

Chapter 8

Kosovo



By 30 June 2015 North Carolina soldiers were on the ground in Kosovo, ready to assume command and control of the Multinational Battle Group East of a peacekeeping force there. The brigade, based in Clinton, left North Carolina in early May and trained in Texas and Germany before arriving in the Balkans. More than 320 soldiers from the North Carolina National Guard's 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team, the bulk coming from the Fayetteville-based 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 252nd Armor Regiment, arrived in the still-disputed country, which was formerly part of Serbia. Their base of operation was Camp Bonsteel where they began their nine-month mission, working with local security forces in the Balkan nation to keep peace and improve security force capabilities.

The mission was unlike past deployments for the brigade - which deployed to Iraq twice in the last dozen years - but its soldiers were well-suited to the task, said Col. Vernon H. Simpson Jr., commander.

Working with civilian authorities is what the National Guard does best, he said. And many of the North Carolina soldiers were law enforcement, giving the unit plenty of familiarity in that field, too.

The battle group, one of two in Kosovo, was comprised of approximately 1,450 soldiers, including National Guardsmen and Army Reservists from West Virginia, Texas, Connecticut, Alabama and Florida and hundreds of soldiers from Armenia, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Turkey.

Shortly after his arrival Major Neil Edgar reported,

“Our mission here is to maintain a Safe and Secure Environment and Freedom of Movement while Kosovo continues their quest to become an independent nation and member of the European Union. It all started in the late 90s when Yugoslavia fell and Slobodan Milosevic went on a Hitler-like ethnic cleansing campaign with the goal of genocide for the Albanian population. During the Clinton years there was a US air campaign launched against Serbia to assist, NATO became engaged and Slobodan Milosevic was removed from power and tried for horrific war crimes.

Tension still exists in the Balkans and while things are stable there is a sense of fragility. Serbia (in part) feels that Kosovo is still Serbia while Kosovo struggles to reach their independence. Kosovo is plagued with political, economic, infrastructure, corruption, and rule of law issues. Gatherings, demonstrations and protests are a common theme in Kosovo. That is how they draw attention to their cause and garner change. Sometimes but not often, protest become riots. In the event of a riot, the Kosovo Police Force is the first responder. They are a well-trained, professional, capable force and they are resistant to ask for outside help. In the eyes of many, to include their own, asking for assistance would delegitimize the Kosovo Police Force and their ability the secure



Kosovo is a disputed territory located on the Balkan Peninsula

Flag - The blue color in the flag of the state of Kosovo represents the goals of the people of Kosovo for the Euro-Atlantic integration. The golden yellow colors of the map on blue field, represents Kosovo as a rich and peaceful country, while the white stars above the map represent the communities living in Kosovo.

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Kosovo. EULEX (European Rule of Law Mission) is the second tier responder in the event the Kosovo Police cannot adequately contain a large riot. KFOR20 (that's us) is a third tier responder. Their hasn't been the need for KFOR to respond since 2011 and we hope it stays that way. The Kosovo Police Force continues to grow and become a more formidable force."

THE KOSOVO COUNTRYSIDE

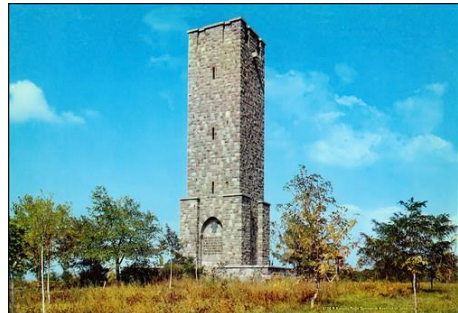
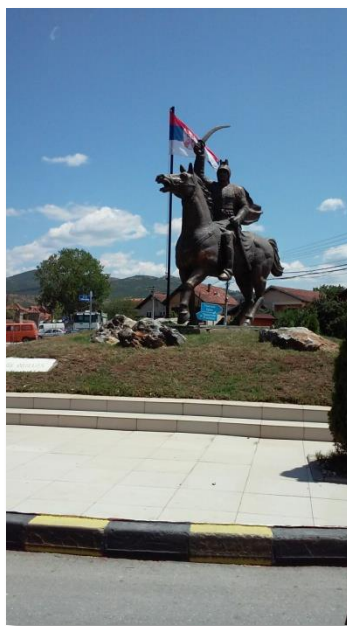
The countryside is austere but still strikingly beautiful. "I have seen quite a few sites here in Kosovo already. I am away from the base three days per week for meetings at the KFOR Headquarters, the US National Intelligence Center and the US Embassy, all in Pristina. On my way back to the base after such meetings I try to work in time to see some of the sites. There are various statues, monuments, monasteries, mosques and even some Roman ruins that are worth a look."



Gracanica Manastir (Monastery)

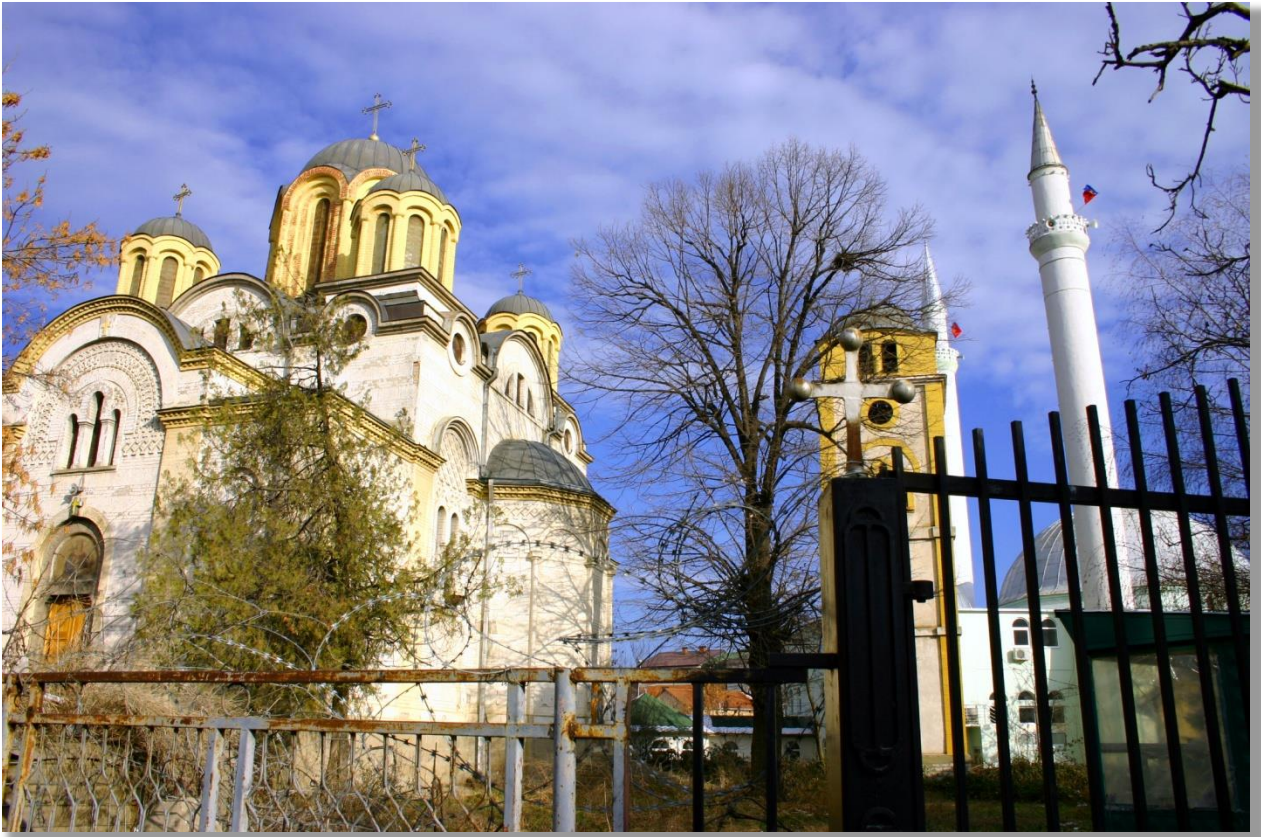


Monument of Brotherhood and Unity in Pristina



Left: Skanderbeg Statue, Top Right: Unfinished Orthodox Church of Christ the Saviour with the Catholic Cathedral of Mother Teresa in the background, Bottom Right: Gazimestan Monument. It is a monument that commemorates the 1389 Battle of Kosovo, the battle in which Sultan Murad I was killed.

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Ferizaj Mosque and Church



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Near the Gracanica Monastery, just a few kilometers outside of Pristina, you can take a step back in time and wander through the ruins of the ancient city of Ulpiana. Archaeologists have uncovered city walls, the foundations of temples, and a necropolis (graveyard).



CAMP MARECHAL DE LATTRE DE TASSIGNY, KOSOVO

First Combined Arms Battalion, 252nd Armor Regiment Alpha Company, assumed responsibility for the Multinational Battle Group-East, or MNBG-E, Forward Command Post, or FCP, during a transition of authority ceremony at Camp Marechal de Lattre De Tassigny, or CMLT, in Kosovo, July 4.

The MNBG-E Forward Command Post is made up of multinational elements, which serve as part of the NATO peace support operation known as Kosovo Force, or KFOR. The ceremony marked the U.S. Army's 20th rotation of Soldiers to support KFOR since the late 1990s.



"We will be the 20th rotation for the Kosovo Force peacekeeping mission," said Lt. Col. William J. Gray, the incoming FCP commander. "The Soldiers have trained alongside several multinational military and police forces in Germany to prepare for this mission here in Kosovo."

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"Our main mission is to provide a safe and secure environment and keep freedom of movement throughout Kosovo," he said.

On behalf of the outgoing FCP, Lt. Col. Mark D. Federovich said the best part of the deployment was working with their multinational partners. Federovich commands 1st Squadron (Airborne), 40th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), and the 25th Infantry Division, an airborne unit out of Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska.

"It was a new deployment with a new experience of training that our Soldiers don't normally encounter. It's been particularly good to work with the multinationals here and see how to deal with the differences in culture and language," he said. "CMLT has been good to us."

The incoming battalion headquarters, the First Combined Arms Battalion, 252nd Armor Regiment Alpha Company, along with its Alpha Company, which now serves within the FCP, conducted several weeks of training on Fort Bliss, Texas, and the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany.

During these training rotations, the National Guard refined their tactical skills, studied the history and culture of Kosovo, and rehearsed their techniques and responsibilities in the event that a violent demonstration could threaten safety and security in Kosovo.

"We've been focusing on KFOR tasks such as crowd and riot control," said Command Sgt. Maj. Charles S. Sanders, the armor regiment's senior noncommissioned officer.

There are also a lot of political factors that play a role here in this mission too, Sanders said, emphasizing the importance of peaceful communication and multinational teamwork throughout his Soldiers' deployment, which is expected to last approximately nine months².

Through that time, the armor regiment headquarters and its "Archangels" from Alpha Company will be joined by several multinational partners. MNBG-E includes troops from Armenia, Hungary, Romania and Hungary, among others. The Soldiers will work, train, and live alongside one another to fulfill NATO commitments and support civil authorities in maintaining a safe and secure environment throughout Kosovo.



² See Appendix A for a comprehensive assessment of the politics and history of Kosovo and NATO's involvement.

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Simpson said many of the North Carolina soldiers have experience on deployments but not quite like what they might have expected in Kosovo. "The major difference between Iraq and Afghanistan and Kosovo is the level of stability," he said.

A NATO-run peacekeeping force has been in Kosovo since 1999 and, during that time, security has greatly improved, officials said.



Simpson said his brigade-led battle group would provide the necessary presence to encourage cooperation between Kosovo and its neighbors, while deterring aggression by groups that would aim to disrupt the peace.



Photo Credit: Sgt. Gina Russell

North Carolina National Guardsman, assigned to 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 252nd Armor Regiment, out of Fayetteville, N.C., stand in formation during a transition of authority ceremony at Camp Marechal de Latre de Tassigny, Kosovo, July 4, 2015.

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U.S. Army paratroopers, assigned to 1st Squadron (Airborne), 40th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division, out of Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, stand in formation alongside their replacements from the 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 252nd Armor Regiment, out of Fayetteville, N.C., during a transition of authority ceremony at Camp Marechal de Lattre de Tassigny, Kosovo, July 4, 2015.



Photo Credit: Sgt. Gina Russell

Lt. Col Mark D. Federovich, front, outgoing commander of the Multinational Battle Group-East, or MNBG-E, Forward Command Post, or FCP, stands alongside MNBG-E Commander Col. Clinton J. Baker, and incoming FCP Commander Lt. Col. William J. Gray during a transition of authority ceremony at Camp Marechal de Lattre de Tassigny, Kosovo, July 4, 2015.

