



# SERVICE IN KOSOVO



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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.



*Multinational Battle Group-East Soldiers finish the 100-meter swim during the German Armed Forces Badge for Military Proficiency, Aug. 4th. The swim is conducted in military uniform while wearing a physical training uniform (shorts and T-Shirt) underneath, and they must also successfully remove the outer uniform without touching the side of the pool to pass. (Photo by Sgt. Cody Barber, 11th Public Affairs Detachment)*

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# SOLDIERS, SAILORS, AIRMEN AND MULTI NATIONALS KICK OFF IMMEDIATE RESPONSE 14



Multi-National and U.S. Forces get into their respective formations for the Immediate Response 14 opening ceremony on August 17, 2014 in Postojna, Slovenia. More than 450 participants attended the ceremony, which was followed by dinner and performances from the U.S. Army Europe and Slovenian Armed Forces bands. IR 14 supports interoperability between the U.S. Army, U.S. Air Force, Slovenian and Croatian Armed Forces and partnered nations and will help prepare participants to operate successfully in a joint, multinational, interagency, integrated environment. (Sgt. 1st Class Randall Jackson, U.S. Army Europe Public Affairs)

Story by Sgt. Gregory Williams,  
353rd Civil Affairs Command

More than 450 participants including U.S. Soldiers, Airmen, and Sailors took part in the opening ceremony for Immediate Response 14 in Postojna, Slovenia, Aug. 17.

Immediate Response 14 is an exercise designed to deploy multi national forces in response to a disaster relief mission. The exercise also improves NATO interoperability between U.S. forces and participating nations to include Albania, Den-

mark, Great Britain, Montenegro, Kosovo, Croatia, Hungary, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Slovenia.

"The goal is to build relationships and training because we don't know where we're going to deploy next, but we do know that we're not going to deploy alone, said Maj. Gen. Walter E. Piatt, the deputy commanding general for U.S. Army Europe.

"If we're going to deploy together we're going to train together, but the most important objective is to get to know other Soldiers from other nations."

Participants of the exercise will be spread out in various areas of operations simultaneously between bases in Slovenia and Croatia working to develop a common understanding of multi national staff planning and procedures.

"We have to get to know each other first then deal with the difficulties of learning all the different military processes for each country later," Piatt said. "I hope the Soldiers get to meet someone from a different country and get a different perspective on challenges we face in Europe and across the world."

U.S. forces will be teaching classes, providing subject matter experts to act as observer controllers for the field training exercises, and provide support to Slovenians in running the exercise. Over the next 14 days Soldiers from the participating nations will be working together to build security assurance among NATO and allies in the region.

Maj. Gen. Dobran Bozic, chief of the general staff of the Slovenian Armed Forces said he is excited that his country is playing host to a ma-

jority of the exercise's activities and sees this exercise as a helping tool in stabilizing the region.

"We're really happy that we can host this exercise in Slovenia because we see this exercise as a bridge between the East and West," Bozic said. "It's always a great experience working with the U.S. because the U.S. brings some sort of stability in frame work and we bring some out of the box thinking, which makes our countries a good package together.

Piatt said he has seen the turmoil when countries don't communicate and work well together leading to mission failure and sees how exercises like this help make the U.S. Army stronger.

"When you come together in a crisis and you don't know one another you're not effective no matter how powerful your organization is an agency alone is not effective when it operates in an interagency operation," Piatt said. "This is absolutely critical that we do this."



Maj. Gen. Walter E. Piatt, U.S. Army Europe Deputy Commanding General, gives remarks during the Immediate Response 14 opening ceremony on August 17, 2014 in Postojna, Slovenia. More than 450 participants attended the ceremony, which was followed by dinner and performances from the U.S. Army Europe and Slovenian Armed Forces bands. The training at Immediate Response 2014 will reinforce USAREUR commitment to increasing regional flexibility, preserving and enhancing NATO interoperability, and facilitating multinational training. (Sgt. 1st Class Randall Jackson, U.S. Army Europe Public Affairs)





# PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

## Hungary

Located in Central Europe, northwest of Romania and land-locked; strategic location astride main land routes between Western Europe and Balkan Peninsula as well as between Ukraine and Mediterranean basin; the north-south flowing Duna (Danube) and Tisza Rivers divide the country into three large regions.

