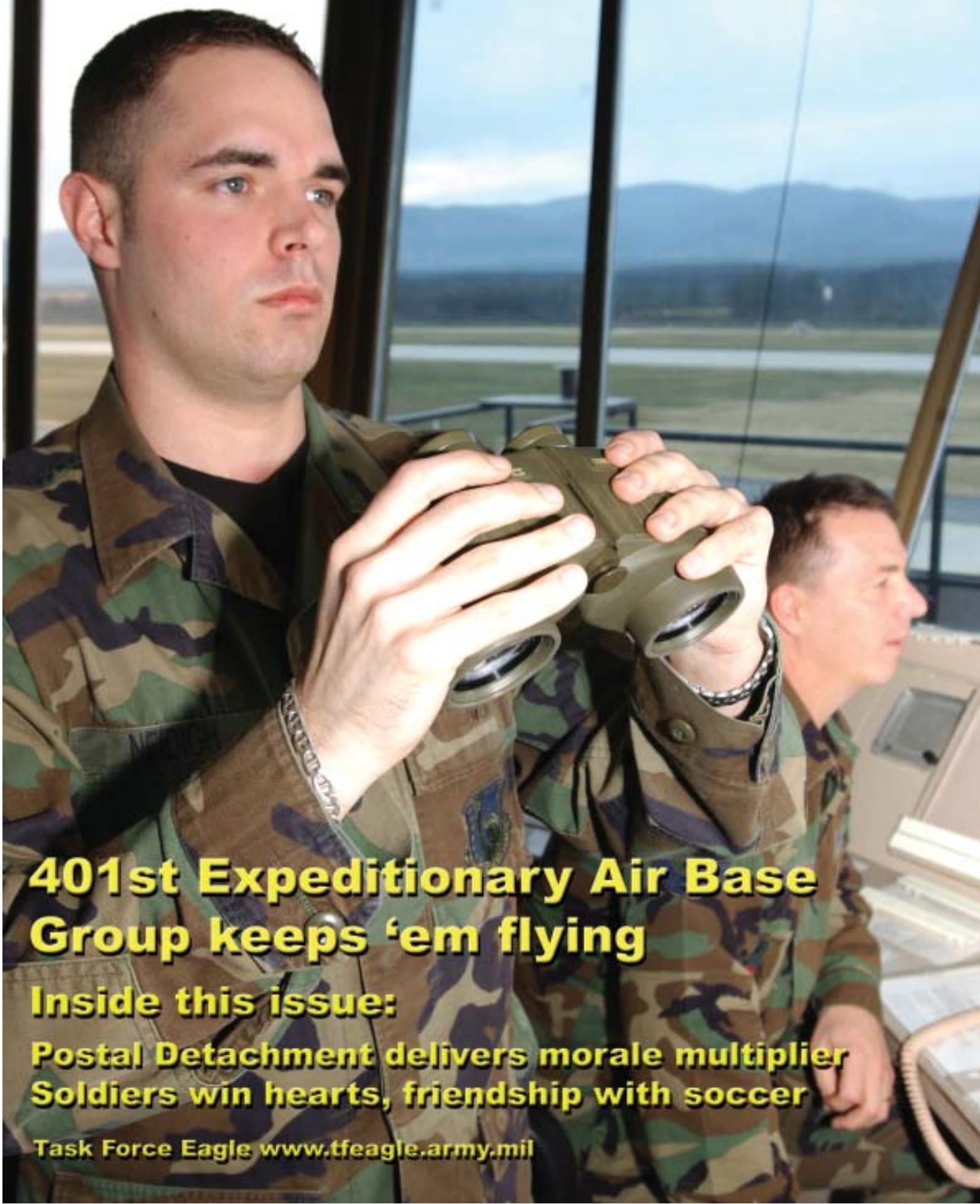


November 29, 2002

TALON



401st Expeditionary Air Base Group keeps 'em flying

Inside this issue:

**Postal Detachment delivers morale multiplier
Soldiers win hearts, friendship with soccer**

Task Force Eagle www.tfeagle.army.mil

Word on the street...

“How would you rate the morale level at this point in the rotation?”

TALON

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Sgt. Craig Stevens
Master Gunner
A Troop, 1-109th Inf.

“We’re doing good things but since we’re in the middle of the rotation, we’re in a gray area. In a month the morale will go up because we will be closer to going home.”



