

# SERVICE IN KOSOVO



JULY 2014 VOLUME XVIII, ISSUE V  
MNBG-E MONTHLY MAGAZINE

## REMEMBERING KFOR's 15 YEAR PAST



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*Service in Kosovo Magazine* welcomes commentaries, articles and photos from readers. Submissions should be sent to the editor at [mnbgeast@gmail.com](mailto:mnbgeast@gmail.com) by the 20th of each month and include details such as the who, what, when, where and why of the photos. Please include the person's name, rank and contingent of who took the photos for photo credit. MNBG-E reserves the right to edit any submissions.



*Cover photo:* Marines with the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) from Lima Battery, 3rd Battalion, 10th Marine Regiment, patrol the streets of Zegra in order to deter looting, arson and also as a show force, June 28, 1999. The Marines and sailors of the 26th MEU are helping to enforce the implementation of the military technical agreement and to provide peace and stability to Kosovo during the initial phases of Operation Joint Guardian. (Photo by Sgt. Craig J. Shell, USMC)

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# KOSOVO SECURITY FORCES PARTICIPATE IN LEADERSHIP REACTION COURSE

Story and photos by Sgt. Cody Barber,  
11th Public Affairs Detachment

Members of the Kosovo Security Force (KSF), with guidance from Multinational Battle Group-East (MNBG-E) Soldiers, participated in their first ever Leadership Reaction Course (LRC) at the KSF Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) compound in Ferizaj, May 29.

The course was created when KSF and U.S. Soldiers discussed innovative methods to teach KSF leaders on furthering their creativeness and problem solving skills, said Capt. Christopher Robertson, MNBG-E Headquarters and Headquarters Company commander.

"We explained what an LRC was and how it was designed to test the problem-solving ability of leaders and subordinates alike," said the native of Kingsville, Md. "They really liked the idea, so we got a look at their existing obstacle course and we designed the LRC to fit their obstacle course."

"We never had a course like this before," added KSF Brig. Gen. Enver Cikaqi, the TRADOC commander. "Since 2009, we've only held basic training and that has helped increase the professionalism of our members. It is our interest to advance our programs and gain as much experience possible from the U.S. Army and their doctrines."

MNBG-E Soldiers went through the course beforehand to demonstrate how each obstacle worked, while the KSF troops watched. The obstacles in the course had soldiers negotiating under wires, over walls and using plywood to cross over imaginary landmines all while carrying ammo cans, water and, at one



Noncommissioned officers in the Kosovo Security Force climb a net during a Leadership Reaction Course at the Kosovo Security Force Training and Doctrine Command compound in Ferizaj, May 29. The obstacles in the course had members crawling under wires, climbing over walls and using plywood to cross over imaginary landmines, all while carrying ammo cans, water, and at one point, a 150-pound dummy.

point, a 150-pound dummy.

Five-member teams went through each obstacle with one of them assuming the leadership role, said U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Carlos Arriaza-Leal, one of the LRC supervisors. The leadership role was a way for one soldier, regardless of rank, to be in command of his own troops and be challenged.

"The primary purpose of the course was to improve the KSF's

leadership ability by affording students an opportunity to apply the lessons learned in his or hers formal leadership instruction," said the San Fernando, Calif., native. "It also provided leaders with a means of making a self-evaluation to more accurately determine their leadership ability, and an opportunity to observe the strengths and weaknesses of others during team operations."



Members of Kosovo Security Force low crawl under simulated barbed wire while dragging equipment during a leadership reaction course at the KSF Training and Doctrine Command compound in Ferizaj, Kosovo, May 29.

The course also challenged the troops by confronting them with unique obstacles that forced them to work as a team and think outside the box, added Arriaza-Leal.

"The LRC builds interdependence, risk-taking skills and inspire new ways of thinking," Arriaza-Leal continued. "It provides the KSF with an idea on how to improve team building and communication skills in their TRADOC environment that will assist in developing future confident leaders."

Robertson also said the knowledge of implementing the course into the TRADOC curriculum will be beneficial for KSF members going through Warrior Leaders Course and Advanced Leaders Course.

Taking a knee before every obstacle and planning amongst themselves, the KSF noncommissioned officers conquered the course and concluded the exercise with an after action review.

"The training went very well," said Arriaza-Leal. "Constructive criticism was well taken by the KSF at the end of the course. They are finding ways to improve team building and relationship building skills."



A noncommissioned officer in the Kosovo Security Force carries a wooden two-by-four across a balance beam during a Leadership Reaction Course at the Kosovo Security Force Training and Doctrine Command compound in Ferizaj, Kosovo, May 29. If anything touched the ground below, the team would have to restart the obstacle.





## Germany

As Europe's largest economy and second most populous nation (after Russia), Germany is a key member of the continent's economic, political, and defense organizations. Located in Central Europe, bordering the Baltic Sea and the North Sea, between the Netherlands and Poland, south of Denmark.

**President:** President Joachim Gauck

**Independence:** 18 January 1871

**Capital:** Berlin

**Currency:** Euro

**Official language:** German

Federal Armed Forces (Bundeswehr): Army (Heer); Navy (Deutsche Marine, includes naval air arm); Air Force (Luftwaffe); Joint Support Services (Streitkräftebasis, SKB); Central Medical Service (Zentraler Sanitätsdienst, ZSanDstBw) (2013). 17-23 years of age for male and female voluntary military service; conscription ended 1 July 2011; service obligation 8-23 months or 12 years; women have been eligible for voluntary service in all military branches and positions since 2001.

