

1st Armored Division

IRONSIDE

America's Tank Division



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Iron Brigade

KOSOVO

2001



1st Armored Division's Iron Brigade in KOSOVO



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1st Armored Division soldiers and Gen. (Ret.) Frederick Franks, former 1AD commander, survey the Serbian valley of Presevo from Checkpoint Sapper in Kosovo.

Cover: Troopers from 3rd Platoon, Co. C, 2-6 IN, patrol the Mucibaba region of Kosovo near Outpost Terminator during the afternoon of Feb. 12. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Michael Pintagro, 13th Public Affairs Detachment) Design by Kerri Schools. **Back Cover:** Design by 1st Armored Division PAO Graphic Artist, Kerri Schools.

Iron Soldiers!
February was another busy month in Ironland. For starters, we celebrated African-American history. Those of you who attended the lecture series will agree that each speaker provided powerful insights into the civil rights progress in our country. Thanks to all the folks that made this a success both here and in Kosovo.

Welcome back to the 1st Brigade Combat Team and congratulations again on a job well done in Kosovo! I hope that each returning soldier enjoyed the much-needed and well-deserved time to get reacquainted with your families. The 2nd Brigade Combat Team now picks up the torch and continues the excellence established by the Ready First Brigade. Once again, Iron soldiers continue to ensure peace and stability in this region.

We continue to plan for the division headquarters move to its new location in Wiesbaden. As we relocate the division headquarters, it is my priority to ensure as little turbulence to families as possible. We do this by developing a well-synchronized plan; establishing an effective preparation tracking system; maintaining a pro-active command and public information program and establishing feedback mechanisms to stay abreast of your concerns. I invite each of you to read the 1AD website, "Herald Union" and the "Ironside" magazine to keep up with the latest re-stationing news. I have instructed commanders at all levels to capture



Maj. Gen. George W. Casey, Jr.

and maintain the small-unit leadership that worked so well during the deployment. We can accomplish this by refocusing our Iron Sergeants' Time training on Thursday mornings. As Command Sgt. Maj. Preston and I go around observing Iron Sergeants' Time, it is impressive to see how well our junior leaders are training their soldiers.

Here, in central region, we are preparing for the Division "Warfighter" exercise. We just finished a Battle Command Training Program seminar where we hosted Gen. (Ret.) Frederick Franks, a former Iron soldier. Gen. (Ret.) Franks, the former VII Corps and 1AD commander, took the opportunity to visit Iron soldiers performing their duties here in central region and in

Kosovo. As with any former commander, he was extremely proud of your accomplishments.

Old Ironsides, with other former VII Corps units, also celebrated the tenth anniversary of Desert Storm/Thunder. Old Ironsides has a rich history and the Desert Storm/Thunder battle streamer serves as a tribute to the great Iron soldiers who helped defeat Iraqi aggression; this was truly one of history's greatest military feats.

I am proud of your accomplishments, both here and in Kosovo. Continue to take care of each other and get better every day!

Iron Soldiers!
Dignity and Respect!

Shake, rattle, roll: 4-27 FA rocks Gnjilane

Story and photos by
Sgt. Thorin Sprandel
Task Force Falcon PAO

CAMP MONTEITH, Kosovo—Thunderous 155mm guns interrupted the night sky and rained down illumination rounds miles away during a live fire exercise, Jan. 2. The mission was a display of Kosovo Forces firepower and cooperation between U.S. and Russian soldiers.

Outside Gjilan/Gnjilane, cannon crews from 1st Platoon, Battery

C, 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment, Baumholder, Germany, fired the M-109A6 Paladin's 155mm guns. Each one of about 20 rounds exploded out of the barrel with a yellow ball of fire and a concussion that shook the ground.

The rounds illuminated the sky above U.S. and Russian soldiers working together at Observation Post Gun-

ner and Checkpoint 75. The operation took place after a week of reported fighting between Serb and Albanian forces just east of the checkpoint in the Ground Safety Zone. In a separate incident, suspected UCPMB forces engaged a joint U.S. and Russian patrol Dec. 17.

It took more than 60 seconds for the illumination rounds to reach



Pfc. Chris Aguilar, cannon crew member, 4-27 FA, secures illumination rounds inside an M-109A6 Paladin.

their target and light up the sky about 10 kilometers downrange, said Sgt. 1st Class Lawrence Maynard, platoon sergeant.