Sgt. Nicole Washington
Civil Affairs NCO
416th Civil Affairs Bn.

“Although the holidays are approaching and the soldiers miss their families, I think the level of morale is good.”



Sgt. 1st Class Cathleen Kirby
Pax Terminal NCOIC
281st PSD

“I think the morale level is good. People are starting to get used to their positions so they are able to take advantage of different opportunities available to them.”



Capt. Chris Warczak
Pharmacist
5501st USAH

“The morale is good. It was lifted with beer days and now with entertainers like Drew Carey.”



Sgt. Ruth Randolph
Traffic Accident Investigator
28th Military Police Co.

“I think the morale is high because MWR brings in entertainers, as well as recreational activities, which gives soldiers something to do.”



Sgt. Paige Taylor
Combat Engineer
C Co., 103rd Engineer Bn.

“Other than the homesick soldiers, who are away from their families during the holidays, the morale is good.”



About the covers: Front, Staff Sgt. Jerome Neidigh, air traffic control supervisor, looks from the tower for incoming aircraft. *Photo by Spc. Jessica Abner.* **Back,** Pfc. Scott H. Day, postal clerk, 336th Postal Det. loads a postal vehicle with mail enroute to forward operating bases. *Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Kelly Luster.*





Lt. Col. Bert S. Kozen
Multinational Division (N)
Chaplain

As the song states, "...There's no place like home for the holidays." As members of Task Force Eagle and Multinational Division (North), we unfortunately will be far away

from home for a number of very important religious, national and family-oriented holidays this year. How can we deal with the difficulties that will arise from this situation? Well, the first thing one needs to do is accept the fact there will be a separation from family and friends; second, acknowledge there might be some difficult emotions and feelings resulting from this separation; and third, realize you are not helpless in dealing with these issues or circumstances.

Most of us probably have

some type of plan worked out, or at least are working on one, to help keep us in touch with loved ones and family over the holidays. Shopping for special gifts and mailing them home not only helps to get us in a festive mood, but also helps to lift the spirits of those significant people in our lives. The sending and receiving of holiday cards and messages, the use of video conferencing or PC camera meetings, and the "Holiday Greetings" that were recorded earlier all help build support and encouragement.

Finally of course, it is important to remember that although these holidays are special times for family, that in a true sense we are "family" here. We need to support and encourage each other. The important things that one normally does with family during this season — church services, meals, caroling, social gatherings — can all be done with our family here.

May we all have a very blessed, safe, and happy holiday season here in Bosnia and try our best to make it our "home" for the holidays.

First - ever Pentagon chapel dedicated

by Courtney Brooks

Army News Service

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Pentagon's new chapel is now in a tranquil outer ring of the building.

Last year on Sept. 11, the area was anything but peaceful though, Army Chief of Chaplains Maj. Gen. Gaylord T. Gunhus told a congregation of Pentagon employees during the chapel's Nov. 12 dedication service. Gunhus said the building's chapel, erected at the crash site of the plane terrorists directed into the building, serves as a place of solace and hope.

"We are here to rejoice in the life and the hope of the future," Gunhus told the dedication attendees, including chaplains from other services. "We are here to move on and keep the memory of those who died alive within us. We all gather here on behalf of our fallen friends to entrust them to the joyous graces of our father in heaven."

Until the chapel was built, religious services at the Pentagon were held in conference rooms or the building's auditorium.

Standing to the side of the Pentagon's stained glass window assembled by more than 400 Army chaplains and assistants, Gunhus said the window was created from broken pieces of glass to memorialize the victims of the attack.

"These broken shards were bound together in a window that virtually jumps out at us as a message of hope and our nation's resolve," Gunhus said. "What once was a pile of broken glass is now a symbol of unity and warm remembrance."

Two crimson rings in the pentagon-shaped window total 184 pieces, memorial-

izing the 184 military and civilian lives lost on Sept. 11, according to an Army Chaplain Corps fact sheet distributed at the service.

The colorful window, named "United in Memory," features the head of an American bald eagle in front of an unfurled U.S. flag and a rendition of the Pentagon building.

The bald eagle and flag were included to evoke courage and patriotism associated with the defense of the nation, according to the fact sheet. The eagle, in a vigilant pose, symbolizes the past and present generations of those who have protected the United States.

The flag, which is displayed against alternating rays of dark aqua and bright gold, depicts the trials and triumphs of U.S. history.