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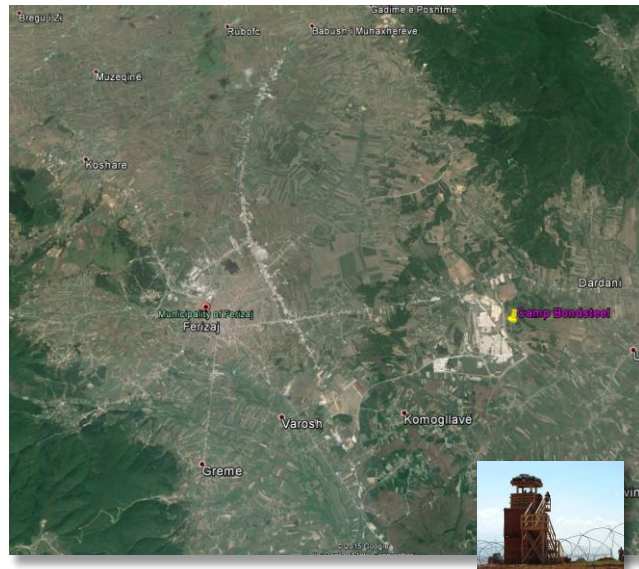
Lt. Col. William J. Gray, right, and Command Sgt. Maj. Charles S. Sanders, the commander and senior noncommissioned officer with 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 252nd Armor Regiment, out of Fayetteville, N.C., uncase the battalion's colors during a transition of authority ceremony at Camp Marechal de Lattre de Tassigny, Kosovo, July 4, 2015.



Lt. Col. William J. Gray, right, and Command Sgt. Maj. Charles S. Sanders, the commander and senior noncommissioned officer with 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 252nd Armor Regiment, out of Fayetteville, N.C., stand in front of the battalion's colors during a transition of authority ceremony at Camp Marechal de Lattre de Tassigny, Kosovo, July 4, 2015.

CAMP BONDSTEEL, FERIZAJ, KOSOVO

The United States agreed to provide a force of approximately 7,000 US personnel as part of the NATO KFOR to help maintain a capable military force in Kosovo and to ensure the safe return of Kosovar refugees. The US supports KFOR by providing the headquarters and troops for one of the four NATO sectors. The US also provides personnel, units and equipment to other components of the KFOR organization.



Camp Bondsteel [CBS] is quite large: 955 acres or 360,000 square meters. If you were to run the outer perimeter, it is about 7 miles. Bondsteel is located on rolling hills and farmland near the city of Ferizaj/Urosevac. For camp security, trees were cut to provide proper line of sight from the watch towers and for fields of fire. The outer perimeter of the base is about 14km and is surrounded by a 2.5m high earthen and concrete barrier wall. The base is protected by 84km of concertina wire and 11 guard towers, built with concrete pad and accessible entrance ladders, around the perimeter of the camp. They allow the soldiers to view the area from 18ft above the ground.

U.S. Army Capt. David Watters, chaplain for 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 252nd Armor Regiment, out of Fayetteville, N.C., gives the invocation at a hand over-turn over ceremony at Camp Marechal de Lattre de Tassigny, Kosovo, July 4, 2015.

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There are two dining facilities at Camp Bondsteel: one in North town and one in South town. The food is very well prepared and there are always a variety of main and side dishes to choose from. There are also salad bars, potato bars and multiple dessert offerings. Due to General Order #1, only alcohol-free beer is served, but it is better than nothing! There are set hours for meals, but each dining facility also has a 24-hour section for sandwiches, coffee, fruit, and continental breakfast items.

Soldiers live in SEA (Southeast Asia) Huts. There are about 250 SEA Huts for living quarters and offices. The buildings have five living areas that house up to six soldiers each. Each building has one large bathroom with



multiple shower and bathroom stalls. A few buildings have smaller bathroom facilities as well. Female and male sea huts are separate. The beds are comfortable and each room has its own heating/air conditioning unit. Soldiers get their own wall-locker for personal storage, and most opt to purchase a small set of plastic bins for additional storage. You can buy almost anything from the PX to make your living space more comfortable, such as TVs, DVD players, coffee makers and sound systems. Rooms are routinely inspected to make sure they adhere to fire and safety codes. The best way to improve the safety of your room is to purchase an approved surge protector for European voltage, and plug all of your lights and equipment into that.

Adaptors are also available so you can plug your 220-compatible devices, like laptops, into the European outlets.

The Bondsteel PX offers soldiers the latest CDs, DVDs, electronics, souvenirs, clothing, uniforms and everything to make your stay in Kosovo comfortable. With two stories of merchandise, the PX draws lots of multinational soldiers from throughout Kosovo. Also located at CBS are Burger King, Anthony's Pizza and a Cappuccino bar.

There are Morale Welfare and Recreation (MWR) buildings in North town and South town. The facilities offer billiards, ping-pong, video games, internet access and a video teleconference room. They also offer movies to check out and watch on several TVs in the MWR facilities. There are a total of three gyms at CBS. Two gyms (north and south) have basketball/volleyball courts, exercise equipment, weight machines and free weights. The third gym is strictly a weight room.



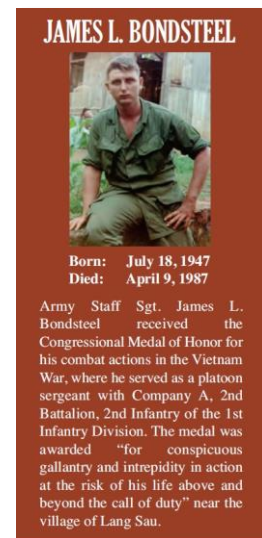
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There are two chapels on Bondsteel, North and South, and one on Camp Monteith. All Chapels offer services in several denominations. The Laura Bush education center offers a variety of college courses to suit your needs. Want to learn Albanian, Serbian, or German? Improve your computer skills? The variety of college credit and

certificate courses is staggering. There are two colleges represented at US base camps: the University of Maryland and Chicago University. For those with easy access to the Internet, online courses are offered too.

The US sector is in southeast Kosovo. Headquarters for US forces is located at Camp Bondsteel, built on 750 acres of former farmland near Urosevic. Bondsteel has about a 6-mile perimeter. The 1,000-acre camp was built from the ground up on a former field. Basecamps Bondsteel and Monteith were established in June 1999 in Kosovo to be used as staging points for the bulk of US forces stationed in the Multi National Brigade-East. About 4,000 US service members were stationed at Camp Bondsteel in the farm fields near Urosevac, and another 2,000 were at Camp Monteith, near Gnjilane. Both camps are named after medal of honor recipients, Army Staff Sgt. James L. Bondsteel, honored for heroism in Vietnam, and Army 1st Lt. Jimmie W. Montieth Jr, honored for heroism in France during World War II. Camp Able Sentry, located near the Skopje Airport, Macedonia, serves as a point of entry for supplies and personnel into Kosovo. Another 500 Americans support the operation from Camp Able Sentry in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The US contingent is known as Task Force Falcon. There are a number of locations within Kosovo, other than the base camps, at which US soldiers maintain a presence.



US forces entered Kosovo in June 1999 following NATO Operation Allied Force. Since then, military officials worked to rapidly improve service members' quality of life. At the outset, planners wanted to use the lessons learned in Bosnia and convinced decision makers to reach base-camp "end state" as quickly as possible. Because of uncertainty about the Bosnian mission's duration, when the Army moved across the Sava River into Bosnia in 1995, soldiers were housed first in tents - in the winter! Only years later were they moved to semipermanent Southeast Asia (SEA) huts (a theater-of-operations design that first made its debut in Vietnam) on base camps. Engineer planners knew it was much more cost effective to forego this gradual approach in Kosovo in favor of building end-state SEA huts right away, and operational commanders agreed with this approach.



In contrast to the Bosnia peacekeeping mission where troops lived in tents for many months before moving into hardened structures, DoD decided to erect the SEA huts from the start. The single-story SEA hut wooden structures were first used in Southeast Asia and then in Bosnia. The military redesigned the SEA huts specifically for Kosovo. Each wooden structure has a male and a female latrine and six rooms housing six service members each. The huts have heat, hot water, air conditioning, plumbing, electricity and telephones.

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At the north end of the camp Containerized Housing Units (CHU's), affectionately known at Bondsteel as "cans" provide temporary quarters for soldier and visitors. These accommodations are identical to those Major Neil Edgar experienced in Iraq.



Protective bunkers and shelters are scattered throughout the camp (exterior view and interior view – left and right)

Because of the topography and population of the camp, it eventually had two independently serviced life-support areas, with semipermanent wooden buildings known as Davidson-style Southeast Asian huts (SEA huts). The battalion also created SOCCE huts (modified for the Special Operations Command and Control Element) and officer/senior noncommissioned officer SEA huts that have 10 rooms with separate latrine facilities for each pair of rooms.

The 94th ECB(H) created Camp Bondsteel's road system, which was critical to alleviate blinding dust storms and enable mobility when torrential rains made the clay soil impassable. They built the hardstand for the camp's hospital, created the road to the military and civilian materials yard, and laid a double-base surface of bitumen on the camp's eastern access road. The battalion upgraded the main briefing room and other areas throughout Task Force Falcon's command center. It also created a storage system for confiscated weapons and built floors for 200 tents, so soldiers would be out of the mud while SEA huts were being constructed.

To create life-support areas, the 94th ECB(H) transformed the topography of Camp Bondsteel to maximize use of the ground. The primary earthmoving mission, dubbed Operation Wolverine Mountain after the battalion's mascot, required that more than 150,000 cubic meters of earth be moved and redistributed. That is equivalent to the area of one football field that is 100 feet deep. To save time, the battalion lowered the two major hills in Camp Bondsteel and simultaneously filled the large ravine between them. Combining the efforts of all four organic companies, the battalion worked two shifts totaling 20 hours per day. At times twelve 621B scrapers, eight D7G dozers, three 130G graders, and six vibratory and sheepsfoot compactors operated on the hills. In 30 days, the battalion widened the life-support areas, created areas for the camp's wash rack and more than half of the camp's motor pools, and built a foundation for the northern access road.

Simultaneously, the battalion created the hardstand for the American logistical supply support activity. This 600- by 160-meter area, which required 70,000 cubic meters of earthen cut-and-fill operations, will eventually include a chapel, a morale and welfare



As a grim reminder of the fragile peace in the Balkans, land mine warning displays are posted in public places throughout the camp.

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tent, the Army and Air Force Exchange Service, and a barbershop. Equipment and operators from nine Wolverine platoons worked around the clock to complete the project.

Shortly after site preparation began at Camp Bondsteel, a 36-inch natural-gas pipeline was discovered under the camp - right where they wanted to make a 3-foot cut! It was easier to redesign the camp around the pipeline than dig it out, and that's why today a "no-construction" strip of land runs northwest to southeast among the SEA huts. The total absence of civilian sewage-treatment facilities in Kosovo forced early diversion of critical horizontal equipment to build sewage lagoons. This project is environmentally critical since there were no sewage-treatment plants in Kosovo, and local people (including those serving military units) emptied raw sewage into streams. The lagoon is a technically challenging mission that requires all four of the 200- by 300-meter areas to have depth deviations from final design grade of no more than 3 inches. Led by the 535th and 568th Engineer Companies (CSE), the first area completed has a maximum deviation of only two inches across its entire 60,000-square-meter area.



Camp Bondsteel has an improved detention facility, with a 250 by 350 foot temporary structure composed of tents with plywood sidewalls and floors, electricity, heat, and lights. The project also includes a separate shower point and security measures -

perimeter fencing, triple-standard concertina wire, locking gates, and an upgraded guard tower. The facility replaced an interim holding cell at Bondsteel and provides space for persons detained in incidents throughout the US sector in Kosovo.

In August 1999 the 9th Combat Engineer Battalion (Mechanized) at Camp Bondsteel altered the southwest perimeter at Camp Bondsteel to make room for the new helicopter landing zone. Engineers reworked triple-standard concertina wire to pull it out farther from the area targeted for landings. To make this change to the perimeter, engineers first had to cut down several trees both to make room and to afford proper line of sight from the guard tower. They worked with Civil Affairs to coordinate the tree removal with local villagers whose property adjoins the area.



In August 1999 the helicopter landing area used since Camp Bondsteel opened moved from the command operations area to a site on the post's south perimeter. Five new helipads made of AM2 aluminum matting handled helicopter landings for a few months until an expanded aviation area was completed with 52 helipads. The 94th Engineer Battalion also completed separate areas for landing sling loads and Chinooks (CH47s). The vacated landing site allowed engineers

to expand the main access road and prepare the ground for erecting four clamshells, which are temporary frame-and-fabric structures. The plan was to transition all aircraft from Camp Able Sentry, Macedonia, to Camp Bondsteel as a home base.



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ONGOING OPERATIONS IN KOSOVO

5 July 2015 – Riot Control Exercise at Camp Marechel de Lattre de Tassigny



U.S. Army Soldiers with 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 252nd Armor Regiment, assigned to Multinational Battle Group-East, alongside partner forces from Germany, the Kosovo Police and Poland conduct a crowd riot control exercise July 5, 2015, at Camp Maréchal de Lattre de Tassigny, Kosovo. The training was held to teach multinational forces to respond to situations that threaten a safe and secure environment. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Gina Russell, Multinational Battle Group-East)



U.S. Army Pfc. Isaiah Helms, a combat medic with 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 252nd Armor Regiment, currently assigned to Multinational Battle Group-East, treats a simulated casualty during a multinational crowd riot control exercise July 5, 2015, at Camp Maréchal de Lattre de Tassigny, Kosovo. The training was held to teach multinational forces to respond to situations that threaten a safe and secure environment. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Gina Russell, Multinational Battle Group-East)



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13-15 August 2015 – NCNG Riot Role Playing, Camp Marechel de Lattre de Tassigny

A platoon of Hungarian Armed Forces troops from the 5th Bocskai Istvan, currently assigned to Multinational Battle Group-East, or MNBG-E, conducted a freedom of movement exercise Aug. 13, at Camp Maréchal de Lattre de Tassigny, Kosovo.

