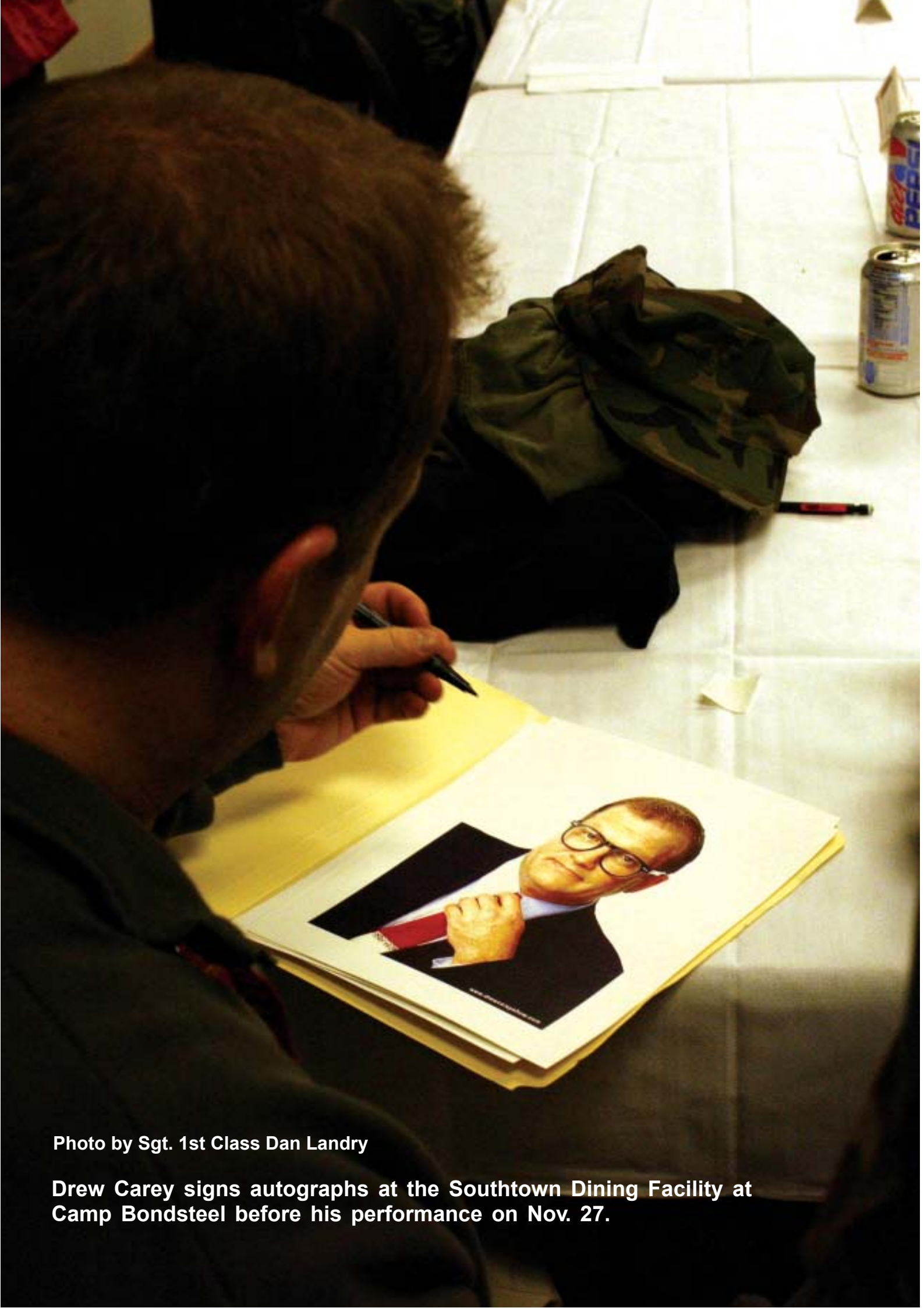


Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Dan Landry

Drew Carey signs autographs at the Southtown Dining Facility at Camp Bondsteel before his performance on Nov. 27.