Information taken from CIA Factbook



## MNBG-E SOLDIERS SUPPORT KOSOVO SECURITY FORCES DURING ELECTIONS

Story and photos by Sgt. Cody Barber,  
11th Public Affairs Detachment

**M**ultinational Battle Group-East (MNBG-E) Soldiers with the battle group's Forward Command Post (FCP), performed roving security patrols during the Kosovo elections, June 8, to ensure Kosovo's citizens were given the opportunity to cast their votes in the republic's parliamentary elections.

The patrols were a part of MNBG-E's supporting role in keeping a safe and secure environment and freedom of movement for the people voting in Mitrovica, a city located in the northern part of Kosovo.

"Our task was to conduct mobile reconnaissance of the polling stations to assist the Kosovo security organizations in maintaining SASE and FOM," said 1st Lt. Christopher Hahnemann, a platoon leader in B Troop, 2nd Squadron, 38th



U.S. Army Spc. Douglas Teed, a cavalry scout with B Troop, 2nd Squadron, 38th Cavalry Regiment, and a native of Owego, N.Y., sits in a vehicle on the outskirts of Mitrovica during the Kosovo elections, June 8. They performed mobile reconnaissance of the polling stations to support the Kosovo security organizations and help maintain a safe and secure environment for the people voting in Mitrovica, a city located in the northern part of Kosovo.

Cavalry Regiment, and a native of Huntsville, Alabama.

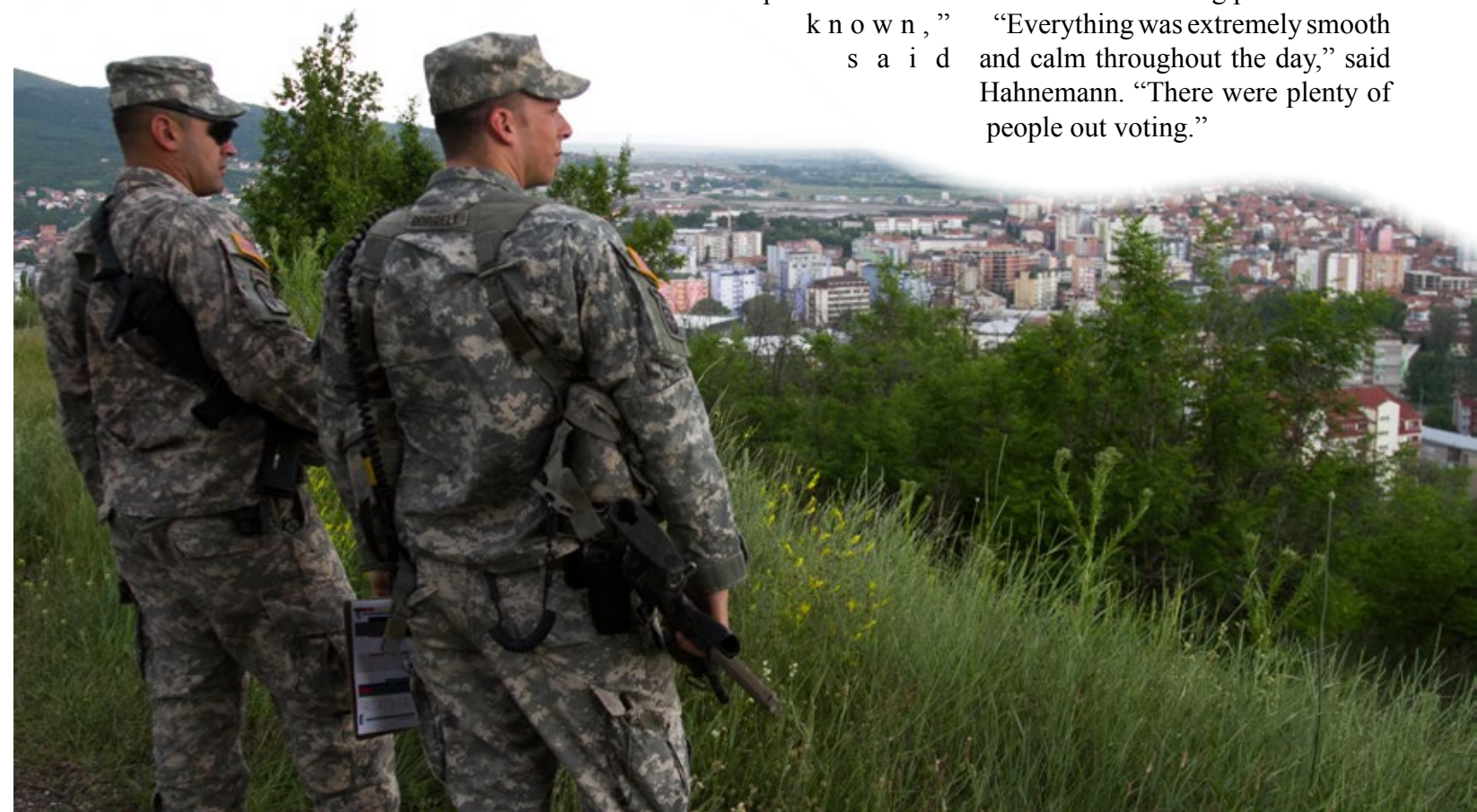
The troops would only drive by each polling station making sure everything was peaceful in the area, but the Kosovo Police had everything under control throughout the event, said Hahnemann.

"Every time we drove by, they were out in front and their presence was known," said

Hahnemann. "They are running everything, and they are doing all of the heavy lifting; we're just here in support of them.

As the day came to an end, fireworks lit up the sky as the polls closed, and Soldiers with Bravo Troop headed back to Camp Novo Selo knowing they had helped the people of Kosovo have a peaceful and successful voting period.

"Everything was extremely smooth and calm throughout the day," said Hahnemann. "There were plenty of people out voting."