Assisting in the training were U.S. Army Soldiers from 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 252nd Armor Regiment, a North Carolina National Guard unit based out of Fayetteville, North Carolina. These Soldiers are currently deployed to Kosovo as part of MNBG-E's Forward Command Post, which will also oversee the battle group's Hungarian coy, or company, throughout their deployment.

The training was intended to be as real world as possible, and it helped prepare soldiers should they find themselves engaging violent protestors.

Freedom of movement is part of the core mission of MNBG-E, and involved moving around roadblocks and dealing with other soldiers playing the role of belligerent protestors. This training supported the mission of ensuring safety, security, and freedom of movement in Kosovo.

MNBG-E is one of two multinational battle groups assigned to Kosovo Force, or KFOR, which is NATO's peace support mission in Kosovo. In KFOR's 20th rotation since beginning in the late 1990s, MNBG-E is currently led by the NCNG's 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team, out of Clinton, North Carolina.

Enabling and empowering the U.S. alliance with partner nations is an important part of the 30th ABCT's mission in Kosovo, in North Carolina, and for its elements conducting other deployments and missions across the globe.



Photo Credit: Sgt. David I. Marquis

Hungarian soldiers from the 5th Bocskai Istvan, currently assigned to Multinational Battle Group-East, stand in a line with shields interlocked and prepare to engage North Carolina National Guard Soldiers from 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 252nd Armor Regiment, out of Fayetteville, North Carolina and also assigned to MNBG-E, acting as opposing forces during freedom of movement training, Aug. 15, 2015, at Camp Maréchal de Lattre de Tassigny, Kosovo. The training was intended to be as real world as possible, and it helped prepare soldiers should they engage violent protestors. Freedom of movement is part of the core mission of MNBG-E. The training involved moving around roadblocks and dealing with other soldiers playing the role of belligerent protestors to support the mission of ensuring safety, security and freedom of movement in Kosovo.

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A platoon of Hungarian Armed Forces troops from the 5th Bocskai Istvan, currently assigned to Multinational Battle Group-East, conduct a freedom of movement exercise Aug. 13, 2015, at Camp Mar´chal de Lattre de Tassigny, Kosovo. The training was intended to be as real world as possible, and it helped prepare soldiers should they find themselves engaging violent protestors. Freedom of movement is part of the core mission of MNBG-E, and involved moving around roadblocks and dealing with other soldiers playing the role of belligerent protestors. This training supported the mission of ensuring safety, security and freedom of movement in Kosovo.



Hungarian Army 1st Lt. Gabov Kovacs, a platoon leader from the 5th Bocskai Istvan, currently assigned to Multinational Battle Group-East, instructs his troops on maneuver techniques during a freedom of movement exercise Aug. 13, 2015, at Camp Mar´chal de Lattre de Tassigny, Kosovo. The training was intended to be as real world as possible, and it helped prepare soldiers should they find themselves engaging violent protestors. Freedom of movement is part of the core mission of MNBG-E, and involved moving around roadblocks and dealing with other soldiers playing the role of belligerent protestors. This training supported the mission of ensuring safety, security and freedom of movement in Kosovo.

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A Ukrainian military working dog handler from the 12th Engineer Regiment's explosive ordnance team, assigned to Multinational Battle Group-East, inspects an obstruction during a freedom of movement exercise conducted with Hungarian Armed Forces troops from the 5th Bocskai Istvan, also assigned to MNBG-E, Aug. 13, 2015, at Camp Maréchal de Lattre de Tassigny, Kosovo. The training was intended to be as real world as possible, and it helped prepare soldiers should they find themselves engaging violent protestors. Freedom of movement is part of the core mission of MNBG-E, and involved moving around roadblocks and dealing with other soldiers playing the role of belligerent protestors. This training supported the mission of ensuring safety, security and freedom of movement in Kosovo.

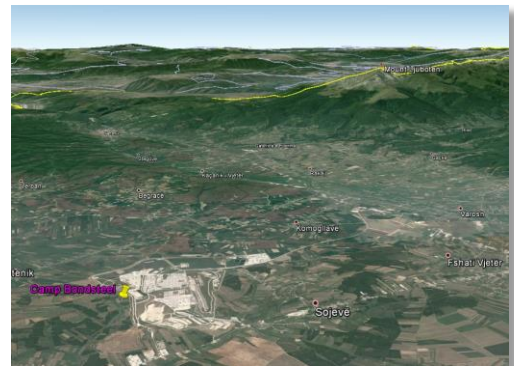
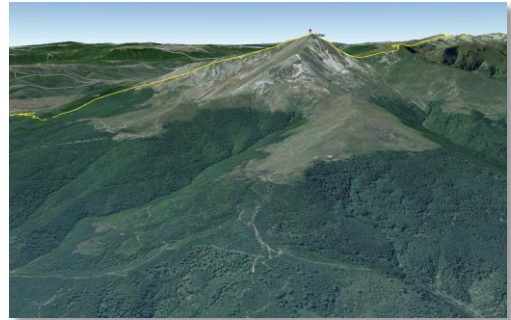


Ukraine Armed Forces Maj. Andri Biletskyi, a freedom of movement instructor, instructs troops from 5th Bocskai Istvan, currently assigned to Multinational Battle Group-East, on how to maneuver during a freedom of movement exercise Aug. 13, 2015, at Camp Maréchal de Lattre de Tassigny, Kosovo. The training was intended to be as real world as possible, and it helped prepare soldiers should they find themselves engaging violent protestors. Freedom of movement is part of the core mission of MNBG-E, and involved moving around roadblocks and dealing with other soldiers playing the role of belligerent protestors. This training supported the mission of ensuring safety, security and freedom of movement in Kosovo.

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16 August 2015 – Climbing Mount Ljuboten

MNBG-E's Soldiers from Camp Bondsteel, made up of U.S. Army Reserve and National Guard Soldiers, as well as soldiers from the Polish armed forces, hiked to the 8,129-foot peak of Mount Ljuboten in southern Kosovo during an Aug. 16, 2015, climb to earn the Edelweiss Badge, a traditional military award for Germany's mountain warfare troops. Alongside their German guides, the U.S. Soldiers hiked to the top, and returned to receive the badge. MNBG-E is a multinational unit supporting NATO's peace support mission in the region, known as Kosovo Force, of KFOR.







Certificate



On 16th AUGUST in the year 2015

MAJ NEIL EDGAR

has proved his survivability under adverse conditions.

He braved cold, wind and frost at the western face of

MT Ljuboten 2498m, Kosovo

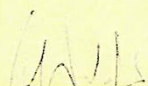
to get his hard-earned

Edelweiß



"Stay together, care for your comrade and always work in a team.

That will be the keystone in mountain warfare!"


Oberstlt Schwegler (OF-4)
Military Mountain Guide

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4 September 2015 – Continued Riot Control Training

Portuguese Army 2nd Lt Marcio Coelho gives instructions on defensive techniques for crowd and riot control to North Carolina National Guard Soldiers with Alpha Company 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 252nd Armor Regiment, out of Williamston North Carolina, Sept. 4, 2015 at Camp Slim Lines in Pristina, Kosovo. The training was conducted so Multinational Battle Group-East Soldiers from the 1-252nd could improve their crowd control techniques an important skill for their mission to ensure safety, security and freedom of movement as part of NATO's peace support mission in Kosovo.



5 September 2015 - Multinational Kosovo Force Fights More Fires in Mountains

Multinational Kosovo Force, or KFOR, emergency response teams were activated to respond to continuing forest fire threats, Sept. 5, in the mountains outside Dragash in southern Kosovo. On the ground and in the air, forces from several nations came together to support local firefighters as they directed Slovenian, Swiss, and U.S. Army Reserve and National Guard helicopters carrying bambi buckets full of water toward the flames.



A multinational contingent of Kosovo Force emergency response elements, including Slovenian, Swiss and U.S. aviation units, support Kosovo institutions in fighting wildfires in the mountains of southern Kosovo outside Dragash, Kosovo.

The response efforts came on the second weekend in a row that KFOR has supported Kosovo institutions fighting fires in the region. The weekend's response efforts included elements from Multinational Battle Group-East, Multinational Battle Group-West, or MNBG-E, and Joint Regional Detachment-South.

"Every time we dropped a bambi bucket on the fire, every person on the ground would cheer," said Maj. Fred Keller, MNBG-E's deputy operations officer and an experienced helicopter pilot with the North Carolina National Guard. "All of KFOR came together to combat this fire."

"There was fantastic team work on the ground," Keller said. "The local institutions were very happy with how we performed."

Capt. Andrew O'Donnell, a Connecticut Army National Guard Soldier from 1st Battalion, 169th Aviation Regiment, out of Windsor Locks, Connecticut, said letting the local Kosovo institutions lead the way in fighting the fire while KFOR acted as a support element, highlighted the capabilities of Kosovo's institutions, and its partnership with KFOR-NATO's peace support mission in the region.

"I think what we did today had a huge impact on the community," O'Donnell said. "The locals took control of the situation."

As the night went on, the local community, supported by KFOR, successfully extinguished the fires before any homes were affected or citizens were hurt.

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11 September 2015 – International Run in Remembrance of 9/11

A formation of Soldiers deployed in support of Multinational Battle Group-East and NATO's peace support mission in Kosovo run together during a remembrance run in honor of the 14th anniversary of 9/11, held Sept 11, 2015, at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo. The formation is led by MNBG-E's leadership from the North Carolina Army National Guard, followed by a formation of Polish soldiers and a West Virginia National Guard liaison monitoring team. The run served as a chance for soldiers from all elements in MNBG-E to reflect on the many lives that were lost in the 9/11 attacks.



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18 September 2015 – Multinational Helicopter Mission

Croatian, Slovenian, Swiss and U.S. Army flight crews soared over Kosovo for a multinational, eight-ship helicopter mission, testing their ability to communicate during a large aviation exercise, Sept. 16, which took them over several Kosovo force, or KFOR, installations.

The event incorporated three NATO member nations, and allowed the allied aviation flight crews, planners and leaders to build interoperability between one another.

The Multinational Battle Group-East, or MNBG-E, Southern Command Post, also known as its aviation Task Force Hurricane, put the 1.5-hour training event together to establish operating procedures for



multinational flight crews conducting combined missions. The multi-ship exercise was a way for NATO aviation forces in Kosovo to measure one another's capabilities.

"This training helps establish relationships with forces here that are conducting air operations," said U.S. Army Reserve Capt. Kevin Dowdey, a UH-60 Black Hawk pilot deployed to Kosovo with A Company, 2nd Battalion, 238th Aviation Regiment, a U.S. Army Reserve unit out of Los Alamitos, California.

"This is a good opportunity to measure the capabilities of each other and learn how to coordinate conducting missions together," he said.

The pilots from the other participating nations also said the multi-ship operation was a good way to see how all the forces could identify procedural barriers and accomplish the mission.

"It would be good to see more missions like this," said 2nd Lt. Tobja Cukjati, a helicopter pilot with the Slovenian Armed Forces.

This training allows for everyone to get familiar with communicating, and see the similarities and differences each military force has when doing air operations, he said.

"We started off with the basics for this exercise today," said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Michael Behuniak, a Connecticut National Guard pilot from 1st Battalion, 169th Aviation Regiment, out of Windsor Locks, Connecticut.

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If all the air elements assigned to Kosovo have to work together, everyone has to be able to understand one another so the mission can be conducted properly and safely, he said.

Part of the mission for KFOR's multinational forces is to work with civil authorities and ensure a safe and secure environment, and freedom of movement, in the future, incorporating additional layers of complexity to increase each mission's training value. in Kosovo.



Staff Sgt. Kathryn Rylander, a U.S. Army Reserve flight crew chief also from the 2-238th, said that training with multinational forces to conduct a large multi-ship air operation is a rare opportunity worth seeing put into action, once the planning is complete.

MNBG-E's aviators plan to conduct similar air exercises First and foremost, these forces' mission is to support NATO's peace support mission in Kosovo. Throughout exercises such as these, their mission comes first, and an appropriate number of aircraft remain available to support requirements on short notice.

As of October 2015 Major Neil Edgar reported,

"We are almost one half of the way into this deployment. Things are finally starting to slow down a touch and I am down to working just 12 hour days with half a day off on Sundays. Things here at Camp Bondsteel are good. This is a well established base and the housing, food and services are more than adequate. Really, on a deployment it doesn't get better than we have it here as far as the safety and living conditions go."

In an article entitled, "Why Does Camp Bondsteel Still Exist?", Carlton Meyer, editor of [g2mil](#) sarcastically describes the camp as, "... a luxurious prison camp, where American soldiers are sentenced to one-year of service, and kill time by driving around the area armed with pistols."