Sofia offers soldiers chance to relax

By Spc. Whitney Hughes

CAMP BONDSTEEL, Kosovo — Maj. Robert Fulscher, the director of personnel and community operations with the Task Force Falcon Area Support Group, recalled a scare that a soldier gave him during a weekend pass to Sofia, Bulgaria.

The soldier had not checked in at the designated time.

Eventually he was found — sound asleep in his room. As Fulscher explained, sometimes all a soldier wants to do with his weekend away is relax.

Because of mission requirements, most service members stationed in MNB(E) discover their free time comes in small chunks. Working through the weekend is not uncommon. The Fighter Management Pass Program to Sofia offers a precious respite from that schedule. It also gives service members a chance to recharge.

"What we've tried to do is offer soldiers an opportunity to get away from Camp Bondsteel, Magrath, or Monteith, wherever it is that they're stationed at down here," Fulscher said. "So that they have an opportunity to relax if they want to, drink alcohol if that's what they want to do, and enjoy a little bit of the local culture."

Sign-up is through one's chain of command, which coordinates the request with the ASG.

The Task Force G-1 allocates dates to the units, and the units try to send as many soldiers as they can throughout the rotation. The allotment and scheduling of slots are decided by each unit's chain of command, said Fulscher.

A service member has to be in country for 30 days to be eligible for the trip. And they are allowed only one trip per rotation.

"We are trying to do two trips a week, which will be at a maximum of 120 soldiers per trip," said Fulscher.

ASG coordinates hotel reservations in Sofia. It's a four-star establishment that features a fitness center and a pool. It is close to many restaurants and starting points for various tours. A double room for two people runs about 90 euros. A single room costs about 120 euros.

Soldiers sit through a required video briefing about specific, requirements and rules regarding the five to six hour bus trip and their stay at the Rodina. There is a tactical operations center where the soldiers need to check in on a daily basis.

For those soldiers looking for a more structured schedule there is a program of cultural and spiritual events available. This program includes religious tours, briefings and entertainment related to the history, culture and religions of Bulgaria.

The program includes a three-day package of tours arranged with a local travel agency. On day one the participants will get a bus tour of Sofia, concentrating on the religious sites. The second day features a tour of Plovdiv, Bulgaria's second largest city, and Bachkovo Monastery. The final day of the tour includes the Rila Monastery, birthplace of the Blessed Virgin Church.

The cost of the tour is about $150, and soldiers can choose which locations they want to see, said Lt. Col. Gregg Drew, the ASG chaplain.

"We have tour guides that are very excited about their country," Drew said. "They're very excited about the history of their country. When they're telling stories of their country you can just see the passion and excitement."

Soldiers can also make arrangements for their families to meet them in Bulgaria. Many are already planning to meet their spouses in Sofia so they can spend the Christmas holiday together.

Photo courtesy of www.sofia.com

The St. George Rotunda from the 3rd - 4th century is one of the many historical sites to be seen in Sofia, Bulgaria.

Perhaps one of the biggest attractions in Sofia is the nightlife. Service members are allowed to drink alcohol in a responsible manner. The clubs are patrolled by U.S. military police and most of the club owners are familiar with the pass program and prepare for MNB(E) personnel.

The entire package makes for a nice getaway, if only for a brief respite.

Peacekeeper profile

Juan Sanchez
Age: 35
Rank: Sgt. 1st Class
MOS: 11B, Infantryman
Unit: 1st Military Police Company
Camp: Monteith
Hometown: San Antonio, Texas

Your role in MNB(E)? Civil-military operations

What advice would you give to soldiers coming to Kosovo? Although, the mission and uniform have changed somewhat, the world is counting on us to do the right thing.Complacent moods have set in for some soldiers, just remember anything can happen at anytime.