Finally, the Pentagon building represents the undefeated bulwark at the heart of defense. Sept. 11, 2001 is inscribed in the lower half of the window, declaring U.S. national resolve is both unwavering in memory and commitment to victory, according to the fact sheet.

Gunhus said that the glass window and chapel serve as a spiritual reminder of the "ultimate human sacrifice" made that day.

"Now when we look at the building from the outside, it is easy to say: 'It looks like nothing ever happened,' but it did," Gunhus said. "Though the majority of our nation and the world would have us put aside the horrible images of the attack and remove them from our minds, we will never forget what happened here."

Gunhus pointed out that the lone blackened and charred stone from the damaged

building sits amongst new stones in the renovated wall has symbolic value.

"Like the Phoenix of mythology, almost as though it grew from that one stone, this new building rose from the ashes," Gunhus said. "And I'm here to promise you that, with the help of God, that spirit will always remain alive in the hearts of all members of our great Pentagon family."

The congregation also participated in a responsive reading, led by Joel B. Hudson, administrative assistant to the secretary of the Army. In unison, Hudson and the dedication attendees recited a psalm:

"Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life; you stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes, with your right hand you save me, the lord will fulfill his purpose for me; your love, O lord, endures forever-do not abandon the works of our hands."

To dedicate the window, chaplains from the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, and an Army resource management director walked to the front of the chapel and lit a candle on a table in front of the window.

Dr. Rabbi Marvin I. Bash delivered the benediction, equating light with hope and strength.

Gunhus concluded with the hope the chapel and window will continue to honor and help people remember friends, colleagues, and comrades, whom he calls "all faithful servants of our nation."

"May the light of heaven shine upon us," Gunhus said. "May God's spirit burn within our hearts. May this chapel with this beautiful window always serve to light our way and focus us all on the destiny of eternal life."

Airfield traffic depends on Air Force

Story and photos by
Spc. Jessica Abner

Assistant Editor, 354th MPAD

EAGLEBASE, Bosnia — The sky is littered with white and gray clouds, but they do not form a blanket over the earth — yet. Air traffic is not threatened by the weather; it is a partly sunny, windy day and the buzz of helicopters and airplanes occasionally fill the air as they come and go from the Eagle Base airfield. This airfield, constructed for the soldiers to come into Tuzla, is run by the United States Air Force. The 401st Expeditionary Air Base Group mission revolves around this 8,152-foot strip of concrete.

With aircraft such as the C-130 taking off from the runway, it is important to ensure all safety precautions are implemented. Every morning, just before the sun peaks over the surrounding mountains, a secu-

rity sweep is completed to clear any unwanted persons or material that may pose a threat to the airfield.

“The safety of aircraft is one of our main purposes,” said Master Sgt. John Lemire, airfield manager. “We make sure all the safety measures are being applied on the airfield.”

Lemire starts his truck and heads onto the airfield. Just before he reaches the runway he stops, exits the vehicle and checks the tires for rocks and other unwanted materials. “We don’t want to track any debris



Tech. Sgt. Chris McKinney, meteorologist, monitors weather patterns for future operations on a satellite display.

on the runway,” said Lemire. According to Lemire, debris poses a serious threat to the aircraft when it lands or takes off.

He proceeds to drive along the lengthy pavement that is scarred by black skid marks left by landing aircraft. Besides debris, birds also pose a significant threat to the aircraft. To fix this problem, devices such as propane-powered air guns have been placed along the airfield and a bird repelling alarm is part of the standard equipment in the truck used for the security sweep. On this day, Lemire said the runway is “good to go” and can open for business.

Every day forecasters report weather conditions. For some, it just lets them know if they need to carry an umbrella. For others, it lets them know if they will be doing their job that day.

The Air Force provides a weather forecast to determine if air traffic is safe. A monitor in the weather room displays a satellite picture of cloud movement. The satellite is “real time,” which means the picture on the monitor, accurately exemplifies the current weather conditions.

According to Col. Joe Grasso, commander of the 401st Expeditionary Air Force Group, weather support is provided to the Army as well. “If an Army

patrol is going out and they need to know what kind of weather to expect, we provide that support,” said Grasso, who commands a force of 51 officers and airmen.

One of the more prominent features of the airfield is the tower. Tower personnel are essential to aircraft landing and departing Eagle Base. Because the tower has no radar capability, communication between tower and pilots is essential.