Each of the rounds, which were continuously fired, was propelled by about 40 pounds of gun powder, he said.

Four-man Paladin crews worked together to harness the power of the machine and direct it as needed. The Paladin chief uses the Automatic Fire Control

System to command the gun, said Staff Sgt. Charles Burden, Paladin chief.

The AFCS helps the chief communicate, track the Paladin's position on the earth and identify friendly positions as well as potential targets.

"Everyone knows their role and that we have to work together to get the job done," said Spc. Kevin Cassidy, Paladin driver.

While the unit had an earlier live fire scratched, this mission went off without a hitch for the Paladin crews.

"This mission shows we have a job here and we're ready to do it," said Sgt. Carlos Colon, Paladin gunner.

"The high-intensity training environment at Baumholder has prepared our soldiers to complete any

mission," said Capt. Thomas C. Hawn, battery commander, Battery C, 4-27 FA.

"Soldiers are motivated when they have a purpose," he said. "We're here to do our part to encourage peace in the region," he added.

"Everyone knows their roles and that we have to work together to get the job done."

Spc. Kevin Cassidy,
Paladin driver, 4-27 FA





“Well, I rope (rodeo) in my spare time. The MWR has many things for the soldiers to do – mine would be singing (karaoke).”

Pfc. Nathan P. Anderson,
Co. A, 2-6 IN,
Camp Monteith, Kosovo



“I participate with the the (local) kids at Champion Karate.”

Sgt. 1st Class Michael Dawes,
Headquarters and Headquarters
Co., 2-6 IN,
Camp Monteith, Kosovo

Man on the street

What
are you
doing
to pass
your
off-duty
time
while
deployed
?

IRONSIDE



“I go to the gym, (take) correspondence courses and help my soldiers with the promotion and soldier of the month boards.”

Sgt. Billy J. Cuellar,
Co. A, 1-6 IN,
Camp Able Sentry, Macedonia



“I enjoy a little rest and relaxation, and extra PT.”

Pfc. Joshua Dindore,
Co. A, 1-6 IN,
Camp Able Sentry, Macedonia

Partners in peace

IRON SOLDIERS,
KFOR ALLIES
PRESERVE
BALANCED BALKANS
TRUCE



Soldiers from Company C, 2-6 IN ponder noises in the distance the afternoon of Feb. 12 during a patrol of the Mucibaba region of Kosovo near Outpost Terminator.

Story and photos by
Staff Sgt. Michael Pintagro
13th Public Affairs Detachment

CAMP MONTEITH, Kosovo — Checkpoint 75, located some four kilometers west of the Yugoslav border, separates the predominantly ethnic Albanian Presevo Valley from Serb territory to the east.

A compact car of eastern European make on route to Kosovo approaches the checkpoint. Armed soldiers halt the vehicle.

While a private first class from the 1st Armored Division examines the driver's passport, a private from the 13th Russian Tactical Group inspects the vehicle and its contents.

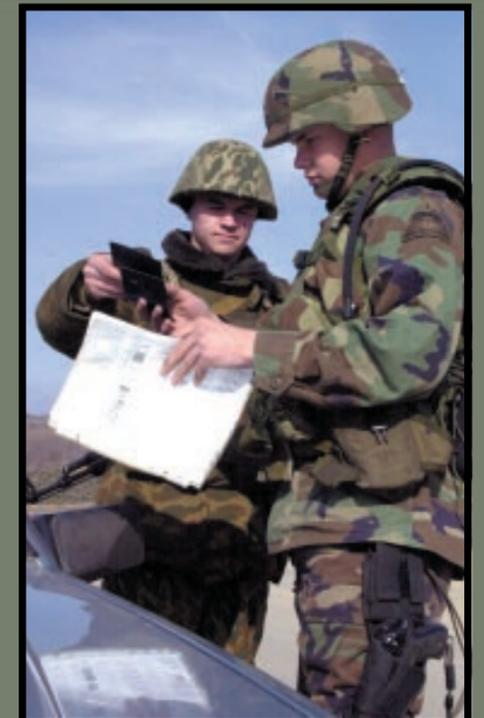
Thus passes a routine spectacle virtually unthinkable as recently as last year: Russian and American soldiers jointly operating a checkpoint designed to minimize weapons transport along Kosovar borders and hence help preserve Balkans peace.