# MNBG-E's LIAISON MONITORING TEAMS HELP SECURE ELECTIONS FOR KOSOVO



Sgt. Lux Duran (bottom left) and Pfc. Desaree Greene (right), are two Soldiers assigned to the Multinational Battle Group-East Liaison Mentoring Team in Ferizaj. On election day, the two were assigned to the regional Kosovo Police headquarters in Ferizaj as liaisons between the LMT and the police.

Story and photo by Capt. Kevin Sandell,  
11th Public Affairs Detachment

With over 110,000 citizens in the municipality and 32 diverse election polling sites, the city of Ferizaj played a substantial role in Kosovo's parliamentary elections, June 8. A small liaison mentoring team (LMT), comprised of 10 U.S. Soldiers from Kosovo Force's Multinational Battle Group-East (MNBG-E), were charged with providing

over watch and mentorship to the Kosovo Police maintaining security during the citywide voting.

For 1st Lt. Andrew Tkac, the local LMT officer in charge, the path enabling the historic vote began uneasily, but required collaboration among the institutions in Kosovo, its police division and NATO's Kosovo Force. Tkac and his team were ready at 5 a.m. that day to certify the ballots were safely distributed to the city's various polling sites, while also ensuring the police were

providing security.

"I had to observe the distribution of ballots to all the polling centers which went flawlessly," Tkac said. "Every single convoy was escorted by Ferizaj, Kosovo Police to all the polling centers, and we observed the polling centers making sure the appropriate security measures were in place."

Serving in a dual-hatted role, the LMT not only monitored the security of Ferizaj's polling sites, but also gained opinions and concerns from

local citizens regarding the electoral process.

Sgt. Brendan Pinkham, a LMT Soldier in Ferizaj, said the team's contributions to promoting a professional election day led to an equal opportunity for all to vote.

"We're visiting all the polling centers, there's 32 of them, and we're just trying to make sure everything is good and all the people are having an opportunity to get out and vote; no one's trying to stop them and prevent them from casting a vote," Pinkham said. "We're going to feel the pulse of Kosovo and try to get out there and make sure everyone has an opportunity to vote; so we're going to be visiting a lot of polling sites and basically trying to get the atmospherics of the region."

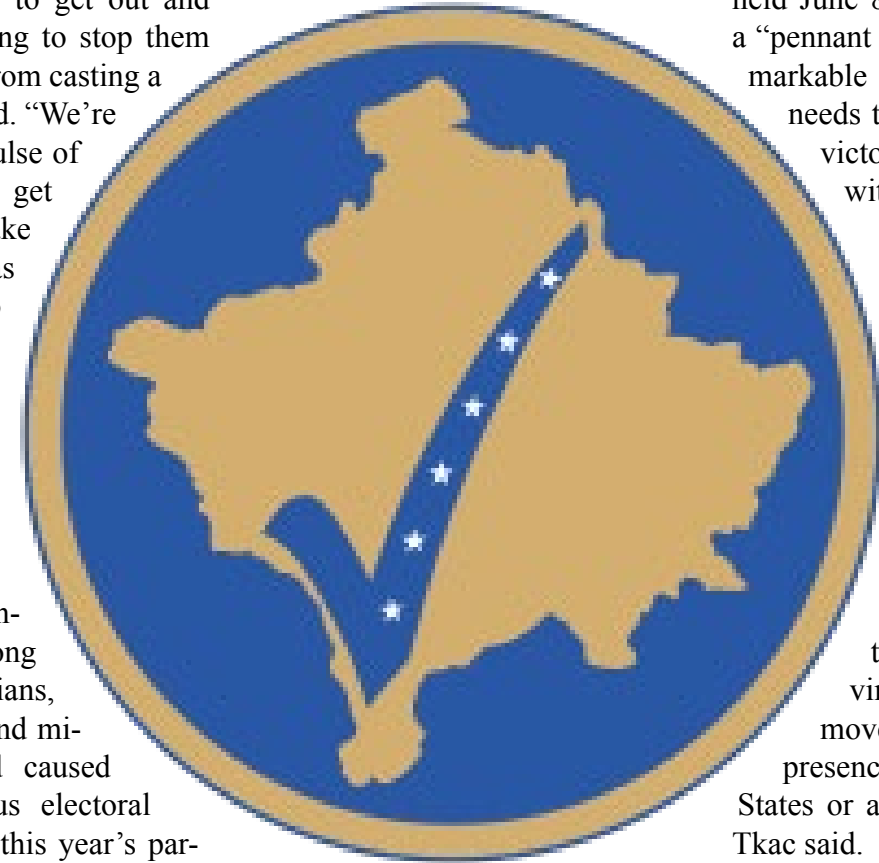
Longstanding ethnic tensions among Kosovo Albanians, Kosovo Serbians and minority groups had caused anxiety in previous electoral votes, so ensuring this year's parliamentary elections went smoothly was the key facet for Kosovo Force.

Due in large part to the successful security plan laid out by the Kosovo Police, KFOR and MNBG-E, the region's voting went off without a major incident, and 43 percent of eligible voters participated in the elections, according to Kosovo's Central Election Commission.

The commander of Kosovo Force, Italian army Maj. Gen. Salvatore Farina, credited the successful voting to citizens' sense of civic duty

along with security efforts by all involved.

"The peaceful mood in which the elections were held demonstrates, once again, the democratic maturity and sense of civic duty which animates all the people of Kosovo and the high degree of efficiency and professionalism of the Kosovo Police," Farina said. "The large participation of citizens of different ethnic



groups and minorities are a clear manifestation of the democratic spirit which distinguishes the citizens of this part of the Balkans."