**President:** Janos Ader

**Independence:** 16 November 1918

**Capital:** Budapest

**Currency:** Forints

**Official language:** Hungarian

Hungarian Defense Forces: Land Forces, Hungarian Air Force. 18-25 years of age for voluntary military service; no conscription; 6-month service obligation.

Information taken from CIA Factbook



# 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.





LEGAL

## CREDIT REPORTS AND IDENTITY THEFT

# Protect Yourself!

A credit report offers vital information about your credit history. The information in your credit report serves as a reference point for financial institutions considering your creditworthiness. It also can show you if someone has stolen your identity. Although each credit reporting agency formats and reports information differently, all credit reports contain basically the same categories of information.

### Identifying information:

Your name, address, Social Security number, date of birth, and employment information are used to identify you. These factors are not used in scoring. Updates to this information come from information you supply to lenders.

### Credit accounts:

Lenders report on each account you have established with them.

- Type of account (credit card, auto loan, mortgage, etc.).
- Date you opened the account.
- Your credit limit or original loan amount.
- Account balance. Even if you pay off your credit cards in full each month, your report may show a balance on those cards (generally the total balance of your last statement).
- Your payment history. Late payments stay on your report for seven years.
- Closed accounts.

### Inquiries (requests for your credit report):

When you apply for a loan, you authorize your lender to obtain a copy of your credit report. This is how inquiries appear on your credit report. The inquiries section contains a list of everyone who accessed your credit report within the last two years.

The report you see lists both "voluntary" inquiries, spurred by your own requests for credit, and "involuntary" inquiries, such as when lenders order your report to offer you a pre-approved credit offer through the mail. Only voluntary inquiries are factored into your credit score; self-inquiries and involuntary inquiries are not.

### Public record and collection items:

Credit reporting agencies also collect public record information from state and county on debts from collection agencies. Public record information includes bankruptcies, foreclosures, lawsuits, wage attachments, liens, and judgments. Bankruptcy information stays on your report for 10 years.

### Protect Yourself:

You should check your personal credit report at least twice a year to make sure that the information is correct, and that your identity has not been stolen. If a thief takes a loan out in your name, it will show on your credit report.

Identity theft is one of the fastest-rising white collar crimes in America. It takes an identity thief mere seconds to steal your information and cause damage to your credit, but it may take you a long and frustrating repair. The sooner you discover an issue with your the better. Inaccuracies, unknown accounts, or first sign of identity theft. Checking your credit way to ensure it is accurate, and will help pro-ages of identity theft. Be proactive and check



your report at least twice a year!

### How to get your report:

You should review your credit report from the three major U.S. credit reporting agencies (Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion).

### Free credit reports:

Credit agencies charge a small fee for reports. However, you are entitled to one free credit report from each of the three major credit agencies once a year. You must order your free credit reports through [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com).

### In addition, you are entitled to a free report:

- Within 60 days of being denied credit, insurance, or employment
- Once a year if you're unemployed and plan to look for a job within 60 days
- If you're on welfare
- If your report is inaccurate because of fraud, including identity theft