According to Master Sgt. Kenneth Breedlove, approach controller, because no radar exists, there has to be 30 minutes between each aircraft arriving and departing. “Usually we have a scope and can see the airplanes for 120 miles, but here I don’t have a scope and I can’t see at all,” said Breedlove. “So the pilot calls and tells me he’s at a certain point at a certain time. When he gets to that point he calls me. We do this until he lands.” The tower controllers know the location of every approaching aircraft, thereby directing aircraft to a safe landing.

With his lengthy experience, Breedlove is qualified to take over for anyone in the control tower. “I’ve been doing this job for 22 years and I can perform any job in the tower,” he said. “However, each base is different and you can’t just walk into



Master Sgt. Kenneth Breedlove and Chief Master Sgt. John Gray, air traffic control, work in the tower.

a new tower and do this. It's a new experience from base to base."

The job of landing airplanes does not stop in the tower. Airmen on the ground also play an important role in the safety of the aircraft.

With an M-60 machine gun mounted to a Humvee, two Air Force SPs (security police) gear up to provide security for any aircraft landing and departing Eagle Base. The SPs obtain a flight schedule every morning. The troops show up prior to the plane landing to do a security sweep of the flight line. Once the security sweep is complete the SPs set up the vehicle in a designated area and pan the fence line, ensuring there are no unwanted personnel on the airfield when the plane lands.

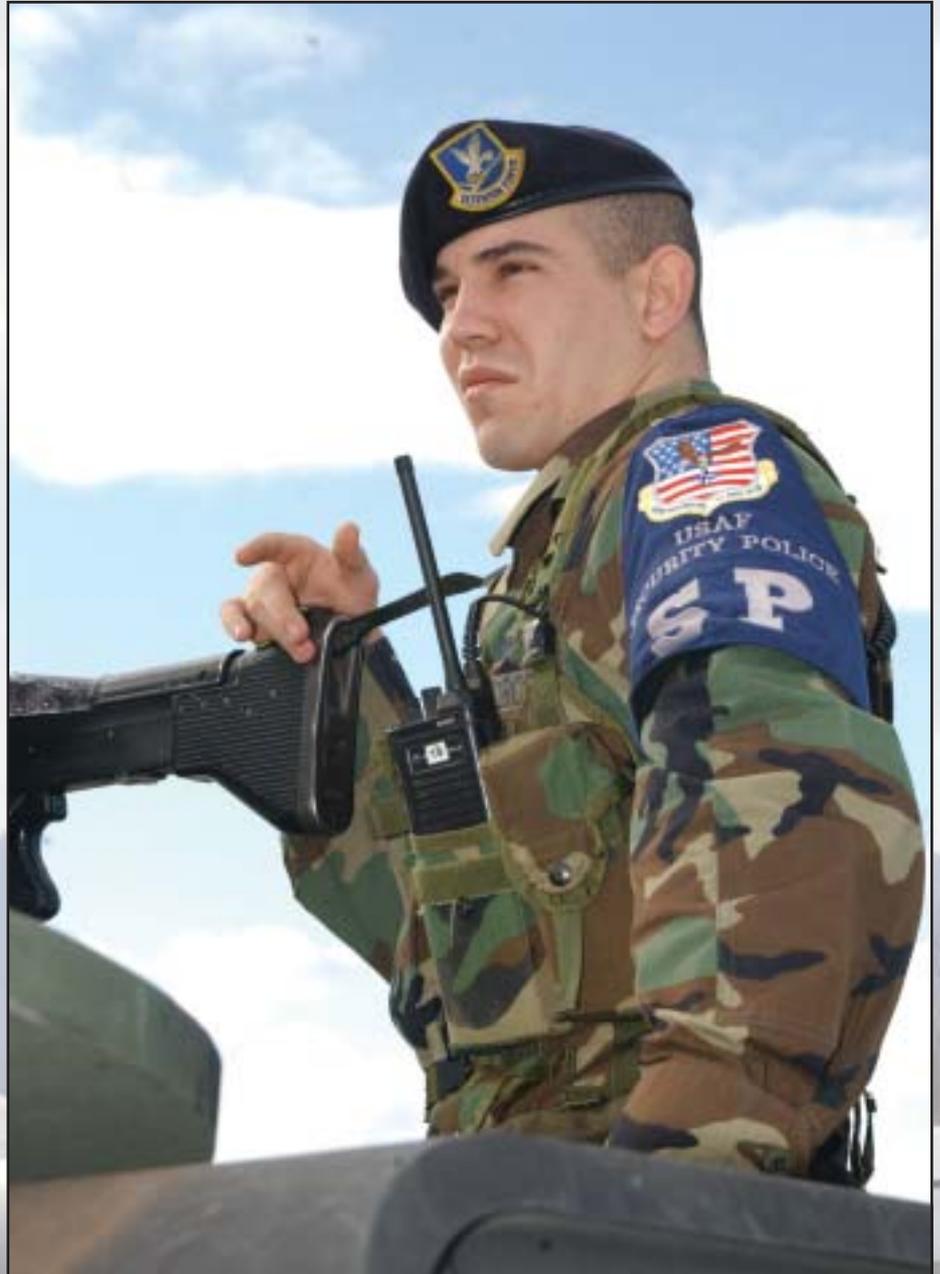
According to Senior Airman Robert Braithwaite, security forces, the incoming personnel are the SP's first priority. Their mission primarily revolves around the security of the aircraft.