Photo by Spc. Matthew Lang

Spc. Scott Hunting, a rifleman with Alpha Co. 1-18 Infantry, is improving his skills on the speed bag at the Camp Monteith fitness center.

Staying fit during long winter months

By Spc. Matthew Lang

During a deployment, soldiers need to be able to focus on their mission and at the same time keep within the standards of U.S. Army physical fitness.

With winter knocking on our door, the task becomes more of a challenge for soldiers in MNB(E).

But thanks to Morale, Welfare and Recreation, soldiers don't have to worry about PT in the cold or snow, unless they choose so.

"There's no reason at all that a soldier would have to train in the cold when they have access to anything they need in the MWR fitness centers," said 1st Sgt. Peter L. Smith, of Alpha Company, 2-2 Infantry.

"I can count at least six treadmills that you can set a time and speed to," Smith continued. "It gives soldiers' supervisors more control than having him or her go out and run on their own."

Soldiers can beat the winter blahs by pushing themselves a little further with weightlifting, said Staff Sgt. Ricky Johnson of Charlie Company, 2-2 Infantry.

Johnson, a platoon sergeant at Camp Monteith, recommended a good work out with weights should include 30-second rests between sets. Others may require a minute to two-minute rest period.

In addition to weights, a good balance of cardiovascular exercise is a must, said Barry Rumsey, an MWR recreation specialist at Monteith.

"It's better than just doing weight-training," he said. "It gets the blood flowing to the heart."

A good exercise regime includes a good diet and proper hydration during workouts, Johnson added. He cautioned that it's easy for soldiers in MNB(E) to gain weight because of the quality and amount of food.

Photo by Spc. Matthew Lang

Pfc. Johathan Gutierrez, 19, Alpha Co. 1-18, an infantry Bradley driver is performing a 250-pound squat to increase his muscle strength in his legs.

One of the best ways for a soldier to stay motivated to exercise is the buddy system, said Sgt. Michael J. Bell of Alpha Company, 2-2 Inf., a squad leader for a scout platoon.

Having a partner helps you meet your goals, said Bell, a squad leader for a scout platoon.

Physical fitness is an essential part of a soldier's life, Rumsey emphasized. It can make the difference of whether a soldier is capable of completing his mission.

"A soldier's fitness is his or her key to survival," he said.

Fitness Programs

Fit for life

It's only offered at Camp Bonsteel. But the program is similar to the one used at the website: www.bodyforlife.com. It's your body, you make the decision.

Aerobics Class

It's offered at Bondsteel and is coming soon to Monteith. It's a high impact class that helps you work on your upper and lower body.

Nutrition Programs

Provide dietary planning; ask for Barry Rumsey at Camp Monteith or Mack at Camp Bondsteel or Conrad Cooper at Camp Magrath for assistance. They are all qualifed to give advice on nutritional plans.

Also available is the Protein Bar open from 0700 to 2400 hrs

Fitness Centers

Bondsteel Fitness Centers:
Phone # 5072 & 6620
Open 24 hrs a day

Monteith Fitness Center:
Phone # 7031
POC: Barry Rumsey
Open 24 hrs a day

Magrath Fitness Center:
Phone # 4589
POC: Conrad Cooper
Open 24 hrs a day

All about the Benjamins

Soldiers can get their finances in order

By Master Sgt. Thomas Hayes

While the Powers that Be execute the "Unfixing" strategy in accordance with the transition to civilian authority, soldiers deployed to Kosovo have an opportunity to develop a fixing strategy of their own. Financially speaking, this deployment is an opportunity to get one's financial house in order.

There are several programs at the base camps that can help. Ranging from a high interest bearing savings account to longer-range retirement programs, these programs offer a painless approach to getting ahead.

But before one looks to the future, one must investigate the present. For instance, does it make sense to put money into a high interest account, when your credit card debt carries an even higher interest? Short answer, no. But, another school of thought is yes. Both are correct, but the key is discipline.