### How to fix errors on your report:

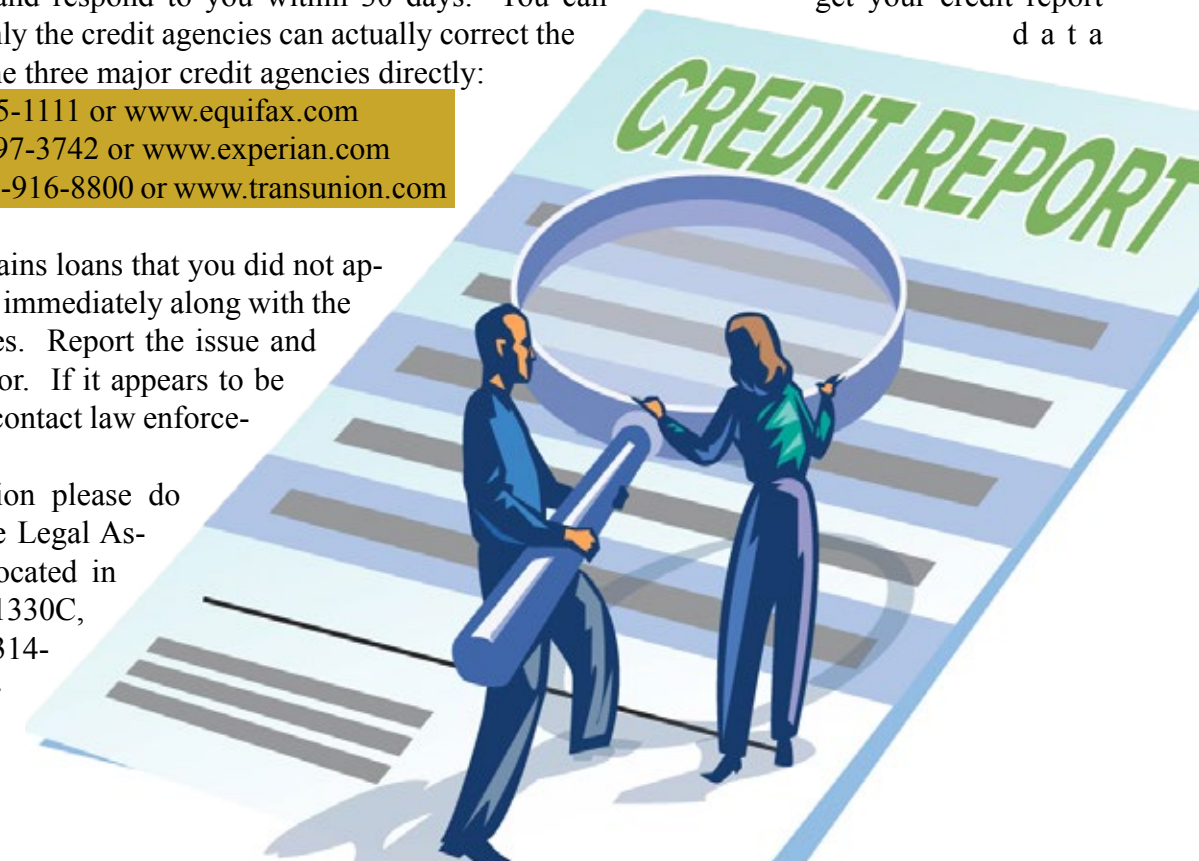
If you find an error, fill out the dispute form provided by the credit reporting agency. The credit reporting agency must investigate and respond to you within 30 days. You can get your credit report from many sources, but only the credit agencies can actually correct the on your report. Contact the three major credit agencies directly:

- Equifax: 1-800-685-1111 or [www.equifax.com](http://www.equifax.com)
- Experian: 1-888-397-3742 or [www.experian.com](http://www.experian.com)
- TransUnion: 1-800-916-8800 or [www.transunion.com](http://www.transunion.com)

### Identity Theft:

If your credit report contains loans that you did not apply for, contact that lender immediately along with the three major credit agencies. Report the issue and find out if it is just an error. If it appears to be identity theft, you should contact law enforcement.

For additional information please do not hesitate to stop by the Legal Assistance office on CBS located in Admin. Alley, Bldg. 1330C, Room 3N, or call DSN 314-781-4575 for an appointment.





# BONDSTEEL SOLDIERS TRAIN FOR EXPERT FIELD MEDICAL BADGE

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

Practice makes perfect, and for six Multinational Battle Group-East (MN-BG-E) Soldiers, they will need all the practice they can get for one of the most rigorous tests military medical professionals can endure.