Col. Charles Hensley, commander of Multinational Battle Group-East, said the battle group's conviction in the Kosovo Police was proven throughout the planning process and on the official Election Day.

"MNBG-East has the challenge of remaining vigilant in Kosovo, and our confidence in the Kosovo Police

has been proven by their abilities in handling any problem and keeping the elections as incident free as possible to allow the citizens of Kosovo an open avenue for a free election process," Hensley said.

Tkac compared the day's successes to a game of professional baseball, with steps taken to achieve playing in the game's ultimate championship, the World Series. The elections held June 8, Tkac said, equated to a "pennant game" - while still a remarkable achievement, work still needs to be done to clench the victory of holding elections without outside assistance.

"You have a free Kosovo doing a democratic election, where they're free to go ahead and do it. Where I see where the 'World Series' will be, is when they are able to do their own elections free and democratically without any threats to a safe and secure environment and freedom of movement, and without the presence of KFOR, the United States or any other NATO allies," Tkac said.

"Today is still an accomplishment, just like winning the pennant is still an accomplishment. It's not the World Series. Whatever happens today, as long as it goes peaceful, they've won the pennant, they've done the good thing and they're almost there. Once Kosovo has said, 'We're secure and we're able to self-sustain and we're able to continue our democratic body and governing, and don't need outside help, that's when I think they'll win the 'World Series,'" Tkac continued.



# LEGAL

The Constitution works and has thus far endured because of bona fide independent courts, which have substantial power to check and balance the other branches of government and are truly free to make impartial decisions.

On July 4, 1776, the founding fathers of the United States signed the Declaration of Independence—a unanimous declaration of the thirteen colonies to Great Britain establishing free, independent and sovereign states. The Revolutionary War began a year earlier and continued until 1783. During that time, the Continental Congress drafted the Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union. This essentially served as the “first constitution” and sprung from the revolutionaries’ vision of a free and united nation with independent sovereign states.

The Articles of Confederation, however, failed to create a centralized government with substance, power, or worth. One of the most significant deficiencies in the Articles of Confederation was the failure to establish a judiciary. By 1787, the United States could not defend its sovereignty, could not pay its debts, its currency was worthless, and the

international treaties or pay taxes to the central government. The revolutionaries’ magnificent dream of a great nation that was governed not by kings or rulers, but by power derived from the people, seemed to be fading and was in serious doubt.

As a result, Congress called a convention to propose a new constitution in February 1787. Delegates from seven states met in Philadelphia on May 25, 1787, and eventually 74 delegates from twelve states participated in the Constitutional Convention. These delegates were considered the best and brightest of their time, and they studied, examined, and scrutinized forms of government, ideas, and philosophies. They debated and challenged each other in their search for a form of government that would protect the fact that “all men are created equal, [and] are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights.” On September 17, 1787, after months of hard fought and intensive debates, 38 delegates signed the Constitution and nine of the thirteen States ratified the same.

The Constitution does not grant people rights, it grants and limits the rights and authority of the government in a way that protects the people’s “unalienable rights.”

It is the courts that enforce the Constitution, protect the peoples’ rights, make the rule of law a reality. Indeed, the judiciary-independence is the most essential characteristic of a democratic free society.

In a constitutional system of govern-

## INDEPENDENT COURT’S PROTECT OUR UNALIENABLE RIGHTS

ment, an independent judiciary serves two goals:

1. Keep the other political branches in check; and
2. Enable judges to make impartial decisions.

The judiciary restrains the executive and legislative branches by ruling their actions void when they violate the Constitution. The judiciary’s check of the other branches preserves the ability of the Constitution to protect freedoms and order society by ensuring that unconstitutional laws are overturned. Decisions should be based on what is right, just and fair, not what is popular at the moment. This independence is protected by the fact that federal judges are appointed for life and are free from executive branch controls. Federal judges cannot be removed from office at the impulse of angry or unsatisfied politicians or litigants.

History has proven that it is the independence of the judiciary that protects our unalienable rights and prevents a tyranny of the majority. Indeed, history has shown that an independent judiciary is the cornerstone of democracy.

Lastly, although the independent judiciary is one of the most important and significant aspects of the Constitution, we must never forget who has the real power over the government. The people. “We the people are the rightful masters of both Congress and the courts, not to overthrow the Constitution but to overthrow the men who pervert the Constitution.” Abraham Lincoln.

# The signs are all around

it's up to **YOU**  
to recognize  
and act on them

## Training, Discipline and Standards

Training, discipline and standards are the bedrock of our Army, and as Soldiers, you've been taught what right looks like. As leaders, you have a duty and a responsibility to maintain standards in your formation. You also have an obligation to your Soldiers and their families to manage risk and take action to correct problems. In our fight against accidental fatalities, knowledge is the weapon of choice.







Task Force Sabre soldiers get on a CH-47 Chinook helicopter to fly back to Camp Bondsteel after a Schützen-schnur range in Orahovac, Kosovo, on Oct. 12, 2001. Eighty American soldiers participated in the German Schützen-schnur weapons qualification to earn the German Marksmanship Badge during NATO's Operation Joint Guardian. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Vincent A. King)

# 15 YEARS

## UNDERSTANDING KFOR'S PAST TO SHAPE ITS FUTURE

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Carlos Burger,  
11th Public Affairs Detachment

It's another typical day on Camp Bondsteel. Besides to occasional officer rushing to attend a meeting or the roving military police patrolman, it's mostly quiet. It's a contrasting scene for those who were here when the Kosovo conflict first occurred back in 1999.

June 10 marks the 15th anniversary of the rapid deployment of Operation Joint Guardian, the security force mandated by the United Nations Security Council and a select few can still recall what life was like in Kosovo more than a decade ago.