Vehicles and foot-travelers approaching Checkpoint 75 pass only after receiving a thorough inspection of their automobiles, trucks or wagons, cargo, identification documents, and other appropriate credentials.

“We're providing an overall sense of safety and security in this region and Kosovo as a whole,” 1st Lt. John Mini, the leader of 2nd Platoon, Company A, 1-35th Armor Regiment, 1st Armored Division, said of his mission.

“The job is like that of any other soldier here,” added Sgt. Christopher West, a tank gunner from Leesville, La., who serves in Mini's platoon. “Provide security, ensure a safe and secure environment.”

According to Mini, soldiers manning Checkpoint 75 “screen people going from Serbia to Kosovo or Kosovo to Serbia; we check IDs, screen to see if anyone trying to pass is wanted.”



Pfc. Ben Dojaquez of Company A, 1-35 AR and Pvt. Ramil Mangurov of the 13th Russian Tactical Group inspect a traveler's credentials the morning of Feb. 12 at Checkpoint 75, Kosovo.



Ramadan Zymberi, a 62-year-old ethnic Albanian farmer from the Mucibaba region of Kosovo, shares a laugh with patrolling troopers from Company C, 2-6 IN.

Leaders and soldiers alike understand the stakes: the road Mini's platoon guards runs through the heart of vulnerable border communities. Minimizing the flow of contraband along the road may well reduce bloodshed in this war-torn region.

"It's a major route in and out of the Presevo Valley," Mini said. "We've basically shut down all weapons and contraband going through there. If the checkpoints weren't here, I think it would be worse."

"Traffic varies quite a bit," added the 24-year-old native of Redding, Calif. "It can be anything from hundreds of cars to just a few depending on the day."

Joint missions such as guard duty at Checkpoint 75 accomplish intangible objectives as well as physical tasks.

The presence of American and Russian guards reinforces the perception of Kosovo Force neutrality and enhances the credibility of peacekeeping operations. Serbs' historic ties to



Pfc. Ben Dojaquez of Co. A, 1-35 AR, and Pvt. Ramil Mangurov of the 13th Russian Tactical Group verify a traveler's credentials Feb. 12 at Checkpoint 75, Kosovo.

Russia and Kosovar Albanians' rapport with NATO countries leave both sides with a traditional ally serving as honest broker.

"Throughout Kosovo Americans are known for impartiality," Mini said. "It may be good for the Albanians, seeing us working together."

Joint cooperation also bodes well for relations between the former

Cold War rivals. Soldiers collaborating at Checkpoint 75 enjoy extremely cordial relations.

Few lower-enlisted Russian soldiers speak English fluently, and still fewer American soldiers understand a lick of Russian. But most Russian leaders speak at least a bit of English, and soldiers often struggle past the language barrier with mutual second-tongues such as German, gestures, tones, symbols and good will.

"We talk with them, usually about the different experiences they've had in the military," Mini said. "Our soldiers want to know what kind of training they've done. They talk about where they're from, make climate comparisons, things like that."

"Sometimes we'll trade unit patches or something like that," he continued. "They'll try to trade a 'mag light' for a Russian babushka."

According to U.S. troops, the highly sought babushkas – round fur-lined hats worn by Russians during cold weather – cost at least "a pair of boots or a 'mag light.'"

American leaders and troopers cultivate a good rapport with their Russian counterparts and often demonstrate a keen understanding of the opportunities before them.

"I think all my soldiers grew up at least during the end of the Cold War," Mini said. "I don't think any of us expected to be working side by side with Russians at a checkpoint at Kosovo. There's been no hostility between us and the Russians or anything."

"Ten to 15 years ago, you wouldn't think we'd be doing this," West agreed. "But we need to move on with the future ..."

Checkpoint 65, known by American soldiers in Kosovo as Outpost Terminator, lies just west of the Ground Security Zone in the hills of the Mucibaba region of Kosovo.

Often the only functional checkpoint in the American sector, "Terminator" attracted a booming business last winter.

"We were averaging around 1,000 vehicles per day until the

Gnjilane."

