



# YUGO NEWS



*This Issue: Peace in Bosnia?, UN goes broke, Macedonia-Greece peace, anatomy of a Croat attack*

**31 Aug 95**

Serbian police raided more than 60 houses following a shoot-out in **Kosovo**. According to initial reports, two Serbian policemen were killed and four wounded in an explosion following a shoot-out at a police station in Irzniq. Later reports had no deaths and only two only two injured.

**2 Sept 95**

Bosnian Serb anti-aircraft fire shot down a **NATO UAV** near Mostar. The UAV, captured with electronics and cameras intact, was on a recon/spy mission.

**3 Sept 95**

NATO issued an **ultimatum to the Bosnian Serbs** to move heavy weapons at least 20 km from Sarajevo by 11 p.m. local time, September 5, or face renewed air strikes. Also, all attacks against Gorazde, Tuzla, Bihac and Sarajevo must cease; and the Sarajevo Airport, largely closed since April, must reopen. The UN opened a road across the airport today. The move was largely symbolic, but important in that it was a unilateral action. Previously, the UN has insisted on the assent of both the Bosnian government and the Bosnian Serbs before acting.

**4 Sept 95**

The Bosnian Serbs moved only 0-25 of their 200-300 artillery pieces outside the 20 km **Sarajevo 'exclusion zone'**. Serb political leaders reportedly agreed to the ultimatum, but the military leader, General Mladic, refused to issue orders to move the weapons.

**5 Sept 95**

**NATO air strikes resumed.** NATO said the Bosnian Serbs had not complied with its ultimatum. Targets included sites in Lukavica, Vogosca, Zunovica and Sarajevo. Last week's air strikes reportedly seriously damaged or destroyed half of the 25 targets attacked. The renewed air strikes are aimed at 50-70 targets including those missed before or repaired since last week.

An anti-radar missile was fired at a **Bosnian Serb tracking station** after it locked on NATO aircraft. The radar was shut off before the missile landed, causing it to miss.

The RRF shelled a factory in Hadzici after it was hit by air strikes. An important **communications relay** between Pale and Belgrade was destroyed in the Majevisa hills near Tuzla; the relay was the object of a failed Bosnian offensive last March. *(See the 20 March item in the April'95 issue of Yugo News.)*

**6 Sept 95**

**The International Criminal**

**Tribunal for ex-Yugoslavia** formally began looking into charges that Croats killed Serb civilians and looted and burned their property during their retaking of Krajina in last month. The Tribunal had previously investigated only Serbs. Fifty civilian bodies have been found in the area. Serbian Orthodox churches may also have been desecrated.

**7 Sept 95**

**NATO air strikes** continued, with the Bosnian Serb barracks at Lukavica and Butila being targeted. The RRF joined the attack, shelling a Serb mortar that had fired at traffic on the Mt. Igman road. More than 1,500 sorties have been flown since August 30, when NATO planes began their raids.

Croatian Interior Ministry forces began a **search and clear operation** in the Plitvice National Park. The operation is intended to capture any remaining Serb groups in the region, gather abandoned arms and munitions, and clear land mines.

Reconstruction has begun on the **Maslenica Bridge**. The bridge, which

## Peace in Bosnia?

On September 8, Bosnia, Croatia and Yugoslavia agreed to an accord at a meeting in Geneva, Switzerland. It is a first step toward peace negotiations.

Under the agreement, Bosnia will exist with its present borders but with two entities -- a Muslim-Croat Bosnian federation and a new Serb republic. 51% of Bosnia will go to the federation and 49% to the Serb republic. The exact division of land is unresolved. Also, the relation between the Serb republic and Yugoslavia needs to be worked out; appointed a Commission for Displaced Persons to enforce the obligations of both sides to enable displaced persons to reclaim their homes or receive compensation; formed a Human Rights Commission to enforce human rights obligations on both sides; appointed a Commission to Preserve National Monuments; and designed an arbitration system for resolution of disputes.

was virtually the only connection between northern and southern Croatia, was destroyed by the Serbs on November 21, 1993. The bridge has since been replaced with a pontoon bridge. The new bridge should be completed by the end of May, 1996.

## 8 Sept 95

This week's **NATO air strikes** destroyed or rendered ineffective 2/3s of the 35 targets on the initial list. 25 targets in the northwest, near Banja Luka, have been located and strikes against them could begin in a few days. The Bosnian Serbs fired a SA-7 at one NATO plane; the missile missed. The RRF shelled the SAM sight. An SA-6 missed another NATO plane; the plane returned fire with unknown results.

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The UN accused **Croatia** of failing to halt the killing of Serbs and the looting and burning of their homes in Krajina. More than 100 Serb bodies have been found.

## 9 Sept 95

The Bosnian Serbs said **RRF artillery killed 10 civilians** and wounded 22 at a hospital in Ilidza, a Sarajevo suburb. (They claim NATO air strikes and RRF shellings have killed over 100 civilians and wounded several hundred more in the past two weeks.) The RRF was firing at a target yards from the hospital after a missile was fired at a NATO plane. The UN said it would not accept responsibility until it had examined the hospital. The Bosnian Serbs have not allowed the UN access to the hospital.

The UN has accused the Serbs of **hiding weapons in civilian buildings**. The hospital's medical director said that there is sometimes outgoing fire from the vicinity of the hospital. Another Serb doctor said that the shelling must have been a mistake: "Officers from the French battalion come here every week to talk to us to see what he need," he said. "At least 90 percent of our equipment was given to us by the French military. They are our friends."

Despite a policy of 'zero tolerance' for **collateral damage**, NATO air strikes have damaged at least one other civilian area. Three of four bridges in Foca have been destroyed. One of the bombs, apparently aimed at the fourth bridge, hit a few feet from a row of apartment buildings, destroying one and seriously damaging another, wounding 15 civilians.