Before the conflict, Kosovo was an autonomous province of Serbia and contained a mixed population with an ethnic Albanian majority. In 1989, Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic altered the status of the region, removing its autonomy and bringing it under Belgrade, Serbia's control.

In 1998, open conflict between Serbians and Kosovo Albanians resulted in the deaths of over 1,500 Albanians and forced 400,000 people from their homes. The international community became concerned about Milosevic's disregard for diplomatic efforts aimed at peacefully resolving the crisis.

On June 12, 1998 the North Atlantic Council assessed possible measures that NATO might take with regard to the developing Kosovo crisis. On 13 October 1998, the

NATO Council authorized the use of air strikes however, at the last moment, Milosevic agreed to further diplomatic initiatives and the air strikes were called off. UN Security Council created Resolution 1199, which called for a cease-fire by both parties to the conflict. In support of the resolution, limits were set on the number of Serbian forces in Kosovo and on the scope of their operations.

In addition, UNSCR 1203 endorsed the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to establish a Kosovo Verification Mission that would observe compliance on the ground and that NATO would establish an aerial surveillance mission.

Despite these steps, in 1999, the situation in Kosovo flared up again.

Renewed international efforts were made to find a peaceful solution to the conflict. NATO supported and reinforced international efforts by agreeing on January 30, to use air strikes, if required, and by issuing a warning to both sides in the conflict.

On March 18, Serbian forces breached compliance with the October agreement by moving extra troops and tanks into the region. Tens of thousands of people began to flee their homes in the face of this systematic offensive. The KVM withdrew from the region, having faced obstruction from Serbian forces to the point that they could no longer fulfill their tasks.

US Ambassador Richard Holbrooke flew to Belgrade, in a final

attempt to persuade Milosevic to stop attacks on the Kosovar Albanians or face imminent NATO air strikes. Milosevic refused to comply and on the 23rd, the order was given to commence air strikes.

Besim Hyseni, a U.S. Army translator for the Forward Command Post, was a civilian who was in the capital city when NATO intervened.

"Before [Kosovo Forces] came, the situation was very difficult. I was in Pristina when the airstrikes started. I was hiding in the city for a month. After a month, my family and I left on a refugee train to Macedonia. There, I worked in the camp as a driver and interpreter for CARE international," Hyseni said.

On the evening of June 9th, NATO and Yugoslav Army commanders signed a Military-Technical Agreement that began the full withdrawal of Yugoslav forces from Kosovo. As agreed in the MTA, the deployment of the security force – KFOR - was synchronized with the departure of Serb security forces from Kosovo.

After an air campaign lasting seventy-seven days, On June 10, 1999, NATO Secretary General Javier Solana announced that he had instructed U.S. Army Gen. Wesley Clark, Supreme Allied Commander Europe, temporarily to suspend NATO's air operations against Yugoslavia.

The UN Security Council passed UNSCR 1244, welcoming the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's ac-

*Continued on next page*



ceptance on a political solution to the Kosovo crisis, including an immediate end to violence and a rapid withdrawal of its military, police and paramilitary forces.

The first elements of KFOR entered Kosovo June 12th and by June 20th, the Serbian withdrawal was complete and KFOR was well established in Kosovo. Following confirmation that Serb security forces had vacated Kosovo, the NATO Secretary General announced he had formally terminated the air campaign.

While this was going on, Hyseni was offered a chance to come back home and make a difference.

“Contractors from KFOR came to the camp to recruit translators for them so I volunteered and got the job. We came back here from Camp Able Sentry in Macedonia to Camp Bondsteel,” Hyseni said. “I was very proud to help my people and to help the U.S Army and was happy to come back to come to our homeland and work with KFOR.”

At its full strength, KFOR comprised nearly 50,000 personnel. It was a multinational force under unified command and control with substantial NATO participation.

Dan O’Brien, Interim Director of Security, Plans and Operations for Area Support Team Balkans was a squad leader for 92nd Military Police Company during rotation 1B. Stationed at nearby Camp Montieth, his role was far different than the role of the MPs here today.

“When we arrived, we were initially the law enforcement for Kosovo. They were still introducing the Kosovo Police into the system. We actually went out and did law enforcement for the entire country,” O’Brien said.

“In those days, KFOR was the only institution. We used to work 15 to hours a day. It was hard work, but



**Pvt. William Helton measures and marks wood for the construction of a SEAHUT at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, on Oct. 5, 1999. Pvt. 2 Helton is from Bravo Company, 94th Engineers Battalion out of Vilseck, Germany. The SEAHUTs are being constructed in replacement of the General Purpose Tents at Camp Bondsteel. They will be used for housing and work spaces. The soldiers are in Kosovo in support of the peace-keeping mission NATO Operation Joint Guardian. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Christina Ann Horne)**

we were joyful to help our people,” Hyseni added.

Maj. Aaron Francis, Kansas National Guard and deputy chief of Multinational Battle Group-East’s Joint Implementation Commission, said combat units here had different tasks as well during his time here during rotation 2B as an assistant operations officer for 4th battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment.

“Our posture was a lot different then. There was still a significant amount of violence going on in

Kosovo and in the ABL valley. We did a lot of illumination missions, called peace enforcement back then,” Francis said.

Life on the bases was of a higher tempo, Francis added, with constant 12-hour shifts, and over crowded living facilities.

“From my understanding, Bondsteel was the biggest deployed base at the time. We had a north, mid and south towns. We lived six captains to a room,” Francis continued.

Although KFOR’s peacekeeping

mission is now widely viewed as positive, back then many Soldiers were apprehensive about how to interact with the people.