An influx of refugees greeted newly arrived 1AD troops last December. "When we first got here we had a big influx of (internally displaced persons), but we haven't seen any in a real long time, so maybe that's a good sign," Leibert said. Third Platoon troops understand their role in a larger enterprise.

"We have the same mission as

everyone here in Task Force Falcon: providing a safe and secure environment for all ethnicities," Leibert said.

"Our mission is stability in the region; stability on the boundary itself," added Sgt. 1st Class Donald Land, the 3rd Platoon sergeant.

Yet the soldiers manning Outpost Terminator take pride in accepting and accomplishing an especially rigorous guard mission.

Unlike soldiers who conduct duty at other checkpoints, who typically work 24-hour or one-week shifts,

"I'm happy the KFOR people are here. Now I don't have to be afraid anymore."

Ramadan Zymberi, Albanian farmer

weather turned bad; we've been averaging around half that since the weather got bad," said 1st Lt. Tony Leibert, leader of 3rd Platoon, Co. C, 2-6 Inf. Rgt.

According to Leibert, between 40,000 people and 80,000 people passed through Checkpoint 65 since his platoon arrived Dec. 3.

Checkpoints exist to deter traffic in contraband, but travelers through the busy mountain pass consist "mostly (of) Albanians living within the safety zone wanting to go to work in



Soldiers from , Co. C, 2-6 IN, ponder noises in the distance the afternoon of Feb. 12 during a patrol of the Mucibaba region of Kosovo near "Outpost Terminator."

troopers manning Outpost Terminator remain at their post throughout their six-month tour of Kosovo. Due to local topography and altitude, soldiers guarding Checkpoint 65 also labor in substantially colder temperatures.

Third platoon soldiers point to significant differences in the mission.

"We get direct contact with rural people rather than Gnjilane urbanites," Leibert said. "Their biggest concern is eating.

"We also see Albanians and Serbs interacting every day," added the 23-year-old Houston native. "We don't necessarily see the political activists rioting in Belgrade. We see people coming up to us and saying they're hungry."

"The amount of traffic we get," Land said of the unique challenges his platoon faced. "Due to market days, we have heavy traffic. Keeping the lines moving can be a challenge. People tend to get anxious when they have to wait in line a long time."

According to guard leaders, 3rd Platoon soldiers responded well to the challenges posed by climate and isolation as well as mission.

"They're doing great," Land said. "When they first got here they were a little unsure. But now they've (gotten) into the groove and they're doing great."

"I think it's the most challenging job in Task Force Falcon," Leibert said of his platoon's mission. "So, we're proud to do it."

During daily patrols of the Mucibaba region, 3rd Platoon soldiers frequently encounter villagers and their farm animals.

"It's a different dynamic here," Leibert said. "We can sit down 500 meters from here and drink coffee with someone, and at the same time hear high-caliber gunfire."

"I'm happy the KFOR people are here," said Ramadan Zymberi, a 62-year-old ethnic Albanian farmer who



Pfc. Dustin Drury of Co. C, 2-6 IN, radios for instructions during a patrol of the Mucibaba region of Kosovo near Outpost Terminator.

lives in a small village adjacent to Outpost Terminator. "Now I'm not afraid any more."

Zymberi, along with his wife and 11 children, fled with most ethnic Albanians into northern Macedonia during the war, returning to Kosovo only after the restoration of order.

Zymberi's village, home to between 300 and 400 people before the war, now contains only 96.

While 3rd Platoon guards rural approaches to Checkpoint 65, other troops monitor the streets of Gnjilane, the small city near which NATO forces constructed Camp Monteith.

Denizens of the overwhelmingly ethnic Albanian city do not always welcome visiting Serbs with open arms.

Yet Serbs often journey to Gnjilane in order to visit graves of family members, shop, sell produce or seek medical attention.

On "Serb shopping days," NATO-escorted shuttle buses deliver rural passengers to an Orthodox Church located in the heart of Gnjilane. Serbs exit the buses, conduct any necessary business and re-board shuttles for the drive home. Guards maintain order and seek to prevent, typically through their mere presence, any violent outbreaks.

"We're making sure the Serbs can shop without any hassle," said Spc. Jaine Fisher, an engineer serving as a checkpoint leader. "If we see any problems, we separate them and send them on their way."