Carey Perks is a financial advisor for the Army Community Services at Camp Bondsteel. From his "Admin Alley" office he helps soldiers experience the joy of financial freedom. If you're building your financial house, he's one of the hardware stores. Cost for his services? A couple of hours of your time.

The first step is to assess where you are. ACS can help you with a net worth statement; basically, what you have minus what you owe. Then you track spending habits: How much do you spend a month? How much do you spend a year on gift giving? The numbers will surprise you. Most people don't factor in seasonal expenses, Perks says.

"How many men remember their anniversaries by having their wife roll over in the morning and say, 'Happy Anniversary,'" Perks says. And then the husband has to scramble for a gift. All these have to be accounted for in financial assessment and budgeting. For example, if the total you spend for birthdays, holidays, anniversaries, Valentines Day is $3,000, then one must factor $250 a month for that into budgeting.

That's the first and most painful part, the realization of what is going out. That's also where the game begins. You can look at these debts as targets. You have three credit cards. Work on paying them down and killing off two by cutting them up, canceling them and saving the lowest interest one for emergencies.

Deployments like this are a target rich environment. It's time for reconstitution. And if your money is your ammo, you need to allocate it against the targets. Your high payoff targets are the high interest charge cards and loans. Look at those bills, credit cards, and loans. At times this may seem a daunting task, like being surrounded, but when you are surrounded, at least you know where they all are.

You've got six months to get your financial house in order, or at least the foundation built. So now you know where you are. Now, you need to know where you want to go.

"Don't get into anything before you have an emergency fund and renter's insurance," Perks says. "So if something happens you don't have to cash in the investment dollars to cover the emergency."

After the emergency fund, Perks's preferred vehicle is Mutual Funds.

"We tend to think that soldiers are better off in a man-

Peacekeeper profile

Patrick Hyman, Jr.
Age: 36
Rank: Sgt. 1st Class
MOS: 92Y, Unit Supply Sgt.
Unit: HHC 2-2 Infantry Bat.
Camp: Monteith
Hometown: Brentwood, NY

What are you good at? My job and sports.

Why did you join the Army? To get my life headed into some direction and let it be positive.

What advice would you give to soldiers coming to Kosovo? To make sure they keep an open mind about what the mission is here in Kosovo. Stay alert and go to school.

aged fund, rather than getting into the stock market directly," Perks says. Mutual funds have automatic and systematic deductions to grow your investment. There's usually a charge, or *load*, that pays the institution to manage the funds.

For the long-range part of your portfolio, there is the retirement account. "One of the things we are pushing for is the Thrift Savings Program. I can't find a good reason not to invest in it," Perks says. Currently, soldiers may contribute up to 7 percent of base pay into this program, which is similar to a 401K. Can't afford 7 percent? That's okay.

"My advice is don't put more dollars into a retirement plan than you can afford to kiss goodbye," Perks says, "Because that's really what you're doing. You're giving away your control until you're 59 ½-years-old."

A painless way to do this, Perks says, is to do it when you're getting pay raises. The military pay raise in January should be 4.1 percent, so invest four percent into TSP and you won't feel the pinch – the January pay check will net about the same as the December pay check.

It is important to realize that the first four years a soldier is in the Army he or she receives on average ten pay raises (anniversary pay, January cost of living increases, and promotion). Deployment increases like hostile fire pay and family separation pay, for example, also add to the pot. The key is to put that money to good use.

"Young soldiers can put away a lot when they're single and can scale back when they're married," Perks says, "and at least they'll have that money that is already there compounding and compounding again towards that retirement date.

"Most of our young soldiers will admit that they waste a lot of money and if they sign up for something like TSP (Thrift Savings Program) where it comes out of their paycheck before they see it, after a couple of months they won't miss it," Perks says. "It is more or less a hidden program where they know they're contributing, but they don't painfully lose it."

Capt. Steven R. Smith is the Detachment Commander of the 106 Finance Company. He recommends both the TSP and Savings Deposit Program.