“We really didn’t know what to expect. For the most part the Kosovars treated us like saviors, but mostly we kept our distance unlike now since we figured out how to go out and engage the populace,” Francis said.

For the next 15 years, KFOR would provide protection and stability to the region, allowing Kosovo to grow and prosper. Hyseni said that for more than a decade the key mission has remained the same.

“[KFOR] is here to provide a safe and secure environment, regardless of ethnic background,” Hyseni said.



**Early Camp Bondsteel observation post. (Courtesy photo)**

## KFOR LOOKS AHEAD TO THE FUTURE

For 15 years, Kosovo Force (KFOR) has provided peace and stability to a region that was unstable and on the brink of collapse. Now, during the 15th anniversary of Operation Joint Guardian, under the security force mandated by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244, members of Multinational Battle Group-East (MNBG-E) reflect on the changes that occurred and also look toward the future.

U.S. Army Col. Charles Hensley, MNBG-E commander, is responsible for a large area of Kosovo, and is also responsible for the northern region, an area many would consider Kosovo’s most volatile. Despite this, his outlook on Kosovo’s stability is positive.

“The conditions are very good right now in Kosovo,” Hensley said. “We’ve done a very good job of maintaining a safe and secure envi-

ronment and freedom of movement for the institutions here.”

A few members of MNBG-E were a part of the initial peacekeeping force and echo Hensley’s positive assessment of Kosovo today.

“In the past 15 years, a lot of progress was done. Back then, Kosovo Force was the police, humanitarian, government; pretty much everything. With time, the local institutions took over and KFOR’s presence reduced. That’s a sign of progress,” said Besim Hyseni, a U.S. Army translator for the Forward Command Post, and was one of KFOR’s first translators.

Maj. Aaron Francis, deputy chief of MNBG-E’s Joint Implementation Commission (JIC) added the security in Kosovo has noticeably advanced over the past 15 years.

“Kosovo and KFOR have come a long way since [1999]. A person’s first need is security. There’s no economic development or improv-

ing your surroundings if you’re in constant fear for your life. That’s the biggest change I’ve seen; the people have a chance to expand and improve on their lives,” said Francis.

Francis, a member of the Kansas National Guard, was deployed here during rotation 2B as an assistant operations officer for 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment, and added the JIC’s missions along the Administrative Boundary Line haven’t evolved in the last decade and a half.

“The JIC hasn’t changed since 1999. The Military Technical Agreement between [KFOR] and Serbia is still the same,” he said.

What has changed drastically is the overall posture and mission of KFOR.

“When you think about the beginning, we had Bradley [fighting vehicles] and tanks in [the streets] to

*Continued on next page*



help establish peace,” Hensley said. “Now, we’re more maintaining the peace so the institutions in Kosovo can develop themselves, and we’re very close to transitioning from what we are now to a different presence.”

The commander added the most jarring change has been the visible reduction of forces in the region.

“When we first came here, there were five battle groups and nearly 50,000 soldiers. Now we’re down to two battle groups and a few thousand troops,” He said. “Still, it’s a visible assurance to the people of Kosovo that NATO and KFOR are still here supporting their efforts in becoming an independent country.”

The commander also said the forces that remain in Kosovo serve as a third responder in the event of a civil disturbance. It’s a mission that KFOR has only been called to perform a few times since 1999. Regardless, the NATO forces train and certify their crowd and riot control skills regularly with events like “Silver Saber,” which was held last month.

“The value of [exercises like] Silver Saber is everybody gets to see how each other’s countries contribute to crowd and riot control. It allows us to employ something we haven’t had to do in several years,” he continued.

One the most telling signs of KFOR success, Hensley said, is the great appreciation on the part of the Kosovar people for the contributions of NATO and the U.S.

“There’s a positive feeling toward KFOR and a very positive feeling toward U.S. Soldiers. I’ve had only positive interactions with the populace. I’ve never gone anywhere and not feel welcomed in Kosovo,” he said.

The commander concluded that over the next several years, as the capabilities of the Kosovar institutions stand up, the need for KFOR’s continued presence will reduce. Hy-

seni agreed, and added this would be done as Kosovo’s infrastructure improved.

“A great deal of progress was done here with the help of NATO, European countries and the U.S. government, but eventually this help will decrease and it will be gone,” Hyse- ni said. “I think it’s going to be done with progress. As Kosovo develops, NATO will give over more responsibility back.”



Sergeant Major of the Army Robert E. Hall talks with soldiers at the chow hall on Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, on October 29, 1999. Hall stopped at Camp Able Sentry on his tour of the U.S. sector of Kosovo. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Tyler Long)

# ARE WE THERE YET? CHAPLAIN

By Chaplain (Capt.) Mark L. Hart

For those of us fortunate enough to have kids, I am sure you have heard them say “Are we there yet?” during the course of any journey to an exciting destination. The anticipation of what is to come gets the best of both kids and adults alike. That was the case June 15, 2014, as a group of 25 U.S. Soldiers ventured out to conquer the highest mountain peak in Kosovo -- Mount Ljuboten -- otherwise known as “Mount Duke.”

The gloomy day of clouds and rain would not dampen the spirits of these 25 Soldiers because they were determined to climb to the summit in hopes of getting just a glimpse of the beautiful valley below. As the ascent to the cloud-covered peak of Mount Duke continued, one false summit after another gave the group hope and excitement in their accomplishment. Yet the constant urge was always there to say “Are we there yet?”

With each summit behind the group, the sense of having conquered the 8,200-foot ascent grew with much anticipation. In just over two hours the entire team conquered what seemed to be nearly an impossible task at several points along

the way. At one point the clouds cleared away just enough to see the majestic view of our God’s creation. As quickly as it cleared, it clouded over once again, leaving the hikers with the daunting hour-long, ankle-twisting task of descending down the path they had just conquered.