According to the Oceanside 8, Calif., native, shifts span the hours of high activity during "Serb

shopping days." Soldiers stand guard at main checkpoints and troops receive briefings on their duties from guard leaders and assistance, if necessary, from Kosovo police.

American guards, typically popular among ethnically Albanians, often win the hearts of Serbs as well.

"I am very satisfied," Savic Gubica, a Serbian woman from the nearby town of Pones, said through an interpreter. "They took very good care of me. I still remember the (medic) who helped me."

After Gubica suffered a gunshot wound during an encounter with ethnic Albanians, an American medical crew transported her to Camp Bondsteel by helicopter for treatment. She fully recovered and emerged from the ordeal a fan of U.S. military personnel.



Troopers from Co. C, 2-6 IN, patrol the rolling hills of the Mucibaba region of Kosovo near Outpost Terminator.

1AD soldiers delve into teaching children mine awareness

Story and photos by
Staff Sgt. Christopher Swartz
Camp Bondsteel PAO



Sgt. Kenneth J. Stewart, tank gunner, Co. A, 1-35 AR, uses a mouse trap as a prop to demonstrate for the "children" where they can be located and how they can be set off.

CAMP BONDSTEEL, Kosovo—"I walked into the first sergeant's office to talk to him about something and he was on the phone talking to someone. In the middle of the conversation he said, 'I have just the man for the job.' and the next thing I know I'm at Camp Bondsteel learning how to teach mine awareness to children," said Sgt. Brent J. Eichelberg, armor crewman, Com-

pany B, 1st Battalion, 35th Armored Regiment.

The Swedish Mine Awareness Training Team, Swedish, British and Polish forces from Multinational Brigade (Central) and United States forces from Multinational Brigade-East met to learn how to teach mine awareness to kids using a program developed by the UN and UNMIK

(United Nations Mission in Kosovo).

The purpose of the mine awareness training we received is to teach us how to teach school children about

"I think this is a better way of informing the people of Kosovo about the danger of mines..."

Sgt. Brent J. Eichelberg,
1-35 AR

mine awareness; how to be aware of mines, what they look like, what can happen if they come across a mine and what to do if they do see one, Eichelberg explained. The Swedish mine awareness team is teaching the class because they are the only one qualified to teach children now.

Kosovo Forces use soldiers to conduct this training because children tend to look up to them and listen to what they have to say, said Capt. Roger Pattersson, instructor, Swedish Mine Awareness Training Team.

The first-day participants

awareness

learned mine awareness classes that would be given to adults to familiarize themselves with the material. Then they learned how to take that information and turn it into a class that children can understand and pay attention.

"The difference between teaching children and adults is that children can't sit down and listen to someone lecture for 40 minutes, so we try to teach other soldiers how to use games and visual aids when teaching kids," Pattersson said.

The soldier teaching the school children can't use real mines or grenades as a prop, because the children see that and wonder why it is safe for the soldier to touch it but not them, added Sgt. Robert Moy, mine advisor, 2nd Battalion, 6th



Using visual aids that children can relate to, Sgt. Brent Eichelberg, armor crewman, Co. B, 1-35 AR, rehearses teaching a mine awareness class to soldiers posing as the school children, during recent multinational mine awareness training. Sgt. John S. Puddy, tank gunner, Co. C, 1-35 AR, serves as the interpreter for the training.

Engineer Regiment, United Kingdom.

On the second day, soldiers in the

class had the opportunity to use all of the training they received and turn it into a class while other members of the class pretended to be children in one of the local Kosovar villages.

"Putting the students up in front of the other students to teach, gives them an opportunity to feel what it will be like up in front of a classroom of kids," said Lance Cpl. Alan Lee, British mine awareness training team. "Everyone evaluates each other, so we learn what we could possibly do better when the time comes that we actually have to teach the class to children."

On day three, soldiers wrapped up the classes with a quick after action review.

"I think this is a better way of informing the people of Kosovo about the danger of mines and it's a great way to keep up our international relations and stay in good standing with the people here," Eichelberg said.



Stewart steps on a mouse trap during one of the practice classes to demonstrate how easy it is to set off a mine.

1AD Aviation tanks up at FARP



Bracing themselves against biting rotor wash, HHT, 1-1 Cav soldiers prepare to hot-fuel an incoming Blackhawk.