"The key thing to remember about the TSP is it is a retirement plan similar to a 401K, so you can't touch the money until you reach 59 ½," Smith says. "The money you put into it every month lowers your taxable income."

"The best time to do the TSP is sooner rather than later," Smith says. "There is the time value of money, which means the more money you put in at an earlier age, especially if you are doing it monthly, will build up to a lot more money later on."

Smith is adamant about ridding oneself of high interest debt before one gets into a program.

"Taking care of high interest debt has to be the first priority," Smith says. "People need to be paying off those loans prior to even thinking about doing anything additional with their money." Once that is manageable, then one can look ahead.

For deployments like these, there is an added bonus in the Savings Deposit Program. A first deposit into the program can be made on the 31st day on the ground. The program has a 10 percent interest rate, which is more accurately calculated at 2.5 percent every three months applied to the average balance of those months. The money is guaranteed, which is more than one can say for the stock market. An important tip: Make your deposit before the 10th of the month so you'll get the interest for that month.

"I would recommend that anyone who has the means to participate in the savings deposit program do so," Smith says. "My first deployment I didn't participate in the program, but this time around I definitely am. Especially with the stock market so crazy, I feel safe with the return without worrying about a decline."

Perks agrees. "If you are a young soldier why not put a few bucks aside?'" he says. "You'll never be sorry. It can be painless to save if just start saving now and banking pay raises. That's the whole thing about saving, make it painless on yourself."

And don't wait. Perks offers an alternative to Smith's philosophy. "I think too many people say, 'when I get out of debt I am going to start saving,' and Americans don't ever get out of debt," Perks says, "so I think it is smart to teach yourself to save while you are dealing with those debts. It needs to be a healthy blend of saving and paying off debt."

Finally, keep the wallet closed and learn to say "No." Disciplining yourself with an allowance is something most financial counselors recommend.

"Soldiers spend a lot of money. People find ways to spend money even down here, and here's an opportunity to save that money: Pretend you didn't even get it, put it away and earn some interest on it," Smith says. "Or just spend all the extra money and miss this opportunity."

Well appropriated...

Photo by Master Sgt. Thomas Hayes

"You've heard of pork barrel politics," says Rep. David Hobson (R-Ohio) while tapping on the door of a humvee, "well, this is an example of a good Congressional add-on." As Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee on Military Contracting, Hobson was instrumental in attaching a rider to a defense bill, which funded acquisition of up-armored humvees like the one in the photo. "These save lives," said Hobson, who lead a Congressional Delegation to visit military personnel stationed at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo on Thanksgiving. From left are Lt. Col. Mark Leonard, from National Guard Bureau's Army Readiness Training; Rep. Doug Ose (R-CA); Rep. Robert Aderholt (R-AL); Rep. John A. Boehner (R-Ohio); Hobson; Rep. Edward Whitfield (R-KY) and MNB(E) Commander Brig. Gen. Daniel Keefe.

VFW

VETERANS OF FORIEGN WARS

A retired Special Forces soldier stands beside a VFW memorial dedicated to his fallen brethren.

By Spc. Whitney Hughes

A year ago, on May 28, Staff Sgt. Michael Hathaway was standing next to his battalion commander at an unveiling ceremony to honor Lt. John H. Banks, a fighter pilot in World War II who was captured and killed by Germans.

The unveiling was next to his gravesite in Lom, a city in the Czech Republic.

"I watched as the U.S. flag I provided was raised over Banks' memorial," recalled Hathaway, NCOIC of the electrical maintenance shop with Headquarters, Headquarters Company here at Camp Bondsteel.

Through his work with his Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 9334 in Vilseck, Germany, Hathaway played a key role in raising the money to erect the Banks monument.

It was an experience he will always cherish as a member of the VFW.

Moments like this are just one of the many that MNB(E) and other military personnel deployed on peacekeeping missions would have otherwise missed out on.