MNBG-E Soldiers participated in a full-scale training event for the U.S. Army's Expert Field Medical Badge (EFMB) at Camp Bondsteel, Aug. 9-10, before heading to Grafenwoehr, Germany, to experience the real event.

The EFMB is a badge of distinction for medical personnel, and the test has a slim passing rate. Capt. Ashley Bradley, a nurse with the 61st Multifunctional Medical Battalion, 1st Medical Brigade hopes going through this training beforehand will prepare her for what lies ahead.

"This train-up before the real thing is very beneficial because it has helped me identify some of my weaknesses," Bradley said. "Some of things I thought I could just jump out there and do, but that's not the case."

On the first day, Soldiers conducted a day and night land navigation course, treated and extracted casualties from a vehicle, reacted to direct and indirect fire and called in an aerial medical evacuation.

The second day continued to test their mental and physical skills, with a written test and a full lane of simulated casualties with various injuries, each of which had to be treated and evacuated within a certain time limit.

"For a lot of the candidates it's



Sgt. Jordan Portillo, an emergency medical technician with Multinational Battle Group-East's Task Force Medical, drags a simulated casualty during a training scenario on Camp Bondsteel, Aug. 9. The training exercise was held to prepare Soldiers for the Expert Field Medical Badge event in Grafenwoehr, Germany.

their first time going through the EFMB," said Staff Sgt. Erik Serrato, a preventive medicine specialist with MNBG-E and an EFMB badge

holder. "We wanted to give them a realistic feel of how the lanes are going to be in Germany."

"The lanes were set up to EFMB



Capt. Ashley Bradley, a nurse with the 61st Multifunctional Medical Battalion, 1st Medical Brigade, treats a simulated casualty during a training exercise designed to prepare candidates for the Expert Field Medical Badge event in Grafenwoehr, Germany, Aug. 10.

standards and are to test against each task," the Santa Rosa, Texas, native added. "We wanted to test them under pressure and test their knowledge."

Bradley said it is a privilege to have an opportunity to earn the badge, and she said she can't wait to get to Germany to give it a try.

"I think the badge is a very prestigious thing to earn, especially in my field of work," said Bradley. "It's a great accomplishment to earn because it's hard."



Soldiers with Kosovo Force's Multinational Battle Group-East carry a simulated casualty to a waiting medevac helicopter during training for the Expert Field Medical Badge testing event in Grafenwoehr, Germany, Aug. 10.







Staff Sgt. Erik D. Serrato, TF Med preventive medicine noncommissioned officer conducting chlorine and PH levels of Camp Bondsteel water, Kosovo, July 22. Camp Bondsteel water treatment plant produces 1.13 million liters of water per day.

## CAMP BONDSTEEL'S WATER SAFE FOR DRINKING

Story and photos by Ardian Nrecaj,  
MNBG-E Public Affairs

With the summer temperatures rising, it's very important to stay hydrated and drink plenty of water. According to a Stars and Stripes taste test held in July 2002, the water treatment plant at Camp Bondsteel offered the best potable water in Europe, meeting the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency national primary and secondary drinking water standards.

Valdet Gashi, environmental officer for Area Support Team-Balkans

at Camp Bondsteel, makes sure the water quality meets the military's requirements and standards.

"The quality is being met," said Gashi.

The water at Camp Bondsteel comes from three wells that go up to 200 meters deep. It then gets processed through a water treatment process and shows up at our water fountains for drinking and bathrooms for personal hygiene use. Gashi said the water that comes out of faucets goes through three different processes at the water plant.

The first process is removing the

hardness of the water by lowering the presence of calcium down to 34.2 milligrams per liter. It then goes through granulated activated carbon, which is called filtration, and it removes the heavy smell and taste of water and kills bacteria.

Lastly chlorine is added for disinfection. Based on military requirements, 1.2 milligrams per liter is added to the water. Disinfection is a water treatment process that kills pathogenic (disease-producing) organisms.