Story and photos by
Sheila R. Garrett
414th BSB PAO

HANAU, Germany – “I liked being under the propellers,” said Pfc. John Gittens, refueling technician, 1st Squadron, 1st United States Cavalry Regiment in Büdingen.

“It gave me an adrenaline rush. ... I rate this training as an 11 on a scale of one to ten.” Gittens recalled the excitement he felt while taking part in a training exercise

conducted by Headquarters and Headquarters, and F Troops from 1-1 Cav together with the 1st and 2nd of the 501st Aviation Regiments of

Fliegerhorst Kaserne. The training was conducted during HHT 1-1 Cav’s Commander’s Week, Feb. 12-14, as part of 1st Armored Division Commander’s

“It gave me an adrenaline rush. ... I rate this training as an 11 on a scale of one to ten.”

**Pfc. John Gittens,
1-1 Cav**

Week Program.

The training was aimed at cross training HHT, 1-1 Cav’s support platoon soldiers to refuel helicopters in

wartime, which normally is the responsibility of F Troop, 1-1 Cav.

“In the Cav, F Troop sets up the Forward Aiming and Refueling Point,” explained Capt.

Dimant-Kass, HHT, 1-1 Cav commander. “... In order to provide flexibility for the squadron we thought it would be a good capability for HHT to have because it is our job to support the entire squadron [both air and ground].”

Refueling is a critical function within the HHT’s wartime mission, Dimant-Kass said, because the Cav’s Kiowa Warrior helicopters

are the eyes of the division commander.

“Once the aircraft leaves the mission to go and get fuel, then that

is one less pair of eyes the division has scouting the battlefield (for enemies),” he said.

Because the Army trains for all contingencies, Dimant-Kass explained the cross training is also important for HHT because in actual conflict the enemy could eliminate the primary refuelers. “If the F Troop FARP is destroyed, our aircraft need a means of getting fuel. ... Because our aircraft are so far forward the closest option for fuel would come from Cav assets.”

HHT, 1-1 Cav support platoon refuels M1-A1 Abrams tanks, M3-A2 Bradley scout vehicles and HMMWVs regularly, but they have never been involved in the quick reaction refueling of helicopters in a wartime setting.

“This is the first time Support Platoon has fueled aircraft with the blades turning,” Dimant-Kass said. “... It adds an element of danger and a level of difficulty.”

The level of danger Dimant-Kass refers to faces the pilot as well as the refueling crew while the helicopter is on the ground.

“The longer the aircraft is on the ground the more vulnerable they are to being destroyed... To do this in battle, we must train soldiers to move quickly and safely... to get the aircraft back to their mission — the division depends on us.”

Dimant-Kass said he and HHT senior non-commissioned officer leaders went to great lengths to ensure the training at Campo Pond was “battle-focused.”

“We could have conducted this



HHT, 1-1 Cav soldiers refuel a Blackhawk as the crew prepares to return to action.

training at the (Büdingen) airfield, but we wanted natural terrain. At Campo Pond scouts had to find a relatively flat area and secure and defend it while Support Platoon set up the FARP and refueled the helicopters.”

It took eight weeks to prepare for the simulated wartime training. “We used the crawl, walk, run theory,” said Sgt. 1st Class Robert Mickle, HHT, 1-1 Cav, Support Platoon sergeant. “First we planned...gathered equipment and worked on cold refuels without the blades running... The run stage was conducted at Campo Pond [in a tactical

setting] with the blades running,” Mickle said.

Arming soldiers with FARP skills in a wartime setting prevents would be mistakes. “There is the potential to refuel incorrectly,” Mickle said. “... The nozzle could be turned the wrong way and the fuel could go up into the intake of the helicopter causing a fire. The outcome would be catastrophic for the pilot and the ground crew,” Mickle said.

The training covered the 90-degree angle approach, proper nozzle position and ground to pilot communications. “Soldiers were taught to make sure the pilots eyes are on them at all times.”