But on Oct. 18, 2002, that changed when President George W. Bush signed legislation extending the eligibility to veterans' organizations to all soldiers receiving hostile fire or imminent danger pay.

Now, soldiers deployed on peacekeeping missions are eligible for the same benefits as a veteran of World War II or Vietnam, Hathaway said. And it's as simple as filling out an application and paying a fee of $25 a year. Soldiers can join here and then when they redeploy they can transfer their membership to the nearest post.

"I think it's excellent, " said Sgt. Devin Rogers, NCOIC in G-2 plans, Headquarters, Headquarters Company. "There are still hostile entities out there that don't necessarily like the U.S., the United Nations or the National Atlantic Treaty Organization being involved. I think all soldiers that have been in a situation like that should reap the benefits."

In addition to a yearly fee, there is the option of a lifetime membership fee. The fees are scaled by age group and include the following:

- **Age through 30: $245**
- **Age 31-40: $235**
- **Age 41-50: $215**
- **Age 51-60: $195**
- **Age 61-70: $165**
- **Age 71-80: $125**
- **Age 81 and over: $85**

"The benefits far outweigh the cost of membership," said Hathaway. "It's an investment in themselves (the soldiers)."

There are many reasons for soldiers to join the VFW, not the least of which are the insurance benefits, Hathaway said. Along with free personal accident insurance to every member, the VFW offers many other insurance programs:

- **Additional VFW travel/accident benefit**
- **Reduced-rate vehicle insurance call: 1-800-821-2606**
- **Long-term care insurance for members, spouse, parents and in-laws**
- **Burial benefits for members and spouses**
- **Group term life insurance (up to $15,000 term), no exams or questions**
- **Hospital Insurance plan**
- **Cancer Expense Assistance plan**
- **Medicaid Supplement plans (10 plans)**
- **Birthday Life Insurance: (fixed rates for ages 40-80)**
- **Cash Value Life Insurance**
- **Dependant Child Coverage**

The VFW also offers its members financial benefits. It has a credit union open to all members, employees and families of VFW and the VFW Ladies Auxiliary. The credit union offers free checking and low-interest loans. The VFW also offers a MasterCard with a 9.9 percent interest rate and no annual fee, low introductory rates and designer cards.

The VFW Foundation helps members reduce taxes and protect their estates, Hathaway explained.

Healthcare benefits are available through the BeneVets Healthcare Saving Program. This program offers discounts on prescriptions, vision, dental and chiropractic care. The program also offers discounts on vitamins, hearing aides and durable medical equipment.

Members have several travel benefits available, such as discount rental cars from Hertz, Avis, Alamo and other companies. The VFW also offers a Veterans Travel Service, which can be contacted by calling 1-800-968-9377.

The organization also serves as a watchdog, Hathaway said. They lobby for veterans benefits.

"I am expecting the VFW to maintain their current status with legislative lobbying to make sure that veterans benefits don't go away," Rogers said.

Its service officers also assist veterans seeking discharge upgrades, record corrections, education benefits, disability compensation, pension eligibility and other veterans' needs. The VFW's field representatives regularly inspect VA healthcare facilities, regional offices and national cemeteries.

"A lot of posts have lawyers on retainer that can help with problems with the VA," said Hathaway. He recalled a specific case when a Vietnam veteran came into his post in need of the VFW's assistance.

The man had received 100 percent disability from the Army and had received only 40 percent from the VA. He had developed cancer and diabetes and had other medical issues that were on the VA's list for compensation.

"If I could help this guy get more than 40 percent disability from the VA then that's great," Hathaway said. " My personal reward is to help people out and help make a difference in their life."

For more information or to receive an Operation Uplink phone card, MNB(E) military personnel can contact Hathaway at Michael.Hathaway@Bondsteel2.areur.army.mil

Peacekeeper profile

Amberly Bailey
Age: 22
Rank: Spc.
MOS: 95B, Military Police
Unit: 1st Military Police Co.
Camp: MP camp in Kamenica
Hometown: Cleborne, Texas

Your role in Kosovo? Ensure the safety and security of the people of Kosovo. I'm tasked out to the Russian Sector.