"We make sure that the procedures are followed at the water plant, that

the water is being tested, chlorinated and that it is going through filters, while making sure that filters are maintained based on standard operating procedures," said Gashi.

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Erik Serrato, a preventive medicine noncommissioned officer with Multinational Battle Group-East's Task Force Medical, explained that they do random monthly tests of water in five different sites of water points at Camp Bondsteel.

"We get water samples and do bacterial analysis at the laboratory, where we test it for E. coli and for bacterial growth, and we also check the chlorine and PH levels of the

water," said Serrato.

"We do tests on four big water tanks and then we pick a site somewhere on camp and get it from one of the buildings. Every test that we have done so far, there were no issues and it has always been negative on bacteria analysis," continued Serrato.

By the military standard, the minimum chlorine level should be 1.0 and the highest allowed 5.0.

"The reading of chlorine today was at 2.0, so it's good," added Serrato, who emphasized that the water at Camp Bondsteel is safe for drinking.

"I drink the water from the water

fountains," said Serrato.

The water treatment plant produces over 1 million liters of water per day, but we must do our part and start saving the water, said Gashi. Water is a natural source and it has an end to it, so we should start saving it for tomorrow.

"Make sure do not waste water, when you are brushing your teeth turn that tap off, when you take a shower reduce the duration of the shower," added Gashi.

Valdet Gashi, environmental officer for Area Support Team Balkans during an inspection of the water treatment plant at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo. Camp Bondsteel water treatment plant produces 1.13 million liters of water per day.





# MNBG-EAST SOLDIERS STRIVE TO EARN FOREIGN BADGE



Multinational Battle Group-East soldiers take aim during the marksmanship event of the German Armed Forces Badge for Military Proficiency, Aug. 4. Soldiers competed for a chance to earn a bronze, silver or gold badge.

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

Approximately 90 Multinational Battle Group-East (MNBG-E) Soldiers participated in the German Armed Forces Badge for Military Proficiency (GAFBMP) testing event in Kosovo, Aug. 2-6. The GAFBMP, or the “Das Abzeichen für Leistungen im Truppendienst” in German, is a decoration of the Bundeswehr, the armed forces of the Federal Republic of Germany, and U.S. service members are allowed to wear the badge on their dress uniforms. To achieve the badge, which can be earned at bronze, silver or gold levels, Soldiers were tested physi-

cally and mentally through various events such as first aid, pistol marksmanship and a basic fitness test. During the fitness test Soldiers had to conduct a 10-meter sprint 11 times, a flexed arm hang, 1,000 meter sprint, a 7-mile foot march carrying 33 pounds and a 100-meter swim wearing military fatigues. For one participant, the 100-meter swim was the most challenging hurdle. “The physical fitness tests were difficult and challenging and I was surprised by how heavy the uniform was when doing the swim test,” said Capt. Allen Jones, judge advocate with Multinational Battle Group-East. “I was not sure if I was going

to survive the swim.” Jones did survive the swim and was able to achieve a gold badge at the end of the events, but he credits it not only to his abilities but also to the atmosphere, as everyone cheered for one another. “It was exciting as everyone was trying to preform their best and we cheered each other on,” said the native of Liberty, Mo. “It was gratifying to applaud and encourage our fellow Soldiers.” For Maj. Christian Risse, German army liaison officer for MNBG-E, it was great to see the Soldiers giving it their all throughout the event. “It’s really fantastic when you see the look in the Soldiers’ faces fighting for this badge,” said Risse. “It

really showed that they wanted the badge.” Events like the GAFBMP are a great way to strengthen bonds with foreign counterparts, said Jones. He thoroughly enjoyed getting to know some of the German soldiers. “It provides an opportunity for us to get to know soldiers from throughout partner nations, and to learn about their cultures,” said Jones. “I now have a greater appreciation for German soldiers and a high respect for the GAFBMP.”