It is Fall in Kosovo. Six months to go!

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In late 2015 Colonel Vernon Simpson, Jr., would prophetically look back on successful training activities and assess the capabilities of the Kosovo Police Force.

“Past exercises have focused on crowd riot control techniques, but we’ve found that the Kosovo Police are more than capable of dealing with almost any large crowd riot crisis,” Simpson said, referencing his rotation’s two major combined training exercises: Operations Stonewall and Silver Sabre, held in October and November, respectively. “We saw an opportunity to work with our partners on the challenge of mission command—when you have an incident, how do you accept additional forces into the scene, and how do you incorporate them into whatever the crisis might be? We focused our efforts not only on crowd riot control, but also mission command throughout a crowd riot event.”

His statement would herald things to come for this tiny country in constant tension.

16 October 2015 – Ferizaj, Kosovo – Operation Stonewall

First responders from the Kosovo Police and local emergency services rushed into a chaotic morning in Ferizaj, as what started with a traffic accident quickly escalated into a morning of civil unrest violent demonstrations.

All of this was part of Operation Stonewall, a combined training scenario held by the Kosovo Police and multinational forces from NATO's Kosovo Force, held Oct. 16 outside Ferizaj's Bill Clinton Sports Center.

The exercise incorporated more than 350 personnel from across several agencies-including U.S. and Turkish soldiers from KFOR's Multinational Battle Group-East-as a way to practice their ability to ensure a safe and secure environment through combined planning and response to a complex event.

The scenario began with a hectic scene, calling for first responders to secure the scene of a bus accident and provide emergency care to three critically wounded citizens. After simulating an air medevac-incorporating MNBG-E aviation assets-emergency responders moved out of the way to allow Kosovo Police crowd riot control personnel to address a frenzied gathering of rioters, played by German soldiers also with KFOR.



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As the violent confrontation continued, Kosovo Police leaders placed a request for KFOR support to the nearby MNBG-E headquarters at Camp Bondsteel, outside Ferizaj. Turkish soldiers were immediately dispatched out the Camp Bondsteel gate, and arrived at the scene to join the line of Kosovo Police forces. With shields and batons, the combined team of Kosovar and Turkish professionals controlled the situation and pulled role-players aside one by one until the violent situation had dissolved.



As the training operation took place, Kosovo Police and MNBG-E leaders looked on from the sidelines, coordinating between one another to support the combined response, another while also observing their forces' tactics and techniques.



As part of NATO's KFOR peace support mission, MNBG-E acts as a response force in support of the Kosovo Police when required to ensure a safe and secure environment, and freedom of movement, in the region. KFOR acts in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1244 to provide a safe and secure environment for all people in Kosovo, regardless of ethnic and religious differences. To this aim, KFOR cooperates positively and closely with the Kosovo Police and other local institutions.

"This was a great opportunity to work with the Kosovo Police and assist them in maintaining peace and stability during this exercise," said U.S. Army 1st Lt. Andy Shetland, a Connecticut National Guard officer who served during the exercise as a link supporting Kosovo Police officials on behalf of MNBG-E's Southern Command Post.

"In this operation, I acted as a liaison officer between the Kosovo Police and the Battle Group's on-site tactical command center, giving me the chance to work directly with an interpreter and Kosovo Police leadership," he said.



One of Operation Stonewall's key learning points was to help MNBG-E leaders and soldiers understand the Kosovo Police's lead role in handling civil unrest, and give them an opportunity to run through the logistics of responding to a request for emergency support from KFOR troops.



"The intent for conducting these drills is so that all operating forces can gain some experience and understanding of the procedures and roles involved during escalated incidents of civil disturbances when assisting the Kosovo Police," said Lt. Col. Jeffrey LaPierre, who commands MNBG-E's Southern Command Post, which includes aviation units as well as teams of Turkish and Armenian response units.

In a situation like this, the Kosovo Police are the incident commanders and key players because of their familiarity of the environment, and because they are capable of performing these duties, LaPierre said.

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Conducting these exercises gives the KP and KFOR a chance to test each other's capabilities, but also provides a chance to exchange tactics on getting the job done, said the Ferizaj regional director of the Kosovo Police, Lt. Col. Gazmend Hoxha.

"What's more important about this is that we can see how we respond to the situation and how all the operating forces work together," Hoxha said.

Prior to conducting the full scenario on Oct. 16, Kosovo Police and MNBG-E forces spent two days briefing and rehearsing their maneuvers, in order to get the most value out of the once-a-year exercise.



"I think the rehearsals went well," said Capt. Demetrius Treadway, MNBG-E's liaison officer in charge for the Armenian and Turkish forces in MNBG-E.

Treadway emphasized that the most important element of the rehearsals was ensuring that all the MNBG-E forces knew how to effectively work together with the KP.

In the weeks and months leading up to Operation Stonewall, Kosovo Police and MNBG-E leaders and planners engaged on a regular basis in order to develop a scenario that met each organization's training objectives. The scenario-which included response to a mass-casualty emergency, downed helicopter procedures, and combined crowd riot control techniques-was designed to address general training goals, and does not indicate a specific prediction of future or likely events.



"The major training objective that happened for this exercise was two-fold," said U.S. Army Col. Vernon Simpson, the commander of MNBG-E and the North Carolina National Guard's 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team. "We wanted to conduct what is referred to as mission command, which is the ability to command and control forces during a major crowd and riot control conflict."

Operation Stonewall also gave Kosovo Police forces the opportunity to run through a scenario that escalated to the point that would lead them to request KFOR support, Simpson said. This exercise was also unique in that the scenario focused on domestic support type issues, such as mass casualties and air medivac, which allowed MNBG-E to highlight the experience of its Army National Guard citizen soldiers who support domestic support to civil authorities in their home states.

At the conclusion of the operation, Kosovo Police and KFOR forces stood side by side as Hoxha and Simpson congratulated them on the hard work and effort. While already a capable team ready to respond to threats to safety and security Kosovo, the day's participants are now armed with further training and confidence for the future.

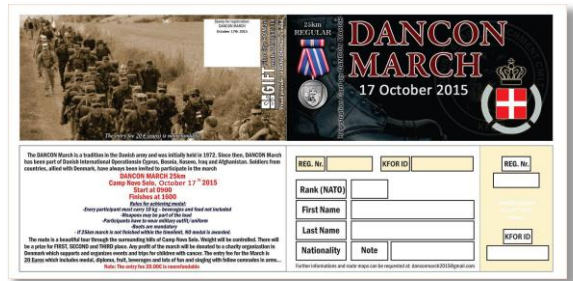
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17 October 2015 – Mitrovice/Mitrovica, MNB North - DANCON March

The DANCON march is a well-known tradition among the Danish units that are serving outside the borders of Denmark. DANCON is short for Danish Contingent and the march has been a tradition with the Danish Defense since 1972 when the Royal Danish Army was deployed on Cyprus. The march invites foreign troops, allied with Denmark, to participate in the 25 or 100 km marches. Apart from Cyprus, DANCON marches have taken place in Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Eritrea and the Gulf of Aden. It follows a 25 km route, usually laid out in the terrain close to the Danish camps, as the march also serves as a sign of mutual trust between the local residents and the Danish Contingent.



However, the main purpose of the march, besides the physical aspect, is for the soldiers to meet their fellow KFOR comrades, have a few laughs, and break the daily routines of work in an atmosphere of camaraderie and respect. Almost 1,100 people from more than 15 countries came for the DANCON



Hilly terrain



An aerial view of the Danish Camp, note the mountains around. It is one of those that the Dancon march goes up against.

march. As the Danish Battalion is located in MNB North in the Mitrovica area, the march took place in the hilly and mountainous terrain surrounding the city.

The march started precisely at eight in the morning from the Danish main camp, and as tension and excitement had been building up among people just before start, due to various rumors of the rough terrain and hot weather ahead, everybody was quite content to finally get going.

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The weather was perfect with clear blue skies and in the morning the temperature was still quite low. But already at 10 a.m. the temperature had risen to above 20 degrees Celsius, and two hours later the temperature climbed at above 25. The intense heat could have become a serious problem, but due to the well-organized march, the heat only became a worthy challenge, as there were checkpoints with water and fruit every five km.



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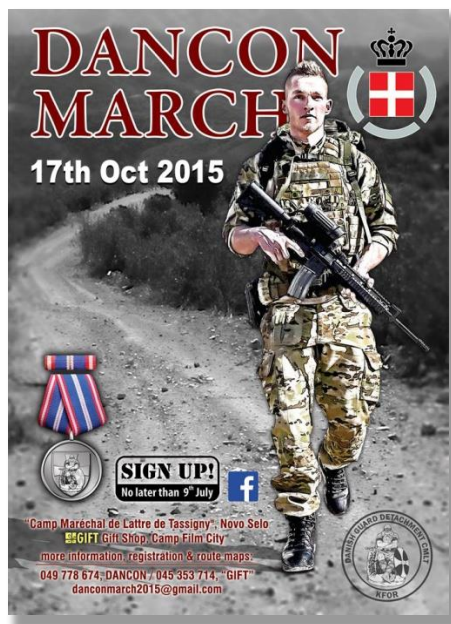
Two and a half hours

The fastest soldier completed the 25 km in the impressive time of 2 hours and 35 minutes, but for many it was not the aim to be first and fastest, but just to complete the march with honors, and thereby earning the right and privilege to wear the DANCON-march-medal. Unfortunately 20 people did not complete the march within the time limit of 8 hours mainly due to light heatstroke, exhaustion or dehydration.

The march ended where it started and here the Danes had prepared a little surprise for the soldiers coming in. At the finish line, the Danes had set up two hotdog-stands from where all 1,100 participants of the march were served with hotdogs and soda.

During the march the runners ate more than 1,300 kg of fruit and drank almost 15,000 bottles of water. Furthermore, at the finish line more than 3,000 hotdogs and 1,400 cans of soda were consumed.

Major Neil Edgar proudly finished the march and later said, "it was really challenging, a good morale booster and reminded my legs of my days in the Infantry!"







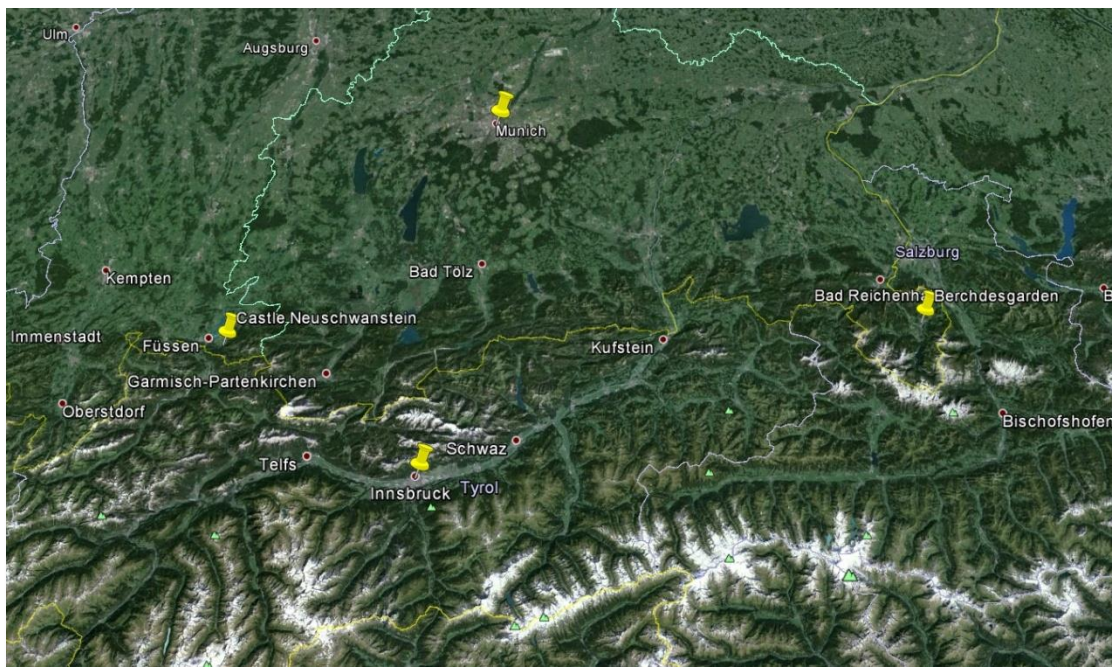
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27 October 2015 – R&R – Munich, Germany; Innsbruck, Austria

Life was not all about the Army for those who chose to take some time to see the world. Neil had some down time coming and his wife, 1st Lt. Cindy Lazarus, C Company 230th Brigade Support Battalion Medical Officer, now Company Executive Officer, took some time off from her day job to meet him in Germany for a tour of Munich, Innsbruck, Austria and the surrounding areas.



That is Cindy on the left shouldering an AT-4¹ anti tank weapon.