Mickle explained that making one mistake while working in a FARP, especially for soldiers who normally do not refuel helicopters with the blades turning, could cost a life if

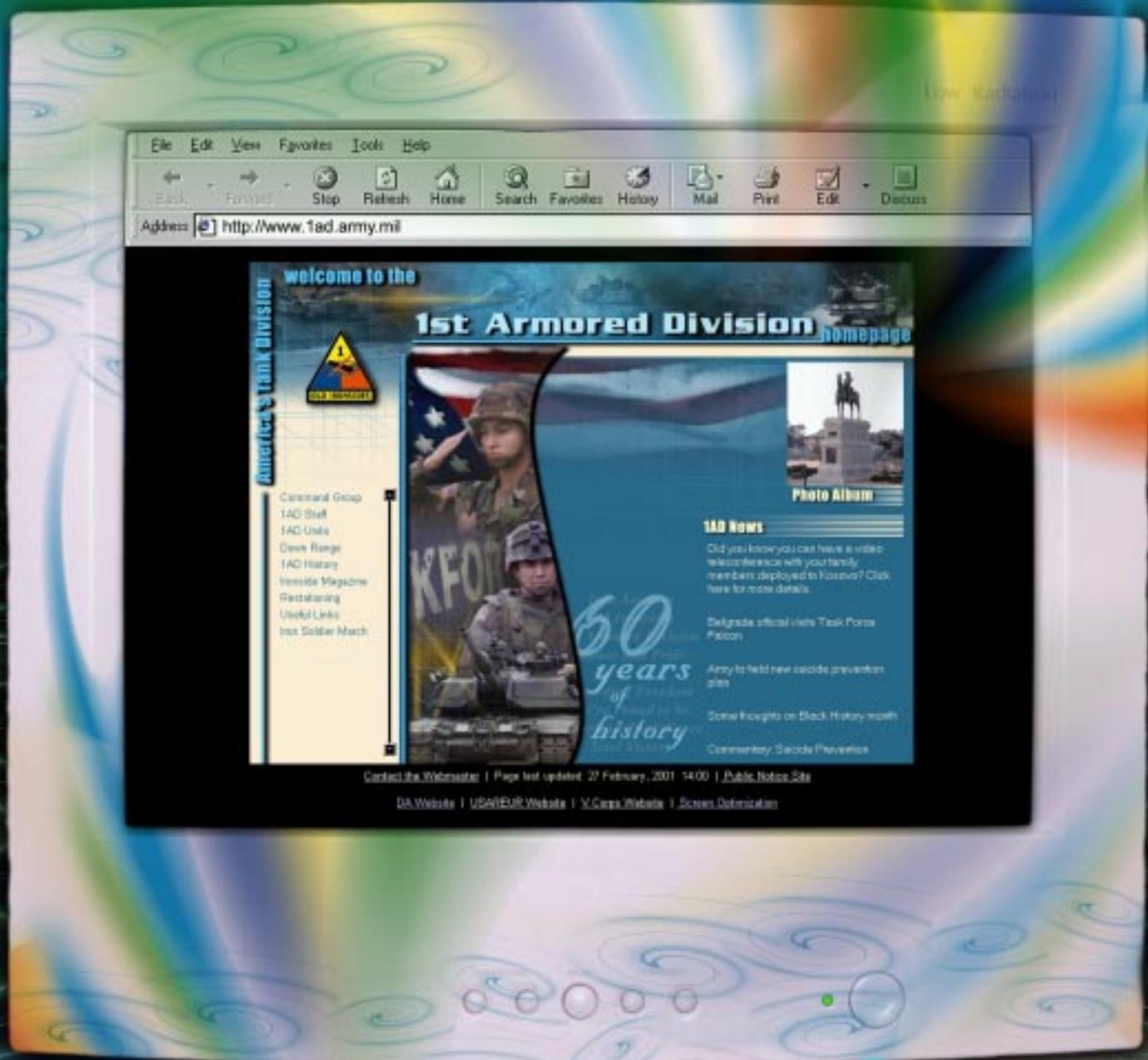
the approach to the aircraft is incorrect. Dimant-Kass added, “This training arms the soldier with the knowledge and capabilities so mistakes will not happen.”

Although Gittens said the training provided a rush of excitement, he also stated that the skills he learned were invaluable.

“This training really extended my horizons,” he said. “It gave more of a dimension to my knowledge than just refueling HMMWVs and tanks... Overall from my point of view, I feel the mission was a success and everyone got top notch training.”

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