Sgt. Joshua Babcock, a food service manager with Multinational Battle Group-East, receives the GAFBMP from a German army soldier that he earned during testing, Aug. 2-6. The GAFBMP is a prestigious and rigorous badge through the German army that U.S. service members are eligible to earn and wear.



Capt. Allen Jones (front), judge advocate for Multinational Battle Group-East, competes in the 10-meter shuttle sprint event during testing for the German Armed Forces Badge for Military Proficiency, Aug. 7. As part of the event, each participant had to lie on a mat with their arms at their side before getting back up and running 10-meters.







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# CHAPLAIN

## DEPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

Commentary by Pfc. Zachary Martin,  
2-38 Cavalry Squadron Chaplain Assistant

My name is Pfc. Zachary Martin and I am a Chaplain Assistant in the US Army. I enlisted on April 29, 2013, and attended Basic Training and AIT in Fort Jackson, S.C, and my first duty station was Fort Hood, Texas. After being stationed there for four months, I deployed to Kosovo conducting peacekeeping operations and assisting in promoting economic and social stability to the region.

This being my first deployment, I have done my best to learn as quickly as possible and become as proficient a Soldier and member of the Unit Ministry Team as possible.

During this deployment there have been many unique and unexpected challenges. Preparation and training are necessary to prepare yourself as best as possible, but you will invariably find yourself in situations that require improvisation and originality. During our third month of this deployment, my chaplain, Chaplain (Capt.) Young Jung, was asked by one of our Soldiers if he could be baptized.

Due to the limited resources and available space to perform the baptism, Chaplain Jung and I were short on time and ideas. We needed something that could fit a Soldier, be transportable, and not require any other space above or below ground. The answer to our dilemma was also the beginning of an original ministry idea that both Chaplain Jung and I will be able to use for the rest of our careers -- a Tuff Box bap-



tism. This unique experience taught me that most times, the situations you are the least prepared for result in the most rewarding success. Never fear what is new. Never avoid the unknown. We limit our ability to improve and grow when we avoid challenges. Every situation, whether large or small, is an opportunity to learn something new. Put your

trust in your God to provide the solution to every problem and He will never fail you.

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” -Philippians 4: 6-7



# KANSAS TAG VISITS NATIONAL GUARD SOLDIERS IN KFOR

Story and photos by Ardian Nrecaj,  
MNBG-E Public Affairs

**K**ansas Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, recently visited Kosovo where he met with Kansas National Guard Soldiers and Armenian army Soldiers serving in Kosovo Force, a NATO led peacekeeping operation.

Kansas has a state for partnership agreement with Armenia; the agreement was signed more than 10 years ago.

Tafanelli meet with Kansas National Guard Soldiers to check on their welfare and to see if they are any issues that he needs to address when he returns to Kansas.

Tafanelli toured the Soldier's work areas and spent time talking with each of them, before having supper with the group that night where he answered questions that Soldiers had on the future of the Army and the National Guard in Kansas.

"Kansas Soldiers have been deploying for nearly 20 years," said Tafanelli.

"It was in 1996 when our first group came to the Balkans to serve in Bosnia, and here we are, 18 years later, in Kosovo—still keeping a stable and safe environment for the peoples of the Balkans," added Tafanelli.

Tafanelli pointed out that with all the deployments in the Balkans, Africa, Central America and the Middle East; they are having a 'cumulative effect' on the Soldiers and their families.

"Some of these Soldiers have been to Kosovo several times. This on top of deployments to other spots of the globe has put a strain on families and we are working with Sol-



Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, the Adjutant General of Kansas, holds an Armenian sword that was presented to him as a gift by Cpt. Gevorg Sayadyan Armenian contingent Commander at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, July 24. Kansas has state partnership program agreement with republic of Armenia and Kansas National Guard Troops are currently serving together with Armenian army in Kosovo Force, a NATO led peacekeeping mission.

diers and their families to help them get through these tough times," said Tafanelli.