Munich, Germany - is the capital and largest city of the German state of Bavaria, on the banks of River Isar north of the Bavarian Alps. Munich is the third largest city in Germany, after Berlin and Hamburg and the 12th biggest city of the European Union with a population of above 1.5 million. The Munich Metropolitan Region is home to 5.8 million people. The city is a major center of art, advanced technologies, finance, publishing, culture, innovation, education, business and tourism in Germany and Europe and enjoys a very high standard and quality of living, reaching #1 in Germany and #4 worldwide according to the 2015 Mercer survey.

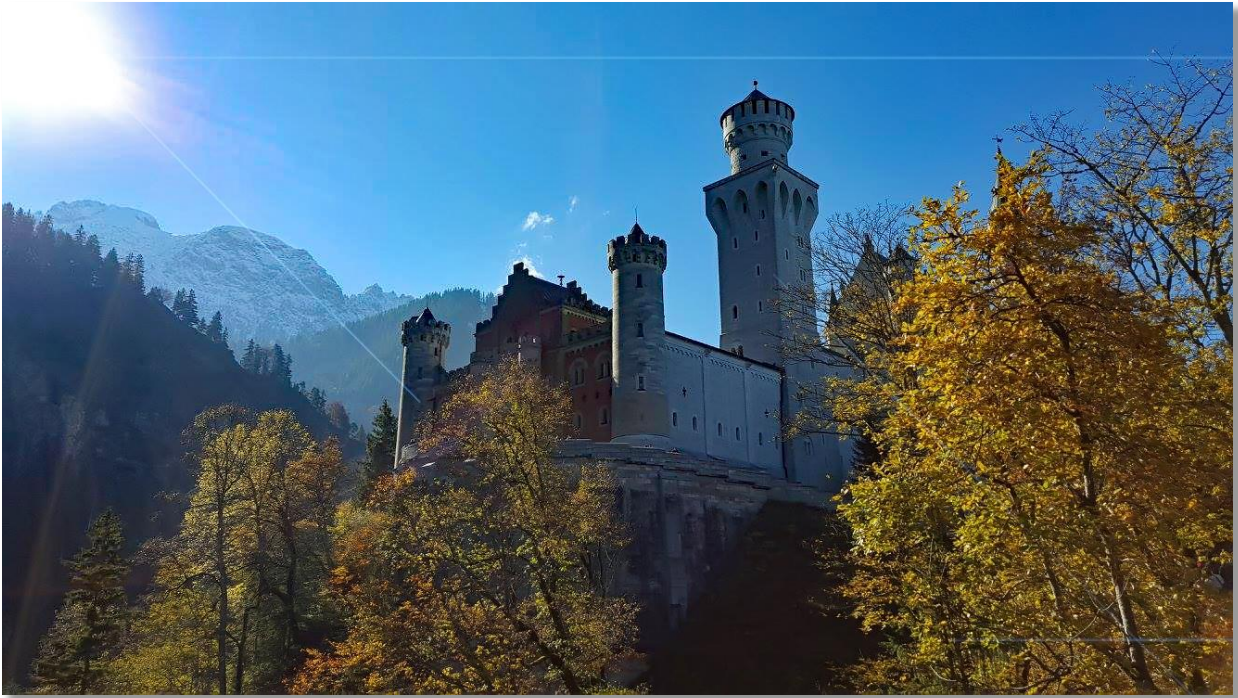
Its numerous architectural attractions, international sports events, exhibitions, conferences and Oktoberfest attract considerable tourism. Munich is one of the most prosperous and fastest growing cities in Germany. Munich nowadays hosts more than 530,000 people of international background, making up 37.7% of the entire population.

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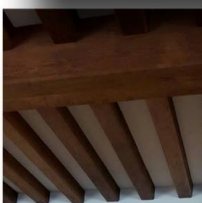
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Berchtesgaden, Germany – Hitler's Eagle's Nest (Kehlsteinhaus)

The Kehlsteinhaus is a Third Reich-era edifice erected atop the summit of the Kehlstein, a rocky outcrop that rises above the Obersalzberg near the town of Berchtesgaden. It was presented to Adolf Hitler on his 50th birthday as a retreat and place to entertain friends and visiting dignitaries. Today it is open seasonally as a restaurant, beer garden, and tourist site.



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Innsbruck, Austria - Innsbruck is the capital city of Tyrol in western Austria. It is located in the Inn valley, at its junction with the Wipp valley, which provides access to the Brenner Pass some 30 km (18.6 mi) to the south. It lies about half way between Munich in Germany and Verona in Italy. It is located in the broad valley between high mountains, the so-called North Chain in the Karwendel Alps.

Innsbruck is an internationally renowned winter sports centre, and hosted the 1964 and 1976 Winter Olympics as well as the 1984 and 1988 Winter Paralympics. Innsbruck also hosted the first Winter Youth Olympics in 2012.



Maria-Theresien Strasse looking towards Altstadt (the Old City)

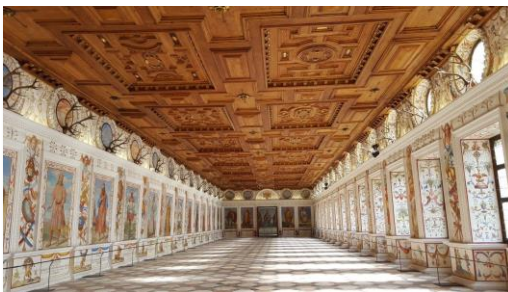
Ambras Castle



Buildings on the Inn River near the Universitätsbrücke (University Bridge)



Spanish Hall, Ambras Castle



Servitenkirche

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Triumphpforte (Triumphal Arch) - Whether traveling in Paris, Munich or London, one can see Triumphal arches throughout Europe. These arches were inspired by the Romans and were usually built to commemorate war victories or founding a new colony, celebrating a new ruler or even a death of one. The arches can represent a happy occasion or a sad one but in Innsbruck the triumphal arch actually commemorates both!

The building of the Triumphpforte (Triumphal Arch) was approved in 1765 by Empress Maria Theresa to honor the marriage of her son Leopold II to the Spanish Princess Maria. Since there was not time to build a new arch, she had a lovely example of a Roman arch built from the stones of the existing south gate of Innsbruck. The northern side symbolizes the joy of the wedding.



A relief of Maria Theresa appears at the top of the arch in white alabaster. Originally ornaments were made of plaster, and in 1774, Balthasar Moll made them marble copies, which are placed on the arch instead of the old ones. Gilded crowns of the Emperor and Empress grace her image. Reliefs of Prince Leopold and Princess Maria adorn the columns.

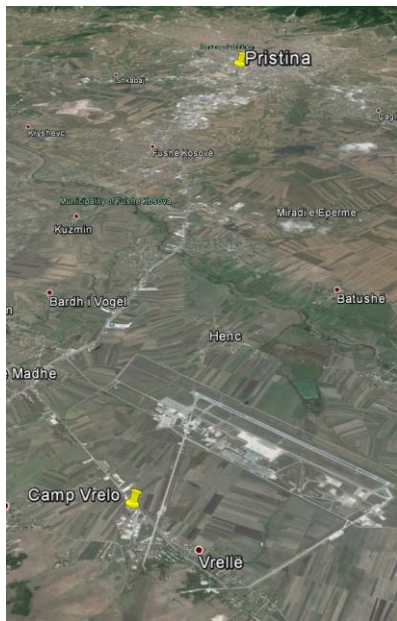


Sadly, Emperor Franz Stephan I died suddenly during the wedding ceremony. Thus, the grief of his death was also embodied in the construction of the arch - the south side symbolizes the sorrow for the deceased emperor.

The Arch is still striking in its beauty and grandeur.

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18-20 November 2015 – CAMP VELRO – Operation Silver Sabre



When a peaceful demonstration erupts into a violent protest, local authorities and international peacekeeping forces will work together to quell chaos and protect safety.

This was one of the messages of Operation Silver Sabre, a massive multinational exercise, held Nov. 18-20, at Camp Vrelo outside Pristina, Kosovo. In the three-day exercise's culminating event, members from the Kosovo Police, European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, Kosovo Force, or KFOR, and NATO Operational Reserve Forces came together in unified response to a crowd of unruly and dangerous role-players.

Silver Sabre is a biannual training event for Kosovo Police, or KP, KFOR and European Union Rule of Law Mission, known as EULEX, forces serving in Kosovo, regularly testing and refining the security professionals' ability to ensure a safe environment throughout Kosovo. In addition, this iteration of Silver Sabre welcomed more than 120 multinational soldiers from NATO's Operational Reserve Forces, or ORF, to augment the combined crowd riot response.

Facing airborne tires and Molotov cocktails, the forces from Austria, Germany, Hungary, Italy and Portugal stood strong, working alongside KP and EULEX to hold their line against the role players. As the crowd grew, the ORF soldiers arrived on the scene via Ukrainian Air Force and U.S. Army helicopters to provide further assistance.



With the ORF serving as the fourth tier in a generally three-tier emergency response structure in Kosovo, Silver Sabre tested the participants' abilities to communicate across organizations in order to perform a seamless operation.

"This event was KFOR's Super Bowl," said U.S. Army Capt. Jonathan Laton, who planned Silver Sabre in his role as a



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Multinational Battle Group-East operations officer. "This is putting every piece we have into the mix to execute a plan, and to highlight the things that we do well."

"Silver Sabre incorporates KFOR, EULEX and the Kosovo Police," he said, "and the ORF's participation is significant because it's the first time they've come to Kosovo in a couple years. They've been training in Kosovo for a couple weeks, and [Silver Sabre] was their main focus."

This year's exercise featured realistic scenarios, and emphasized the combined participants' ability to communicate between and relieve one another in the middle of an operation.

"We tried to make this educational and practical," Laton said. "These forces train on crowd riot control all the time, so Silver Sabre focused on the things we don't get to do all the time, with everybody training together in one place."



"Training events of this scale are conducted to practice and improve understanding among the different forces," said U.S. Army Maj. Michael Ariano, an operations officer assigned to the KFOR headquarters. "It is important to be flexible when it comes to learning from other international forces who are very proficient when it comes to dealing with protesters."

"Contingents within KFOR acted as third responders," Ariano said. KFOR's mission is to restore safety, security and freedom of movement when requested by KP and EULEX officials.

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The exercise's violent crowd was acted out by KFOR soldiers from Hungary and the United States, respectively assigned to the KFOR Tactical Reserve Maneuver Battalion and the Multinational Battle Group-East, or MNBG-E, Forward Command Post.

The opposing force's goal was to make the exercise as realistic as possible, said U.S. Army 1st Sgt. Billy Greene, the senior noncommissioned officer for A Company, 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 252nd Armor Regiment, whose Soldiers served as role-playing rioters.

"Sometimes you don't realize how your small role plays into such a big picture," Greene said, describing his team's experience in the multifaceted training event.

Training with other forces proficient in crowd and riot operations definitely adds a new level of experience and readiness for the U.S. Army Soldiers serving in KFOR, Greene said, emphasizing that these lessons will stay with his Soldiers for the years following this deployment.



"After participating in this event and all the other [crowd and riot control] training events since being deployed to Kosovo, I think we have better understanding and knowledge of how to apply the tactics and bring the useful information back to our state," said Spc. Nathaniel Allen, a North Carolina National Guard Soldier from the 1-252nd's Alpha Company.

Before the culminating event, Silver Sabre began with two days of round-robin training to give the multinational soldiers a common framework in fire phobia, crowd riot control, communications equipment, explosive ordnance disposal, and casualty evacuation.

"There was a lot of exchange of techniques and procedures between forces," Laton said. "Every one of these units conducts crowd riot control a little differently, and the goal of Silver Sabre was to learn how everyone does these things, and find a way to understand them and work together."

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This iteration Silver Sabre was unique because it also included active-shooter response training led by MNBG-E's Military Police unit, Laton said. This training set the stage for future training events between KFOR and the KP, in order to prepare more police officers to respond to dangerous situations.

"Every second that goes by [in an active shooter situation] is another second that someone could possibly be injured or killed, so the first person on the scene needs to know how to respond," Laton said. "Our Military Police Soldiers used active-shooter lessons, and tailored some scenarios for Kosovo."

Elements from the training sessions were incorporated into Silver Sabre's final face-off between the role players and peacekeeping force.

"Our task for conducting the fire phobia training was to demonstrate to other international Soldiers how to defend against live Molotov cocktails," said Hungarian 2nd Lt. Mark Nemes, a platoon commander for the KFOR Tactical Maneuver Battalion. To reinforce their fire phobia classes, Hungarian role-players tossed live Molotov cocktails at the line of crowd riot control authorities.

Silver Sabre was an opportunity to build interoperability and respect between the organizations that protect Kosovo's security environment, Laton said.

"I think we all learn from how other people do things," said Laton, who has worked on multinational teams while deployed to Iraq and Egypt. "There's a cultural piece and pride, and you can't make any assumptions about what one organization can or cannot do. Everyone's very capable of doing their job, and putting many heads together helps you learn planning, communication, and structure." After three hours of intense confrontation, the multinational Soldiers expressed relief and excitement as they wrapped up one of the year's biggest training events. KFOR's leaders acknowledged that all participants had put forth a strong effort throughout Silver Sabre.