What do you like to do when you're off duty? Read and spend time with my wonderful husband , Jeff.

Why did you join the Army? To serve my country and make my family proud.

U.S. soldiers share their blessings

Photo by Spc. Christopher Gookin

Tony Williams of Army Material Command Logistics Support Element-Kosovo, unloads donated food at the Organization for the Blind in Ferizaj on Nov 28.

By Spc. Christopher Gookin

UROSEVAC/FERIZAJ, Kosovo — For the Army Materiel Command Logistic Support Element-Kosovo, this year's Thanksgiving had special meaning.

On a day when American service members were treating themselves to a holiday dinner, 22 members of the AMC LSE-K decided to do the same for someone else.

They delivered 1000 pounds of potatoes, carrots, onions, fruit and flour to the Organization for the Blinds central office in Urosevac/Ferizaj. The food will be distributed equally among 150 people who rely on the organization's services.

The Organization for the Blind has been in operation for three years and covers the towns of Ferizaj, Pristina, Strpce and Kacanik.

Speaking in Albanian, AMC Commander Maj. Tom McCarthy said, "Today, Americans celebrate our Thanksgiving, which is mainly celebrating that for which we are thankful for having. We wanted to share some of our blessings with the people of your organization. We have brought food items for those who are not as fortunate as us. Please accept these items as a token of our support for you and the people of your organization."

There were nine staff members and recipients on hand to greet the AMC staff and present them with a token of their appreciation, a framed and matted watercolor painting.

"The Organization for the Blind of Ferizaj thanks KFOR for their help," said Demir Zenuni on behalf of the organization. "With the respect that you have for the blind, we thank you. God bless you, God bless KFOR, and God bless American soldiers."

The staff members of the Organization for the Blind perform many functions. They act as administrators, caregivers, and instructors. There are also limited vocational training opportunities available to those serviced by the organization.

"The response from our personnel has been overwhelming," said Diana Mills, the administrative officer for AMC LSE-K. "It was made very clear by myself that this was to be strictly on a volunteer basis. Everyone that was asked gave what they could and gave from the heart."

Peacekeeper profile

Laird Culver
Age: 40
Rank: CW3
MOS: UH60L Instructor Pilot
Unit: B Co., 2-1 Aviation Regiment
Camp: Bondsteel
Hometown: Ludowici, GA

What are you good at? Singing and acting
Why did you join the Army? To fly and serve my country
What advice would you give to soldiers coming to Kosovo? Keep looking to the future.

For additional news
www.mnbe.hqusareur.army.mil

- A Christmas gift
- Rebuilding relations in Donja Bitinja

Soldiers' style

Photos and story by Spc. Whitney Hughes

Soldiers and civilians participated in a Thanksgiving Fashion Show held at the Camp Bondsteel Movie Theater on Nov. 28. Twenty-two soldiers and three civilian contractors participated in the show. The show was organized by the Morale Welfare and Recreation department. The clothing was donated to the models by a local clothing store, Interkos in Ferizaji, owned by Mr. and Ms. Rexhep Sadiku. The hair and make-up design was provided by Hajriz Rexhepi.

Less is more: Spc. Jason Mitchell, an optical lab technician with Task Force Medical Falcon, retreives his tear-away pants from a member of the audience displyaing their convenient removal.

Ready for my close up: Ms. Kada Zeqiraj, a civilian contracted interpreter with Brown and Root, gets her make-up done by Harjriz Rexhepi, the make-up artist.

Love the audience: Spc. Yvette Escobeda, a lab specialist with Task Force Medical Falcon, blows a kiss to the audience.

Scenes of Kosovo

Photo by Spc. Christopher Gookin

A partially-rebuilt home in Donja Bitinja stands as a testiment to the work of Albanians and Serbians, who have returned to this village to reclaim their community.