As part of his visit to Kosovo Tafanelli meet with Armenian army Soldiers, since Kansas has state partnership program agreement

with republic of Armenia to see how the Kansas National Guard Troops are currently serving together with Armenian army in the KFOR.

"It is my personal pride and satisfaction to be able to come here and see some outstanding soldiers from

Armenia working alongside not only the US personnel but all other countries," said Tafanelli.

Tafanelli explained that through this more than decade long partnership they have learned from each other.

"It really has been a learning experience for both and we are really excited about our future engagements and opportunities to work with the Republic of Armenia," added Tafanelli. "The importance of what we do on KFOR missions, or exercises we do with our international partners—these will all play a continued important part of what we as the Kansas National Guard does.

Tafanelli explained that he is excited for the opportunity that Kansas troops have to work with Armenian army in KFOR mission. "The task forces throughout the world are decreasing and the National Guard is picking up the relationships that have been built over time. It's im-

portant to grow that relationship as the National Guard will have a more prominent role in world issues in the future."

"It really gives me great feeling for the partnership program," continued Tafanelli.

Armenian army has platoon sized contingent with around 30 soldiers serving in KFOR.

1Lt. Hunanyan Tigran Armenian National Contingent Liaison Officer with Multinational Battle Group East said that they are honored with the visit.

"When you see that we are being accounted for makes us feel we have to be more responsible when we are conducting our mission," said Tigran.

Tigran explained that part of their every day duties is conducting patrols along the Administrative Boundary Line with Serbia.

"We do joint and synchronized patrols with Serbian Armed Forces

and when we are on the base here at Camp Bondsteel we are ready to react as a quick reaction force," added Tigran.

According to National Guard web page the state for partnership program evolved from a 1991 U.S. European Command decision to set up the Joint Contact Team Program in the Baltic Region with Reserve component Soldiers and Airmen. A subsequent National Guard Bureau proposal paired U.S. states with three nations emerging from the former Soviet Bloc and the program was born, becoming a key U.S. security cooperation tool, facilitating cooperation across all aspects of international civil-military affairs and encouraging people-to-people ties at the state level.

The State Partnership Program has been successfully building relationships for over 20 years that includes 68 unique security partnerships involving 74 nations around the globe.



Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli the Adjutant General of Kansas (center right) and Kansas State Command Sgt. Maj. Scott Haworth (center left) takes some time out of the night's supper and discussion with Kansas Army National Soldiers for a photo.



# S.I.K.

SERVICE IN KOSOVO

# Photos



LT COL. JOHN COGBILL, COMMANDER OF 2-38 CAVALRY SQUADRON AND MNBG-E'S FORWARD COMMAND POST, GIVES A BRIEFING TO SOLDIERS ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THE "PEACE PARK" IN MITROVICA, KOSOVO. (PHOTO BY PFC. DENWILL CARINO, 268TH BRIGADE SIGNAL COMPANY)

Like taking photos? Want to see them in this magazine?

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***[mnbgeast@gmail.com](mailto:mnbgeast@gmail.com)***

Please provide a brief description with the photo(s)



SOLDIERS WITH KFOR MULTINATIONAL BATTLE GROUP-EAST, ALONG WITH THE KOSOVO POLICE AND INSTITUTIONS IN KOSOVO, SECURED AND PARTICIPATED IN THE PILGRIMAGE TO THE BLACK MADONNA CHURCH IN EASTERN LETNICA, AUG. 15. (PHOTO BY U.S. ARMY CAPT. KEVIN SAND-ELL, 11TH PUBLIC AFFAIRS DETACHMENT)



ADMIRAL MARK FERGUSON, THE NEW COMMANDER OF JFC NAPLES -- THE ALLIED JOINT FORCE COMMAND IN NAPLES, ITALY -- VISITED WITH KFOR MULTINATIONAL BATTLE GROUP-EAST SOLDIERS AT THE FORWARD COMMAND POST, AUG. 21. JFC NAPLES IS THE NEXT HIGHER HEADQUARTERS OVER KOSOVO FORCE. (COURTESY PHOTO)