"I am sure that all Soldiers with different units from different nations have proven that they are able to fulfill the task if it's necessary," said Hungarian Brig. Gen. Ferenc Korom, KFOR's deputy commanding general, who encouraged all forces to stay focused and ready to perform their mission.

18 November 2016 – Pristina, Kosovo – A Hint of Things to Come

While Operation Silver Sabre was underway at Camp Vrelo, a mere nine miles southwest of Pristina, violent protests were underway in the capital of Kosovo.

Riot police and protesters clashed in Kosovo for a second day in a deepening crisis over relations with former ruler Serbia. Police fired tear gas at a crowd of around 150 people lobbing rocks, bottles and petrol bombs outside the government building in central Pristina.



Hours earlier, bomb disposal experts detonated a hand grenade thrown near Kosovo's Constitutional Court, which has been asked to rule on a European Union-brokered accord with Serbia that the parliamentary opposition vehemently opposes.

On Tuesday, opposition lawmakers fired tear gas and pepper spray in parliament and police clashed with rock-throwing protesters, the latest in months of escalating violence over the accord. Kosovo's president has sought a ruling from the Constitutional Court on whether the EU-brokered deal was in line with the constitution. The court is due to issue its ruling in the next few weeks, and on Wednesday it was surrounded by police and bomb squad units after a grenade was thrown into the backyard of the complex.



The opposition is angry in particular at an agreement to grant ethnic Serb areas in Kosovo greater local powers and the possibility of some financing from Belgrade. Majority-Albanian Kosovo broke away from Serbia in 1999, when NATO carried out 11 weeks of air strikes to halt the killing and expulsion of ethnic Albanians by Serbian forces trying to crush a guerrilla insurgency.

The Kosovo Police clearly demonstrated their competence in controlling the violence but the fact that violence was also taking place between lawmakers on the floor of parliament was stark reminder of deep rooted discontent at all levels in the country. [See APPENDIX B for a summary of the atrocities of the Kosovo Holocaust].

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25 November 2015 – Camp Bondsteel – Thanksgiving

The Super Bowl of riot training exercises were over. A few weeks of debriefing and clean up would follow while the Holiday season descended on the soldiers of Bondsteel.

US soldiers from the NATO led-peacekeeping mission in Kosovo (KFOR) took part in a traditional Thanksgiving meal on Thursday. The troops were served by their superiors at the US military base, Camp Bondsteel, near the village of Sojeve.

It is the 16th Thanksgiving for hundreds of U.S. soldiers serving in the NATO-led peacekeeping mission in Kosovo since its initial involvement in 1999.



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22-25 December 2015 – Camp Bondsteel – Another Christmas Season Away from Home

Christmas at Bondsteel – not unlike Christmas for thousands of deployed troop around the world - it can be lonely at times but rarely so at this camp where you are surrounded by sisters and brothers. They may not be blood relatives but they are family nonetheless.

Soldiers and civilians at Bondsteel would be entertained by a local children’s choir, would return the favor bringing in Santa and giving gifts, and would celebrate with their own stockings and the camaraderie of a family Christmas meal for a few thousand live-in guests.



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31 December 2015 – Camp Bondsteel – Celebrating the New Year with a Run.

Oh look! It snowed. Let's all go for a 5-kilometer endurance run!



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6 January 2016 – Reporting Home With Two Months To Go

Escaping from the regimentation of Camp Bondsteel and the constant pressure of being “on alert”, trips to the countryside and interactions with the local population provided a few of the more pleasant takeaways from this deployment – the country was beautiful and the people genuinely friendly and neighborly. Major Neil Edgar wrote in an e-mail home,

“I’ve had the chance to visit Serbia and Macedonia. The Serbian Army Soldiers we work with occasionally, brought us to visit an Orthodox Monastery called Prohor Pcinjski. It was nestled in a valley between beautiful green mountains.”



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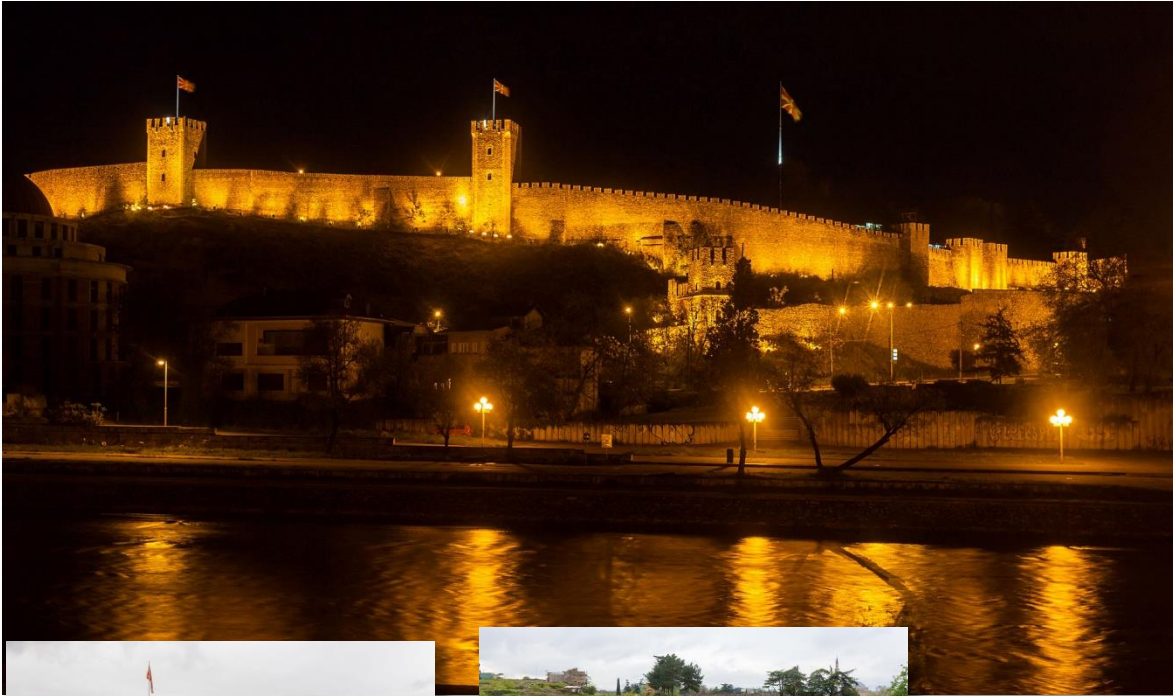
“The people who lived in the town provided meat and vegetables from their farms and fed us like we were royalty. It was nice to break bread with the Serbs.”



“In Skopje, Macedonia there is a massive statue of Alexander of Macedon (Alexander the Great) in the city center and an old Fort that was occupied during Roman times.”



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Fortaleza de Skopje, Macedonia

"In Kosovo I've had the chance to visit the Black Madonna (one of 187 in Europe), and beautiful, old monasteries in Pec, and the vacation town of Prizren."

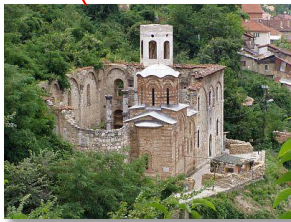


Pec (Peja), Kosovo

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Prizren, Kosovo



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Neil expected the remaining two months would go fairly quickly. He was anticipating a visit to Prague, Czech Republic for the second of two 4-day passes he had been authorized for the third week of January. After that he would return to Germany for a planning conference in February assisting in the transition of command from KFOR 20 to KFOR 21.

Prague, Czech Republic



6 January 2016 – Djakovica, Kosovo – Local Tensions at Christmas

They came in a bus escorted by the police and brought a *badnjak* - an oak log that is part of Serbian Christmas traditions - to the church's yard, despite the fact several dozen ethnic Albanians gathered to protest against their arrival.

The protesters gathered several dozen meters from the church and waited for three hours, in bad weather and rain, for the Serbs to arrive. They stood in front of a police cordon deployed there. There was strong police presence along the streets leading to the church and protesters at one point shouted, "This is Djakovica - no room for Serbs," along with anti-Serb insults.

Last year and the year before, displaced Serbs were unable to visit the church and a monastery in Djakovica on Christmas due to the opposition of local Albanians, as some of them used stones to attack their buses.



~

6 January 2015 - Ethnic Albanians in Djakovica on Tuesday attacked with stones a bus carrying some 40 Serb refugees from this Kosovo town. The incident happened in front of a Serbian Orthodox church. The driver of the bus was slightly injured during the attack.



The attack took place on Orthodox Christmas Eve.



Djokica Stanojevic, who heads an association of displaced Djakovica citizens explained that the incident happened despite the police escort that was provided to the Serbs.

"Once again this year we have not been able to burn the badnjak (ceremonial Christmas oak branches) in the town from which we have been driven out. At the very entrance to the church a group of Albanians waited with stones that they pelted at the bus," Stanojevic explained.



Stanojevic strongly condemned the incident, noting it was not the first of the kind, and asked for "urgent condemnation and reaction of the international community" - so that Serbs displaced from Djakovica could exercise their basic human rights - the right to live, return, move freely, and confess their religion.

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According to reports, there were no major incidents at the 2016 confrontation - "other than the eggs, snowballs and apples" that the protesters threw in the direction of the Serbs who were "not in their buses at the time, and were out of the range."

The Kosovo police said later on Wednesday that the protest was organized by the Self-Determination Movement and ended without incidents, and that the Serbs' visit to the town went peacefully.

Some 12,000 Serbs lived in Djakovica before the war, while there are only four Serb nuns living there now. Most of the Serbian homes were looted and burned by the formerly persecuted Albanians in 1999.



President of an association gathering Serbs displaced from Djakovica, Djokica Stanojevic, said that Orthodox Christmas was once respected by everyone, and that Albanians would wish Serbs a happy holiday.



"I am sad, because I have been traveling 800 kilometers to reach my town, my street, only to pass by my house that is 100 meters from here," he told reporters in the church's yard.

He stressed that all those who "made mistakes in the past should be held responsible" but that "it should be known that Serbs, too, are a part of this town," and added that IDPs had filed requests to authorities to return to their town.

The Serb (Srpska) List president, Slavko Simic, also arrived today on the bus that traveled from Decani, and told reporters the visit was not meant to provoke anyone or cause incidents, but had the goal of sending "a message of peace." He said Albanians should not protest but welcome their fellow Djakovica-residents "cordially" and in that way show they want the town to once again be multi-ethnic.

October and November protests in the capital of Pristina did not settle the disagreements. They merely served to mobilize larger and larger demonstrations. Intelligence reports from Camp Bondsteel to the US State Department warned of impending massive protests in the new year prompting the release of a notice to US citizens in or traveling to the Balkans.





Security Message for U.S. Citizens: Pristina (Kosovo), Demonstration January 9

Riots/Civil Unrest

Europe > Kosovo > Pristina

1/6/2016

U.S. Embassy Pristina informs U.S. citizens that protests are expected to take place in downtown Pristina on Saturday, January 9, 2016, along Mother Teresa Square and near government buildings from the National Library of Kosovo through the Assembly of Kosovo. Political parties in Kosovo will be demonstrating against the Government of Kosovo. The anticipated size of the protest is unknown. U.S. Embassy personnel are restricted from Mother Theresa Square from the National Library of Kosovo through the Assembly of Kosovo from 1:00 p.m. until protest activities cease in the area.

Similar demonstrations in October and November, including along Mother Teresa Square, became violent. The events may block key road intersections and/or disrupt public transportation.

U.S. citizens should avoid areas of demonstrations, and exercise caution if in the vicinity of any large gatherings or protests. Even demonstrations intended to be peaceful can turn confrontational and escalate into violence.

U.S. citizens should monitor media and local information sources and factor updated information into personal travel plans and activities. Demonstrations in one city have the potential to lead to additional public rallies or demonstrations in other locations around the city and country.

- See the State Department's travel website for the Worldwide Caution, Travel Warnings, Travel Alerts, and Kosovo Country Specific Information.
- Enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) to receive security messages and make it easier to locate you in an emergency.

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.

9 January 2016 – Pristina, Kosovo – Massive Violent Riots Return

Demonstrators in Kosovo fought running battles with police and set fire to the government's headquarters on Saturday as anger simmered in the young Balkan country over an accord with its former ruler, Serbia.

Action by three major opposition parties — "Self-Determination", "Alliance for the Future of Kosovo" and "Initiative for Kosovo" — began at 2 p.m. local time. Albanian radicals started setting fire to the parliament building as legislators met inside. Police put out "Molotov cocktails" thrown into the yard and onto police cars, and police officers were injured by thrown stones. Firefighters quickly doused the flames and police used tear gas to drive back several thousand opposition demonstrators.



See Skanderbeg Square – Page 67

Over the past four months, opposition activists had been blocking any meetings of the Legislative Assembly of Kosovo. They were protesting against a European Union-brokered deal to give Kosovo's ethnic Serb minority greater local government powers and the possibility of financing from Belgrade. The agreement with Serbia established a Community of Serb province communities (MTR). Under the agreement, the MTR would be entitled to self-government, its own flag and other attributes of autonomy. Albanian radicals also contest the summer 2015 signed agreement with Montenegro on the determination of the state border line.