Braithwaite also said the SPs they haven't run in to any major problems. "The work is not tough, it's something that we can do and the job is done well. Everything is very well put together and we've got a good group of people," said Braithwaite. "The worst problem we've encountered so far is telling people to stay off the grass."

Security police undergo three months of training at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas, to prepare them for this job. According to Sgt. Joseph Moos, flight sergeant, everything the SPs trained to do is used from day-to-day. "The benefits of on the job training is if you do it everyday, it just becomes second nature," said Moos, who also said they are prepared for any emergency. "You don't want to get caught unaware, but we are ready for the worst case scenario."

After the aircraft is on its way to another location, the SPs drive off the airfield and prepare for the next plane to arrive.

The job of running the airfield requires teamwork and communication. Each job



Air Force Security Police provide security for all aircraft landing on Eagle Base. Senior Airman Robert Braithwaite, security forces, 401st Expeditionary Air Base Group, sits in the gunner's hatch while watching over a C-130 during landing and departure.



Security Police pan the fence line, ensuring the safety of the aircraft.

relies on the next to safely run the airfield and its traffic. Although it appears to run smoothly, there are always challenges. According Grasso, downsizing is a constant challenge. "If you're growing in numbers or if you're downsizing, it's a challenge. Steady operations are easier because you can get into a routine."

The Air Force has three months to fall into a routine because they rotate every 90 days. According to Airman 1st Class Jacob Deaton, airfield management operations craftsman, life on Eagle Base is not so bad. "It's a lot better than I expected. This is my first temporary duty assignment and I thought I was coming to a place where there was less than nothing," said Deaton. So far with the quality of life, the food, and people, everything has been great. People here treat you well."

Now, when you see a C-130 or any aircraft approach or leave Eagle Base, you will know teamwork and cooperation are behind its safe landing. The airfield is the reason the United States Air Force is here, and they pride themselves in not just doing their jobs, but doing their jobs well.

Postal detachment delivers morale multipliers to deployed troops

Story and Photos by
Sgt. 1st Class Kelly Luster

Editor, 354th MPAD

EAGLE BASE, Bosnia — Almost every soldier can remember that day as though it were yesterday. A thunderous voice bellowing from an ominous figure standing in front of 50 sweaty, intimidated ragbags. “Private Smith, get up here!”

As a nervous young troop makes his or her way to the end of the third rank and starts toward the front they realize what is about to happen. They are the lucky recipient of six pieces of mail this day and, as was the custom in some basic training platoons, a debt is owed the drill sergeant — ten push ups per item and the bill was overdue. Quite honestly, most soldiers would probably do six hundred pushups for mail.

According to Spc. Michael Russ, registered mail clerk, 336th Postal Co., nothing in the Army will improve morale like mail call. “I believe that we are the morale multiplier,” said Russ.

Russ is just one member of a team of Army postal workers who through rain, sleet, snow, and dark of night, to make certain soldiers get mail.

Russ, who served as an Army postal worker during Desert Storm, Haiti, Somalia, SFOR I and II, said the Army Postal Service is full of unsung heroes.

“When many soldiers are still asleep in bed, we’re here taking care of the mail. When others take Saturdays and Sundays off, we’re here working



Just one of the many pieces of mail that is checked to make sure it gets to the correct unit.