This experience is a reminder to each of us that life can be like that cloud-covered mountain sometimes. Just when you think you have conquered an unobtainable obstacle, the clouds break up just enough for you to see there is another obstacle up ahead. The journey of life can be difficult at times, even as battle-hardened Soldiers. Because our focus is so clouded by the obstacle right in front of us, we lose sight of how God can use that situation to strengthen us or to help another person who may be facing a similar obstacle.

Just like these 25 Soldiers who set out to climb Mount Duke together,

no one should be left to complete their climb alone. We sometimes forget that it’s not about getting to the top of the mountain, but it’s about the experience along the way. We are made to experience life together, not remain in an isolated vacuum. The next time you are faced with an apparent unachievable obstacle, remember you don’t have to get through it on your own.

The Chaplain Corps’ foundational competencies are to nurture the living, care for the wounded and honor the fallen. If you find yourself facing a climb that seems unachievable and feel you have nowhere to turn, always know your chaplain is more than willing to come along side you and assist you along life’s journey. They are trained, willing and ready to provide unbiased pastoral care and counseling to every Soldier who has a felt need.

For God and Country!!!





# EXCELLENCE IN CAVALRY CHALLENGES PHANTOM RECON TROOPS



Sgt. Stephen Triplett, a Soldier with 2nd Squadron, 38th Cavalry Regiment and a native of New Braunfels, Texas, pulls security during the Excellence in Cavalry event at Camp Bondsteel, June 11. Soldiers had to move through the woods quietly to maintain noise discipline.

Story and photos by Sgt. Cody Barber,  
11th Public Affairs Detachment

Noise was their enemy and silence was their ally as Soldiers tested during the Excellence in Cavalry (EIC) competition held at Camp Bondsteel, which tested them on their knowledge of their cavalry occupational specialty, June 10-12.

The three-day event had Soldiers from 2nd Squadron, 38th Cavalry Regiment, running steep hills, calling for simulated artillery fire, and using camouflage to blend into the surrounding vegetation, as they tested their proficiency in cavalry scout skills.

“[The purpose is] to evaluate their [basic] skill level reconnaissance tasks and to make sure they have maintained those skills,” said 1st Sgt. Lanny McLaughlin, senior enlisted advisor for 2-38 Cav. Regt.’s

Alpha Troop. “It also measures their physical fitness, shooting capabilities and their basic cavalry knowledge.”

On the first day, Soldiers from the Phantom Recon squadron took an Army Physical Fitness Test and had to achieve the 90th percentile in each event to qualify for the EIC. They also completed a timed land navigation course and performed basic maintenance and function checks of multiple crew-served weapons.

“They were tested on the .50-Caliber and 240B machine guns, M4 rifle, 40mm grenade launcher and the long-range advanced scout surveillance system,” said McLaughlin, a Nogales, Ariz. native.

The Soldiers started the second day with a four-mile run, which they had to finish in less than 36 minutes. They also completed dismounted movement techniques, qualified at a M4 rifle range, established a heli-

copter landing zone and conducted a MEDEVAC.

For the final day of the event, Soldiers threw on a 35-pound ruck for a 12-mile march, which required completion in less than three hours. That was followed by exercises in calling for simulated artillery fire, tactical vehicle identification, establishing a listening/observation post and an EIC knowledge board.

Spc. Douglas Teed, a 2-38 Cavalry scout and a competition participant, said every event tested his knowledge and physical skills, but he was able to push through each obstacle.

“Physically it’s been challenging, and when you are physically challenged you’re a little tired, so it makes it mentally challenging as well,” said Teed.

The Owego, N.Y. native added the entire event was quite the experience, and said there was only one goal on his mind throughout the

event.

“It’s a honor to do it and to be chosen to do it. It’s great training and it’s good to get back to the roots of a scout,” said Teed. “The goal is to always succeed, that’s what we are going for.”

McLaughlin said the Excellence in Cavalry award could only be earned if a Soldier earns a ‘go’ in all assigned tasks. He also added the event is a chance for Soldiers to set themselves apart from their peers, and for senior leaders to distinguish those capable of increased leadership duties.

“By the end of the course, [most participants] will probably have a 7-10 percent ‘go’ rate. It just lets the Soldiers see if they have what it takes to excel amongst their peers,” said McLaughlin. “If they don’t succeed in getting the EIC, they know that they pushed themselves for the past three days and bettered their knowledge for next time.”

Teed couldn’t agree more.

“It’s important for me to get it because it shows leadership that



Cpl. Lawrence Wheeler, a cavalry scout with 2nd Squadron, 38th Cavalry Regiment and native of Palm Coast, Fla., checks a land navigation point to see if his bearings are correct during the Excellence in Cavalry competition at Camp Bondsteel, June 10. To receive a “go” in the event, Soldiers had to find eight of ten points during a timed land navigation course.

I’m capable of doing my duties to the standard, and it makes you look good in the eyes of your supervisors,” said Teed.

When the competition concluded, 27 Phantom Recon troops had fin-

ished their final tasks, but only two Soldiers received the coveted EIC award, proving the event’s difficulty. Teed was one of the awardees, and said even though the mission in Kosovo is peacekeeping, it is always good to stay proficient in his skills no matter what, because they are easily forgotten.

“This is our job and we have a set of skills we need to perform our job, and we need to stay sharp on them,” said Teed.



A Soldier with 2nd Squadron, 38th Cavalry Regiment, fires the M4 rifle during the Excellence in Cavalry competition at Camp Bondsteel, June 11. The three-day event had Soldiers running up and down steep hills, calling for simulated artillery fire and using camouflage face paint to blend into the surrounding vegetation to test their proficiency on cavalry scout skills.