Opposition leaders said the government should resign over the accord and call an early election. Many Kosovo Albanians believe the accord with Serbia represents a threat to Kosovo's hard-won sovereignty, now recognized by more than 100 countries including the major Western powers while Kosovo's government accused opposition party leaders of organizing the violence and attempting to drag the country into "crime and anarchy."

"The aim of this protest was to overthrow the government with violence and leave the country in the hands of the incriminated people that today set on fire the (government) building and police," it said in a statement.

Opposition parties said they will organize more protests until the government resigns.

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See Skanderbeg Square – Page 82


Police said 28 people were hurt, including 24 police officers and two journalists. Around 40 protesters were arrested and police confiscated knives and petrol bombs.



U.S. ambassador to Kosovo Greg Delawie, whose country is the biggest supporter of Kosovo's independence, wrote on Twitter. "Political violence threatens democracy and all that Kosovo has achieved since independence."

Once again the protests in Pristina in early January would not be the last. So far the Kosovo Police stood their ground which is a testament to KFOR joint forces training that had been underway for many years. Their lines of defense had bent but not broken.

However, protests up to that point had predominantly focused on the seat of government in the capital of Pristina. Now opponents were calling for nationwide action.



Security Message for U.S. Citizens: Pristina (Kosovo), Planned Demonstrations on February 17

Riots/Civil Unrest

Europe > Kosovo > Pristina

2/12/2016

U.S. Embassy Pristina informs U.S. citizens that protests are expected to take place in downtown Pristina on Wednesday, February 17, 2016, along Mother Teresa Square and near government buildings from the National Library of Kosovo through the Assembly of Kosovo. Opposition political parties in Kosovo will be demonstrating against the Government of Kosovo. This date coincides with Kosovo Independence Day. The anticipated size of the protest is unknown.

U.S. Embassy personnel are restricted from Mother Theresa Square and from the area between the National Library of Kosovo and the Assembly of Kosovo from 11:00 a.m. Similar demonstrations in October, November, and January along Mother Teresa Square, became violent. The events may block key road intersections and/or disrupt public transportation.

U.S. citizens should avoid areas of demonstrations, and exercise caution if in the vicinity of any large gatherings or protests. Even demonstrations intended to be peaceful can turn confrontational and escalate into violence.

Protest organizers have called for related protests throughout Kosovo. Demonstrations in one city have the potential to lead to additional public rallies or demonstrations in other locations around the city and country. U.S. citizens should monitor media and local information sources and factor updated information into personal travel plans and activities.

See the State Department's travel website for the Worldwide Caution, Travel Warnings, Travel Alerts, and Kosovo Country Specific Information.

Enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) to receive security messages and make it easier to locate you in an emergency.

Contact the U.S. Embassy in Kosovo located at 30 Nazim Hikmet St. Arberia/Dragodan, 10000 Pristina, at +(381) 38-5959-3119 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday (except

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.

Multinational forces at Camp Bondsteel were now on high alert.

17 February 2016 – Pristina, Kosovo – Final Demands and Call To Arms

Thousands of Kosovo's opposition supporters called for the government to resign on the eighth anniversary of the country's declaration of independence, accusing it of violating the country's constitution in reaching deals with Serbia and Montenegro.

Opposition supporters came from all over the country to Pristina for the rally on Wednesday. Al Jazeera's Stefan Goranovic, reporting from the capital, said more than 15,000 were estimated to have taken part in the event.

"Opposition representatives were asking for the immediate resignation of Prime Minister Isa Mustafa and the Foreign Minister Hashim Thaci," our correspondent reported.

Shouting anti-government slogans, most of the participants in Wednesday's protest held Albania's red-and-black national flag at the Skanderbeg Square. Far fewer Kosovo flags were visible, along with a few US and German flags.



"Kosovo will not allow itself to be led by people who have violated the constitution, its sovereignty," said Visar Ymeri, leader of the main opposition Self-Determination Movement party.

Ymeri set a February 27 deadline for the government to resign and declare a new election, or "our protests will not stop". The rally participants dispersed peacefully.

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Another protest was called for Friday when parliament may start procedures on electing a new president.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Hashim Thaci of the Democratic Party of Kosovo is the only self-declared candidate so far.

"In a normal situation, there can be no presidential election when the people insist the government shouldn't stay in office for a single minute (longer)," Ymeri said.



The government accuses the opposition of trying to come to power through violence.

Earlier on Wednesday, the government held a ceremony to celebrate the eighth anniversary of the 2008 unilateral independence declaration with a military parade.



"Such a government has a clear mandate. It has the legitimacy to serve the citizens who trusted it with the majority of votes in a democratic process accepted by the whole political spectrum in Kosovo," Prime Minister Isa Mustafa said.

Kosovo's Western backers have denounced opposition-led violence, calling on the opposition to resolve the political crisis in parliament.

Kosovo's independence has been recognized by 111 countries, including the US and major European Union nations. But it is rejected by Serbia, with support from Russia, which has blocked Kosovo from becoming a UN member.

Kosovo and Serbia are holding EU-mediated talks to try to overcome their differences but the opposing sides are firmly entrenched and the protests and riots will surely continue.

Kosovo was fuming in late February but the Kosovo Security Forces were up to the task. As of the time of the change in command to KFOR 21 the KFOR 20 forces had been on high alert but were never required to engage.

In late February with the KFOR 20 deployment coming to an end, Major Neil Edgar was assigned to duty in Hohenfels, Germany, to assist in the training a National Guard contingents from Pennsylvania and Colorado who would be assuming responsibility for KFOR 21. The formal change of command would take place in early March

With the KFOR 20 nine month engagement coming to an end, Major Neil Edgar finds himself in Germany awaiting repatriation orders. While there is anticipation of the journey home there is also a lingering sense of responsibility. Although it is good to have another deployment come to an end and to be out of harm's way, as a committed field officer in the United States Army his thoughts and prayers are with the men and women he leaves behind and the many that will follow in KFOR 21 – after all, they are his family too.

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RECOGNITION FOR A JOB WELL DONE

On 6 January 2016, with two months to go in his deployment, Neil reflected on the work he and his team had been doing in making a difference for the Kosovo Security Forces (KSF) [See APPENDIX C – Kosovo Security Force]:

“The work my staff and I have been doing with the KSF has been the most rewarding part of the deployment. The KSF is the former Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) formed as a militia in 1998-1999 to counter Serbian aggression during the war in Kosovo. Currently, there is a plan in place for the KSF to become the Kosovo Armed Forces (KAF). The US Embassy here in Kosovo reached out to me and asked for assistance to help mentor and assist the intelligence branch of the KSF. To date we have ensured they are task organized appropriately, and helped them build a process for collecting, analyzing and disseminating intelligence information. In the coming weeks, we will help them refine their intelligence products and assume a product cycle that is impactful and efficient. We are laying the foundation for the KSF intelligence branch to be a viable war fighting function as they make the transition to the KAF. Together, we are building an Army!”

From: Edgar, Neil E MAJ USARMY KFOR (US)
Sent: Friday, February 19, 2016 7:30 AM
To: Parker, Chad James COL USARMY KFOR (US); Simpson, Vernon H Jr COL USARMY KFOR (US); Bowen, James O MAJ USARMY NG WVARNG (US); Murillo, Juan P
Subject: THANK YOU (UNCLASSIFIED)
CLASSIFICATION: UNCLASSIFIED

Gentlemen,

Just a quick note to convey my appreciation for your attendance at the KSF briefing yesterday. It was their first undertaking and marked a new beginning for their intelligence community.

They are thrilled that COL Simpson thought enough of their work to invite them to CBS for the purpose of briefing the new Battle Group Staff from the US.

We made a difference!

v/r

MAJ Neil E. Edgar
KFOR20 S2
30 ABCT "Old Hickory"
DSN: 314.781.6107
Cell Comm: +386.49.774.688
NIPR: neil.e.edgar.mil@mail.mil <<mailto:neil.e.edgar.mil@mail.mil>>
SIPR: neil.e.edgar.mil@mail.smil.mil <<mailto:neil.e.edgar.mil@mail.smil.mil>>

-----Original Message-----

From: Simpson, Vernon H Jr COL USARMY KFOR (US)
Sent: Friday, February 19, 2016 8:03 AM
To: Edgar, Neil E MAJ USARMY KFOR (US) <neil.e.edgar.mil@mail.mil>; Parker, Chad James COL USARMY KFOR (US) <chad.j.parker4.mil@mail.mil>; Bowen, James O MAJ USARMY NG WVARNG (US) <james.o.bowen.mil@mail.mil>; Murillo, Juan P <MurilloJP@state.gov>
Cc: Kennedy, John C LTC USARMY KFOR (US) <john.c.kennedy1.mil@mail.mil>
Subject: RE: THANK YOU (UNCLASSIFIED)

Neil,

Thanks for having the vision to incorporate our strategic partners from the KSF into our operations. As previously mentioned, the fundamental theory behind stability doctrine is legitimacy of the host nation. It does us no good to come here and simply "hope" for their success. It is in our national interest to ensure that they continue to advance in order to become the MOST TRUSTED INSTITUTION IN KOSOVO!

My sincere gratitude and respect for your willingness to take on this task.

Sincerely, H6

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Neil and his team were indeed instrumental in setting the ground work for the Kosovo Security Forces to develop an "Intelligence Function", a necessary capability for an effective security force. In recognition for his efforts and the significant impact it had to the KSF and, thus, the security of the nation, before he left Kosovo Major Neil Edgar received an award from Ministry of Kosovo Security Forces for their invaluable assistance. Neil was personally recognized by Lieutenant General Rrahman Rama, the highest ranking uniformed officer and current commander of the KSF. A buffet luncheon was held in their honor. As any good soldier simply doing their duty would react, Neil was floored.



The General gave "MAJ Edgar" full credit for training, specifically teaching them IPB (Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield). IPB is a systematic, continuous process of analyzing the threat and the effects of the environment on the unit [See APPENDIX D - FM 34-130: Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield]. It identifies facts and assumptions that determine likely threat COAs (Course of Action). The IPB supports the commander and staff and is essential to decision making. It provides the basis for intelligence collection and synchronization to support COA development and analysis. It is a dynamic staff process, driven by the commander that continually integrates new information into the process.

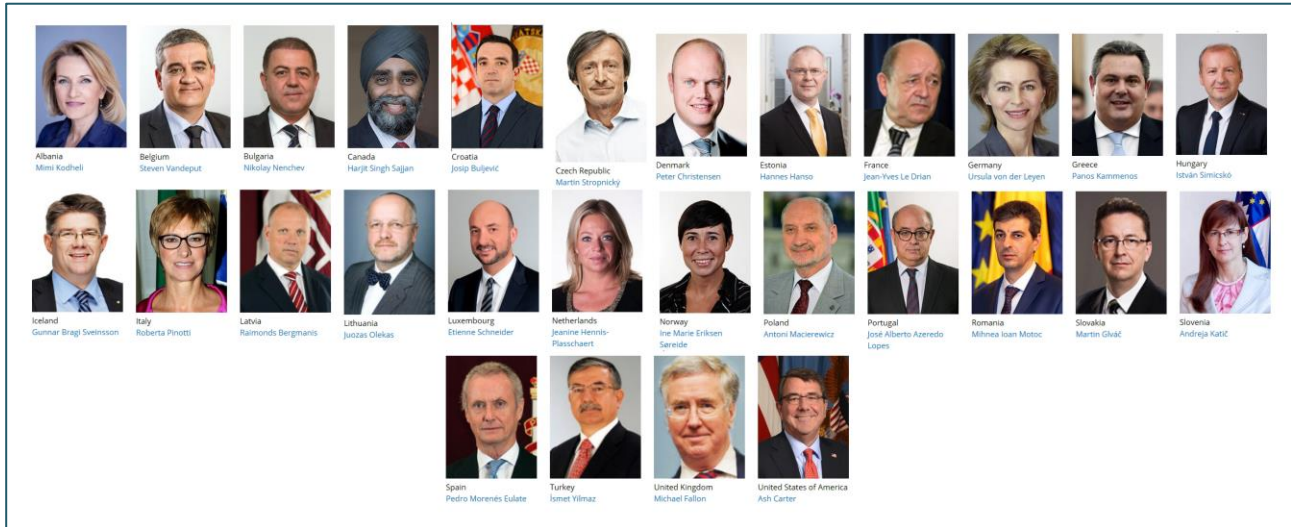


This is an integral part of The Military Decision-Making Process (MDMP) – which is the Army’s analytical approach to problem solving; it is how the Army decides the ‘how and when’ movements... it is the established, and proven analytical process. Knowing how to properly conduct MDMP takes a lot of practice, can be very stressful and has many steps. When done correctly is a true art and of course Major Neil Edgar is an expert.

Lieutenant General Rama went on to discuss Neil and the efforts of KFOR20 at a subsequent NATO meeting in Brussels, Belgium, in February. The impact of Neil’s work became more profound when the NATO Defense Ministers gave this press release:



Statement by Defence Ministers on the declaration of the initial operational capability for Joint Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance



Press Release (2016) 018
 Issued on 10 Feb. 2016
 Last updated: 01 Mar. 2016 19:05
 English

We, the Allied Defence Ministers, have today declared the initial operational capability for NATO's Joint Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (JISR) initiative. This achievement follows up to the commitments that our nations made at the Chicago Summit and subsequently reaffirmed at the Wales Summit.