Spc. Jon Quil Livingston, postal finance clerk, 336th Postal Co., assists one of the many customers who are sending packages home for the holidays.

on the mail. When some soldiers take time on Thanksgiving and Christmas to enjoy themselves — we will be here working on the mail. Seven days a week, 365 days a year — someone is working in the post office.”

Pfc. Scott H. Day, postal clerk, said his day usually begins at about 4 a.m. with a truck full of mail. “The first thing we do is break down the truck,” Day said. The truck happens to be a forty-foot tractor-trailer that can hold up to 1,000 pieces of mail. But don’t be fooled by the word “piece.”

“A piece can be a tray that has 1,000 letters in it,” said Day. “Or it might be a bag filled with letters, boxes or what have you.” Sometimes, it’s the “what have you” that makes the day a little more interesting.

Since the Sep. 11th terrorist attacks on the United States and the subsequent anthrax attacks, the Postal Service no longer accepts mail addressed “to any soldier.”

“Believe it or not, if something like that comes through here, we shut the post office down,” said Spc. Foy Thomas, postal locator. Thomas said they take no chances. “On more than one occasion we have stopped work here while explo-

sive ordnance disposal teams, military police and the fire department inspected suspicious packages.” All were false alarms.

Thomas said not a day goes by without his desk being filled to capacity with unidentified packages, letters, catalogues, and magazines that have hit a roadblock on the mail route.

“Sometimes they come in without the right address or only a partial address,” said Thomas. “It’s my job to try to find out where they are supposed to go.”

Thomas uses a computer locator system first. If that doesn’t work he goes low-tech.

“If I can’t find the person on the computer, I switch to my DA Form 3955 card file,” said Thomas. The DA Form 3955 card is a change of address card that allows the Postal Service to forward mail to the new location.

“If you were at Sarajevo and moved to Camp Morgan, you should fill out a DA Form 3955. If you move from Morgan to Camp McGovern, you should fill out the card. Every time you relocate, you need to fill out this card,” said Thomas.

If all else fails and Thomas cannot forward the mail or return it to the sender, then the item may end up going to the

dead letter center.

“That’s the worst part of this job,” said Thomas. When I can’t find a person and have to send something off to the dead letter center, it’s just terrible.” In the past he has had to send computers, televisions, cameras, cards, and just about anything else one can think of to the dead letter center.

With the holidays fast approaching, mail volume increases dramatically. For that reason the post office set deadlines for holiday mailing. The last day to guarantee packages arrive in time for Christmas using priority mail must be dropped off no later than Dec. 11. After that there are no guarantees.

When the volume of mail goes up, so does the work load of the post office. Although Pfc. Day is no stranger to long, hard days, he knows what lies ahead.

“One nice thing about our business is that we can use volunteers or augmentees in the post office,” said Day. Other units will often provide a few extra hands to the Postal Service this time of year.

“Some units think it’s a punishment to send soldiers here to help out. Actually they’re helping us and themselves.”

In order to help out in the post office, soldiers sit through a short class and take a test afterward. Then it’s off to the mail truck for loading, sorting, and pitching.

Appreciation for these unsung heroes has grown immensely among the ranks. Many now understand what it takes for a card, letter or ever so important care package to get from Latrobe, Pa. or Muscle Shoals, Ala., to get into their hands. And from now on when you’re taking a break on a holiday or weekend, remember that behind closed doors, long before the sun has risen, seven days a week, 365 days a year, the Army post office is hard at work making sure you get your morale multiplier.

109th Infantry “kicks it” with friends

Submitted by 1st Lt. Marcel C. Minutolo

Asst. Intell. Officer, 1st-109th Inf.

MILICI, Bosnia — While the tough infantry soldiers clad with protective equipment and weapons might not seem very threatening to some, many locals are still intimidated and prefer to keep their distances. When a weapon or up-armored Humvee separates soldiers from the local people, there is little chance for close contact and friendships. However, a local Bosnian, Sloba Milanovic, found an interesting way to break down barrier between them — soccer.

Milanovic, challenged 3rd Plt., C Co., 1st - 109th Inf., to a game of soccer with their local team — the Birac-Derventa Team coached by Nedjo Jovanovic and Dragan Micic. Soldiers of the 109th, having never shirked a challenge before, readily accepted the call.