# S.I.K.

SERVICE IN KOSOVO

# Photos



A U.S. soldier, part of a NATO peace force, places barbed wire on his Humvee during a protest in the ethnically divided town of Mitrovica, June 22, 2014. (Photo courtesy of Hazir Reka/Reuters)

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Please provide a brief description with the photo(s)



Soldiers with KFOR Multinational Battle Group-East, celebrated the U.S. Army's 239th birthday, June 14, at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo. Events at Camp Bondsteel included a traditional cake-cutting ceremony with the battle group's oldest and youngest Soldiers cutting the cake. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Carlos Burger)



A Black Hawk helicopter hovers approximately 10 feet above the ground waiting for Troopers with 2nd Squadron, 38th Cavalry Regiment, Hammer Troop, to hook up a re-supply bundle at Camp Novo Selo, June 17. Air Re-Supply is a critical element of peace support and combat operations, and expert level proficiency is only achieved during hours of darkness. (Photo by Pfc. An Nyguen)



U.S. Army Sgt. Ryan Bendall and Sgt. Vladimir Vega, Soldiers with KFOR Multinational Battle Group-East, received their United States citizenship through naturalization on Camp Bondsteel, June 12. Naturalization is the process by which U.S. citizenship is granted to a foreign citizen or national after he or she fulfills the requirements established by Congress in the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Cody Barber)



# DAY OF ORGANIZED CHAOS PROVIDES LIFESAVING KNOWLEDGE TO MNBG-E SOLDIERS

Camp Bondsteel firefighters treat and watch over the various simulated wounded personnel at a casualty collection point during a force protection exercise, June 17. Multiple entities had to work together and overcome challenges during the training.



Story and photos by Sgt. Cody Barber,  
11th Public Affairs Detachment

The day was like a Hollywood horror movie -- pouring rain, cracks of thunder, and a killer on the loose. For the security forces at Camp Bondsteel however, this wasn't a movie, but rather a challenging, simulated exercise.

Multinational Battle Group-East (MNBG-E) Soldiers participated in a camp-wide force protection training scenario, June 17. The training tested troops on their ability to react to possible security events, while working together with different agencies on the camp, such as the fire department and DynCorp security.

"The intent of the recent training event was to stress force protection systems by modifying the challenges responders must address," said U.S. Army Capt. Branson Love, MNBG-E Provost Marshall and a Clinton, Mo., native. "This exercise emphasized the lattermost option as evidenced by an increase of incidents, spatial regions affected, notional casualties and communication requirements."

The event started in the morning with a simulated car bomb detonating near the main gate and injuring numerous security guards. Shortly thereafter, shots rang out inside one of the gyms located on base, where a simulated active shooter began his rampage, causing multiple casualties.

This ultimately led to the final training event for the Kosovo Force Soldiers, which was a mass casualty exercise.

"The exercises were developed to accomplish multiple objectives [such as the] functional evaluation of a mass notification system, challenging emergency responders' tactical capabilities, and evaluating Camp Bondsteel Emergency Management synchronization," said Love.

Love functioned as the incident commander during scenarios. He assumed operational control of the incident sites, directed responders and resources, and coordinated the activities of responding agencies. He said the sheer scale of the

event was part of the test, and that all of the events were emplaced to put increased tension on the Kosovo Force responders.

"A diverse range of expertise is needed to effectively mitigate hazards that might threaten human lives and mission requirements," Love added.

At the base hospital, the influx of simulated casualties seemed to come in like a conveyor belt as patients filled up beds and hallways. Spc. Megan Woods, a combat medic with Task Force Medical and a native of Mesa, Ariz., was one of the personnel on scene treating the casualties, and said it shined new light upon her job.

"It gave me a different perspective, especially since we had the [simulated] shooter on one of the beds in the emergency room," said Woods. "It was a good learning experience."

Just as fast as the patients arrived, they were treated, and Woods attributed that to the communication between the medical personnel.

"The communication was outstanding compared to our last mass casualty exercise," said Woods. "The turnaround [of patients] was a lot faster because we knew exactly what we were doing."

One of the trainees during the event, U.S. Army Sgt. Ronunda Henley, a patrol supervisor with the Camp Bondsteel Military Police platoon and native of Birmingham, Ala., said the training was an eye-opening experience.

"This event tested my ability to perform under a stressful environment while having to maintain a level head during the unfolding of these events," said Henley. "It also tested my patrols' capability to perform tasks according to the standard operating procedures and my ability

to effectively lead patrols."

Her responsibility during the training was serving as the extra eyes and ears for Love, and she believes training is an excellent way to stay proficient in her skills.

"The skills Soldiers learn are perishable and everyone can become complacent," said Henley. "The training provides insight to areas our Soldiers should focus on to ensure they know their role."

Love said there are several limitations that prevent groups from mastering all skills required for effective emergency management. He felt the training was essential to everyone involved in the events.

"In a deployed environment, training is essential to defeat physical threats to safety and welfare and [to] honor [Soldiers'] commitments to support and defend," said Love.



Multinational Battle Group-East (MNBG-E) Soldiers load simulated patients onto a MEDEVAC helicopter during force protection training on Camp Bondsteel, June 17. The events tested troops on their ability to react to possible real-life events as well as coordinating with different agencies to work together.



# LAST LOOK

Junior officers with Multinational Battle Group-East, load a helicopter with ROTC cadets who were visiting Camp Bondsteel to experience a day-in-the-life of a Soldier, June 8. (Photo by U.S. Army Capt. Kevin Sandell)