This initial operational JISR capability is centred on enhancing the situational awareness of the NATO Response Force through heightened proficiency in collecting, processing, and exchanging intelligence. In short, JISR will maximise the resources we have at hand already, both in NATO and in individual Allies: enhance interconnectivity across our systems, improve training and expertise among our personnel, and lead to better procedures for information handling and sharing.

All of these improvements will ultimately contribute to a better informed and more watchful Alliance. JISR is ready to support rapid decision making across several major lines of effort, including the Readiness Action Plan, our strategy on hybrid warfare, and our overall deterrence posture. Further, JISR is helping to lay the groundwork for integrating Alliance Ground Surveillance into NATO.

The achievement of this milestone has been made possible by our collective Alliance pulling together towards a shared set of objectives. JISR is demonstrating the value that multinational cooperation – particularly in research and development – can have in strengthening NATO as a whole.

This initial operational capability is only the first milestone for the JISR initiative. Further work is needed to sustain these achievements, and expand them beyond the scope of the NATO Response Force. NATO will further aim to intensify JISR support to the Readiness Action Plan and other efforts, all towards the end of enabling timely and informed decisions by our political and military leaders.

We look forward to continued progress in the months to come.



COMMANDER OF THE KOSOVO SECURITY FORCE

is hereby granting

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

to

Major Neil Edgar

for cooperation and great contribution, expertise and support in developing the intelligence in Kosovo Security Force, especially for drafting the IPB presentation

Rahman Rama

Lieutenant General Rahman RAMA
 Commander of the Kosovo Security Force

Date: 26/02/2016
 Reference: 03/155/2016

2 March 2016 - North Carolina Guard troops prepare to return from Kosovo deployment

Hundreds of local soldiers serving in Kosovo are expected to finish their mission there in the next week and soon be on their way home. Roughly 320 North Carolina National Guardsmen were in the Balkan nation, where they have served for much of the past year as part of a NATO peacekeeping force. A NATO-run peacekeeping force has been in Kosovo since 1999 and, during that time, security has greatly improved, officials said. The soldiers belong to the 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team, which is based in Clinton, but most of the troops belong to the Fayetteville-based 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 252nd Armor Regiment.

The brigade commander, Col. Vernon H. Simpson Jr., said the soldiers worked closely with Kosovo forces to help the still-disputed country gain a secure foothold. That included security patrols on the still-disputed border with Serbia, which controlled Kosovo before the country declared independence in 2008, and training efforts with Kosovo police and security forces.

Simpson said, "I think there's an impact on Kosovo, and I think Kosovo has left an impact on us as well," he said. "This is the most permissive learning environment we've ever operated in."

The 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team headquarters served as the core of Multinational Battle Group East, based at Camp Bondsteel, near Urosevac, Kosovo, for the last nine months. The battle group, one of two in Kosovo, is composed of about 1,450 soldiers, including National Guardsmen and Army Reservists from several states and hundreds of soldiers from European allies.

Simpson said his brigade-led battle group added to that success, further improving the capabilities of partner forces within the country, while deterring aggression by groups that would aim to disrupt the peace.

The brigade will be replaced on March 10 by soldiers from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 28th Infantry Division, part of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard. While the North Carolina troops will leave the country soon, they are still weeks from home. The soldiers will demobilize at Fort Bliss, Texas, before returning to their home state.

While deployed, soldiers have been able to keep in near-constant contact with their families. But that doesn't lessen the toll of the deployment on those who were left behind, Simpson said.

"People don't realize the burden family members shoulder," he said. "My wife has it harder than I do, and deserves a medal."

Missing major life events is part of the job, he said. And if soldiers take anything from the deployment, it should be a need to cherish the time they have with their loved ones.

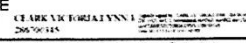
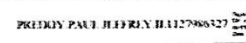
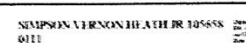
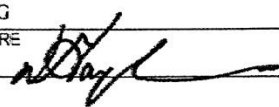
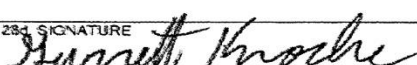
"It makes your time at home more precious," Simpson said.

CHAPTER 8

7 March 2016 – Recognition for Meritorious Service

RECOMMENDATION FOR AWARD				
For use of this form, see AR 600-8-22; the proponent agency is DCS, G-1.				
For valor/heroism/wartime and all awards higher than MSM, refer to special instructions in Chapter 3, AR 600-8-22.				
1. TO DCG, USAREUR APO AE 09014		2. FROM CDR, MNBG-E, KFOR 20 APO AE 09340		3. DATE (YYYYMMDD) 20151212
PART I - SOLDIER DATA				
4. NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial) EDGAR, NEIL E		5. RANK MAJ	6. SSN 050-68-9012	
7. ORGANIZATION HHC, MNBG-E, KFOR 20 APO AE 09340		8. PREVIOUS AWARDS AAM-1, ARCOM-1, BSM-1		
9. BRANCH OF SERVICE		10. RECOMMENDED AWARD MSM	11. PERIOD OF AWARD a. FROM 20150402	
			b. TO 20160229	
12. REASON FOR AWARD				
12a. INDICATE REASON SVC	12b. INTERIM AWARD IF YES, STATE AWARD GIVEN	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	12c. POSTHUMOUS YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	13. PROPOSED PRESENTATION DATE (YYYYMMDD) 20160301
PART II - RECOMMENDER DATA				
14. NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial) KENNEDY, JOHN C		15. ADDRESS HHC, MNBG-E, KFOR 20 APO AE 09340		
16. TITLE/POSITION MNBG-E EXECUTIVE OFFICER	17. RANK LTC	19. SIGNATURE KENNEDY JOHN CHARLES 1031561872		
18. RELATIONSHIP TO AWARDEE SUPERVISOR				
PART III - JUSTIFICATION AND CITATION DATA (Use specific bullet examples of meritorious acts or service)				
20. ACHIEVEMENTS				
ACHIEVEMENT #1 MAJ Edgar served as the Multinational Battle Group-East, Kosovo Force (KFOR) 20, Intelligence Officer (S2) supporting over 1240 Multinational Soldiers, managing a S2 section consisting of 48 US Soldiers, 15 Romanian Soldiers, and 12 civilian contractors. He also led the operationalization of all battle group linguists and conducted liaison with their contracting entity. MAJ Edgar briefed 28 General Officers on the complex Operating Environment and cultural dynamics in Kosovo at an OPD training event at the US Embassy in FYROM.				
ACHIEVEMENT #2 MAJ Edgar showed great leadership and initiative when he reengaged the USAREUR J2 section bringing a renewed detailed awareness of the Balkans to the HQs. He accomplished this by developing internal S2 staff running estimates to ensure S2 staff were building and maintaining pertinent products and developing a high-level understanding of the OE. He led the development of over 180 daily INSUMS and over 20 ACE Briefs and Super ACE Briefs during the rotation. His products are being employed at KFOR and USAREUR daily.				
ACHIEVEMENT #3 MAJ Edgar and the S2 section provided Intelligence support for two large multinational training events consisting of over 600 Soldiers from 20 nations during the KFOR 20 rotation. His understanding of the complex OE and intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) contributed greatly to the overall success of OPERATIONS STONEWALL and SILVER SABER. He also coordinated with the NLAT, US Embassy in Pristina, and the Iowa National Guard to assist the KSF with IPB during the culminating event of the EAGLE IV exercise.				
ACHIEVEMENT #4 MAJ Edgar identified a shortfall in KFOR historical data retention. To correct, he led the development of five intelligence running estimates involving Extremists Claiming Association with Islam, Unexploded Ordnance, Toxic Waste Sites, Significant Acts on the Administrative Boundary Line, and SASE and FOM incidents. These running estimates have provided the MNBG-E staff with situational awareness and will assist future KFOR rotations with predictive analysis. This ability is important to predicting future causes of instability in Kosovo.				
21. PROPOSED CITATION For exceptionally meritorious service from 2 April 2015 through 29 February 2016 while serving as the Intelligence Officer (S2), in support of Operation Joint Guardian, KFOR 20. Major Edgar's outstanding leadership and personal performance greatly contributed to the unit's operational success and a safe and secure environment in Kosovo. His tireless devotion to duty is in keeping with the finest traditions of military service and reflects distinct credit upon himself, Multinational Battle Group-East, United States Army Europe, and the United States Army.				
DA FORM 638, APR 2006		REPLACES DA FORM 638-1, PREVIOUS EDITIONS OF DA FORM 638 ARE OBSOLETE.		Page 1 of 3 APD LC v3.04ES

CHAPTER 8

NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial) EDGAR, NEIL E		SSN 050-68-9012	
PART IV - RECOMMENDATIONS/APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL			
22. I certify that this individual is eligible for an award in accordance with AR 600-8-22; and that the information contained in Part I is correct.		22a. SIGNATURE 	22b. DATE (YYYYMMDD) 20151213
23. INTERMEDIATE AUTHORITY	a. TO CDR, MNBG-E, KFOR 20 APO AE 09340	b. FROM CDR, HHC MNBG-E, KFOR 20 APO AE 09340	c. DATE (YYYYMMDD) 20151213
d. RECOMMEND: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> APPROVAL <input type="checkbox"/> DISAPPROVAL <input type="checkbox"/> UPGRADE TO: <input type="checkbox"/> DOWNGRADE TO:			
e. NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial) PREDDY, PAUL J.		f. RANK CPT	
g. TITLE/POSITION COMPANY COMMANDER		h. SIGNATURE 	
i. COMMENTS			
24. INTERMEDIATE AUTHORITY	a. TO DCG, USAREUR APO AE 09014	b. FROM CDR, MNBG-E, KFOR 20 APO AE 09340	c. DATE (YYYYMMDD) 20160103
d. RECOMMEND: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> APPROVAL <input type="checkbox"/> DISAPPROVAL <input type="checkbox"/> UPGRADE TO: <input type="checkbox"/> DOWNGRADE TO:			
e. NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial) SIMPSON, VERNON, H. JR.		f. RANK COL	
g. TITLE/POSITION MNBG-E COMMANDER		h. SIGNATURE 	
i. COMMENTS Outstanding performance in the conduct of significant responsibility! Fully responsible to ensure that the commander and staff understood the complex Kosovo environment.			
25. INTERMEDIATE AUTHORITY	a. TO	b. FROM	c. DATE (YYYYMMDD)
d. RECOMMEND: <input type="checkbox"/> APPROVAL <input type="checkbox"/> DISAPPROVAL <input type="checkbox"/> UPGRADE TO: <input type="checkbox"/> DOWNGRADE TO:			
e. NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial)		f. RANK	
g. TITLE/POSITION		h. SIGNATURE	
i. COMMENTS			
26. APPROVAL AUTHORITY	a. TO ORDERS ISSUING AUTHORITY	b. FROM DCG, USAREUR APO AE 09014	c. DATE (YYYYMMDD) 20160315
d. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> APPROVED <input type="checkbox"/> DISAPPROVED <input type="checkbox"/> RECOMMEND UPGRADE TO: <input type="checkbox"/> DOWNGRADE TO:			
e. NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial) GAYLER, WILLIAM K.		f. RANK MG	
g. TITLE/POSITION DEPUTY COMMANDING GENERAL		h. SIGNATURE 	
i. COMMENTS			
PART V - ORDERS DATA			
27a. ORDERS ISSUING HQ HQ, USAREUR APO AE 09014		27b. PERMANENT ORDER NO. 67-9	31. DISTRIBUTION 1-File 1-OMPF 1-Unit 3-Individual
28a. NAME OF ORDERS APPROVAL AUTHORITY KNOCHE, GARRETT D.		28b. RANK DAC	
28c. TITLE/POSITION CHIEF, MILITARY AWARDS		29. APPROVED AWARD MSM	
28d. SIGNATURE 		30. DATE (YYYYMMDD) 20160229	



THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO ALL WHO SHALL SEE THESE PRESENTS, GREETING: THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AUTHORIZED BY EXECUTIVE ORDER, 16 JANUARY 1969 HAS AWARDED

THE MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL

TO MAJOR NEIL E. EDGAR
MULTINATIONAL BATTLE GROUP - EAST, KOSOVO FORCE - 20

FOR EXCEPTIONALLY MERITORIOUS SERVICE AS THE S2. YOUR OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP AND DEDICATION TO DUTY CONTRIBUTED TO OVERWHELMING MISSION SUCCESS AND SET THE STANDARD FOR OTHERS TO EMULATE. YOUR ACTIONS ARE IN KEEPING WITH THE FINEST TRADITIONS OF MILITARY SERVICE AND REFLECT GREAT CREDIT UPON YOU, UNITED STATES ARMY EUROPE, AND THE UNITED STATES ARMY.

FROM 2 APRIL 2015 TO 29 FEBRUARY 2016

THIS 7TH DAY OF MARCH 2016

PERMANENT ORDERS 67-9
7 March 2016
Headquarters,
United States Army Europe




William K. Gayler
Major General, USA
Deputy Commanding General