MORE THAN 30 KFOR MULTINATIONAL BATTLE GROUP-EAST SOLDIERS GRADUATED FROM THE WARRIOR LEADERS COURSE, AUG. 2. THE COURSE WAS LEAD BY THE 7TH ARMY NCO ACADEMY FROM GRAFENWOEHR, GERMANY. (PHOTO BY U.S. ARMY SGT. 1ST CLASS CARLOS BURGER, 11TH PUBLIC AFFAIRS DETACHMENT)



# IMMEDIATE RESPONSE 14 KICKS OFF WITH TEAM BUILDING EXERCISES

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Opal Vaughn

Paratroopers from the 173rd Airborne Brigade and their allies from various European nations conducted a physical-fitness competition here in order to promote camaraderie with the start of combined exercise Immediate Response 14 on Aug. 19, 2014.

Immediate Response 14 is an exercise designed to deploy multinational forces in response to a disaster relief mission. The exercise also improves North Atlantic Treaty Organization interoperability between U.S. forces and participating nations to include Albania, Denmark, the United Kingdom, Montenegro, Kosovo, Croatia, Hungary, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Slovenia. This year, there are over 450 participants in the exercise.

"Ten partnered

forces are represented here and they all came together as a team in the last 48 hours," stated U.S. Army Lt. Col. Michael T. Ripley, commander of the 173rd's Brigade Special Troops Battalion. "The intent is for all of us to compete as a multi-national team and then the team that wins, gets to lead the run back."

Paratroopers from the 173rd Airborne represent the bulk of U.S. forces participating in the exercise. The 173rd is the Army Contingency Response Force in Europe, and is capable of projecting forces to conduct the full of range of military operations across the United States European, Central and Africa Commands areas of responsibility.

Immediate Response 14 is not just a training exercise, it's also about continually forging new bonds between allies whose nations have deployed and trained together in Europe and around the world.

"[This competition] was good for team building and multi-partnering," said U.S. Army Sgt. First Class Gene Williams from 173rd acting as brigade operations non-commissioned officer for the exercise. "I enjoyed the opportunity for all of us to get together for friendly competition against each other."

Each physical fitness exercise was devised to bring each team together and push them to the limits. Some of the exercises tested re-



Multi-national and United States forces flip tires as part of a physical-fitness competition during exercise Immediate Response 14 on Aug. 19, 2014 in Postojna, Slovenia. More than 450 participants from militaries across Europe are conducting the exercise focusing on preparing for disaster-relief situations.

siliency and others were designed for pure strength.

"So far we've done a tire flips prints, log race and we've got press-ups still to come," said British Army Capt. Jack Pullinger, Light Dragoon Reconnaissance Regiment, British Army.

Building camaraderie is the first step in training as one, stated Ripley. Over the next two weeks Soldiers from the participating nations will continue to work together to build security assurance among NATO allies and partners in the region.

Exercises such as IR14 provide vital opportunities not only for multiple U.S. services to train as we fight, but also include integrated, total force training to ensure our national armed forces are interoperable and prepared to maintain regional security and stability, stated Ripley.



Capt. Brian Williams, 173rd Airborne Brigade, leads a log run as part of a physical-fitness competition during exercise Immediate Response 14, on Aug. 19, 2014, in Postojna, Slovenia. More than 450 participants from militaries across Europe are conducting the exercise focusing on preparing for disaster-relief situations.



Multi-national and United States forces carry a log as part of a physical-fitness competition during exercise Immediate Response 14, on Aug. 19, 2014, in Postojna, Slovenia. More than 450 participants from militaries across Europe are conducting the exercise focusing on preparing for disaster-relief situations.



# LAST LOOK

Multinational soldiers from several countries in KFOR Multinational Battle Group-East, practiced sling load techniques with German, Italian, and Moldovan soldiers during training at Camp Novo Selo, August 11. Sling load operations are used to transport vehicles, containers, etc., via a helicopter to wherever the mission requires. (Courtesy photo)