The two teams met not on a field of battle, but on a playing field. The U.S. Team, led by 2nd Lt. Charles Connolly, was composed of two squads from 3rd Plt. The Bosnian team was composed of players from local high school and college teams.

Although the soldiers lost by a final

score of 4-3 — they won a great deal more — they won the hearts and minds of all the participants.

The local team was excited to have their photos taken with the U.S. soldiers prior to beginning the game. At first, the two teams competed against each other, but after playing for a while the local team suggested they mix the two teams together. After the mix-and-match game, Staff Sgt. Joe Robinson, the squad leader, said, “We had a lot of fun, and I think they had fun, too. Local Bosnians cheered louder for us than they did for their own team.”

According to Robinson, Spc. Bobbie George provided a great demonstration as the goalkeeper, blocking and saving numerous attempts on the goal, sacrificing his body as most of the action was at his end of the field during the game.

It appears the local team had a lot of fun because after the game, they invited the two participating squads to a local café to eat together and talk some more.

It was not all fun and games for the patrol, however. While the U.S. team played the game, a second squad interacted with neighborhood children. Staff Sgt. Joe White, squad leader, passed out Tootsie Rolls and gave an impromptu class on the



photo by Staff Sgt. Joe Robinson

Although the soldiers’ team was defeated 4-3, they won in the end by breaking down barriers and building new relationships.

dangers of unexploded ordnance.

The Birac-Derventa Team was a very enthusiastic host and displayed outstanding sportsmanship throughout the competition. Spc. Brian Turner said, “This is the best patrol I have been on so far, we need more of this to promote our image and commitment to the youth of this nation.”

There was no need for interpreters during this exchange — body language and smiles of good sportsmanship tore down any language barriers that may have previously existed.

TFME builds relations and shares info

Story and Photos by Maj. John Dowling

Commander, 354th MPAD

TUZLA, Bosnia — SFOR medical personnel from throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina recently gathered in Zenica to share information and build camaraderie among the many diverse representatives of the peacekeeping mission here.

For the first time, the Multinational Division (North) Surgeon’s Conference was held outside the confines of Eagle Base as the Turkish Battalion Task Force hosted this event, which also included representatives from the MND (Southeast) and SFOR’s senior medical officer.

“The very fact the surgeon’s conference is being attended extensively by the leaders and medical personnel from all sides of the MND (N) underlines the importance and the significance of the occasion,” said Lt. Col. M. Hakan Kocaman, Turkish Bn. commander. “The surgeon’s conference stands as a symbol of commitment by armies of all nations to further consolidate the existing ties of amity, goodwill and cooperation.”

The doctors and nurses discussed many of the challenges and potential solutions to serious medical concerns facing SFOR as the mission moves away from military security and more toward humanitarian support. The presentations included information on medical civilian aid program (MEDCAP) planning, Behcet’s Disease, Balkan Endemic Nephropathy, veterinary services, and the Russian medical experience in Afghanistan.

Lt. Col. Joseph Warren, deputy commander of Nursing, Task Force Med Eagle, delivered a presentation highlighting the suc-

cess of international cooperation during an October MEDCAP in Milici. The event resulted in about 140 underserved healthcare patients receiving preventive and diagnostic treatment.

The medical staff for the event included representation from Finland, Denmark, Latvia, Croatia, Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and UNHCR. The entire cost of the MEDCAP was approximately \$1,700, according to Warren.

“Think of the return on that investment. There is no certificate of deposit that will give you that kind of return,” said Warren. “For some people the MEDCAP is the only medical healthcare they ever get.”

The medical soldiers also viewed a presentation about the host nation’s country and toured the Turkish Battalion Hospital. After the daylong conference, the multinational participants toured the city of Zenica, home to the Turkish Battalion Task Force. The headquarters element is housed in part of a large steel-making complex that dominates the mountainous landscape surrounding the city. A barbecue concluded the day’s events and gave the participants yet another opportunity to share a wealth of professional experience and knowledge.

“We are representing different nations and units within the MND (N) and no matter where or what our duties or obligations are, we have the same aim. We are the ones that are trying to do our best in providing healthcare for all SFOR representatives,” said Turkish Capt. Ismail Simsek, the conference coordinator.

The formal and informal activities reinforced the cooperative nature of the conference, which brought together medical personnel from many diverse backgrounds together to benefit the soldiers of SFOR and the community.