† † †

Several thousand Serbs **demonstrated outside the White House** and the Holocaust Memorial Museum. Protesting against further maintaining the sanctions against Yugoslavia and US policy toward Croatia, they said that: the US was the destroyer of peace rather than its creator; the US was supporting genocide against the Serbs; Croatia was a nazi state created by Hitler in 1941 and restored by the US in 1991; Hitler would be proud of Clinton; and Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole, (R, KS) is a war merchant.

## 10 Sept 95

**NATO attacks** shifted from air strikes in southwest to missile attacks in the northeast. Using cruise missile for the first time, the alliance struck at the Bosnian Serb military stronghold of

Banja Luka. Ten communications relay sites were the targets. US jets mopped up with missiles and guided bombs. The Bosnian Serbs claimed the attacks water supplies and power plants.

† † †

The first **NATO exercise in Romania** began. Over 400 troops from NATO members Germany, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Turkey and the US, and Partnership for Peace members Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia, are taking part. The five day exercise, near Sibiu, will concentrate on peacekeeping and humanitarian operations.

## 11 Sept 95

Bosnian government forces attacked Bosnian Serb positions on Mt. Ozren. The Serbs reacted by shelling the UN facility in nearby **Tuzla**. NATO reacted to that by bombing Serb artillery there and at Han Pjesak.

† † †

The UN began investigating the **RRF shelling of a Serb hospital** two days ago. The investigation would have begun yesterday but the Bosnian Serb army refused to guarantee the investigator's safety.

† † †

## UN Goes Broke

The UN has run out of money to pay regular operating expenses and is borrowing money from the peacekeeping budget. The regular budget ran out in mid-August, and \$98 million has been borrowed from peacekeeping since then, according to Joseph E. Connor, Under Secretary General for Administration and Management. If countries in arrears do not begin to pay their debts, the diversion will rise to \$200 million by the end of October and \$300 million by the end of November.

UN members are about \$3.7 billion in arrears. The US owes the largest amount, \$1.18 billion.

The situation has been caused by several factors, including war crimes tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia; the loss of money in currency exchanges because of the depressed value of the dollar; and fears that the US will delay payments.

Connor says that \$900 million is owed to countries that provided peacekeepers, and at the current rate, the number is expected to rise to \$1.2 billion by the end of the year. The UN has ordered a freeze on recruitment, limits on staff overtime and travel, delays in payments to vendors and the issuing of monthly rather than semimonthly paychecks. Further measures are planned.



Gunfire hit a bus in **Sarajevo**, wounding eight people.

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Exercise Peaceful Eagle'95 -- a combined peacekeeping exercise -- began in Durres, Albania. Approximately 150 US and 150 Albanian soldiers will participate in the 10 day exercise. The US 82nd Engineer Bn., 3rd Infantry Div. and the Albanian Shijaku Division will train in escorting humanitarian convoys, establishing and operating a checkpoints, OPs and combined mobile checkpoints; route security; and securing a fixed site.

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**Macedonia and Albania** held military talks in Macedonia. Commander of the General Staff of the Macedonian Army Admiral Dragoljub Bocinov met with his counterpart, the Commander of the General Staff of the Army of the Republic of Albania Seme Kosova.

## 12 Sept 95

The US sent ground crews to Aviano, Italy, last weekend to prepare for the arrival of six **F-117A Nighthawks**, which were to be used in air strikes. But Italy threatened not to allow stealth bombers to be based on its soil until it is given a full-fledged role in the peace process. (Italy had only observer status at last week's Geneva talks, but wants a larger role as a regional power.)

*Note: The F-117A is a stealth fighter-bomber.*

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NATO jets paid a return visit to Mt. Ozren today. The **NATO air strikes** targeted Bosnian Serb military bases in Doboij and Servarilje, and Serb heavy artillery positions in villages on the foothills of Mt. Ozren. A large ammo depot in Vogosca was destroyed. US Defence Secretary Perry, stated that NATO air-strikes have nearly destroyed the Bosnian Serb anti-aircraft defense system and NATO jets will soon be able to fly safely over Bosnia. Perry added that the latest strikes have had serious consequences for the Bosnian Serbs.

**Bosnian President Izetbegovic** downplayed the effectiveness of the NATO air strikes and RRF barrages: "Great damage ... have been inflicted

only to chetnik infrastructure ... tanks and artillery being little damaged. The machinery for killing Sarajevo is not destroyed, so we are only relatively satisfied with the current situation."

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The effectiveness of the 13 BGM-109C (Block III) **Tomahawk cruise missiles** fired on Sunday was reportedly mixed. A figure of 11 of 13 missiles hitting their targets has been circulating, but this has not been officially confirmed. NATO and the US Navy have been upbeat about their performance, while the US Air Force has understandably been less so. (*The Air Force has so far been getting all the air strike glory, while the Navy was on the side lines until their Tomahawks were employed.*) This was the first combat employment of the Block III.

## 13 Sept 95

Croatian and Bosnian forces continued their advance on **Jajce**. The Croats liberated the area of Drvar and

Slipovo all the way to Vrbas, while the Bosnian government has taken 30 sq. km. near Mt. Ozren. Donji Vakuf and the all-weather Tuzla-Zenica road were also recaptured. The Serbs fear (*reasonably so*) that the NATO air strikes are facilitating the Croat-Muslim land grab.

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**NATO air strikes** again hit the Bosnian Serb military base at Lukavica. The UN says the base -- which contains numerous ammunition storage depots, command, control and communication facilities -- are the key to the 41 month siege of Sarajevo.

After the air strikes, NATO announced that further attacks were again on hold because of **bad weather**.

## 14 Sept 95

The most recent **Croat-Bosnian offensive** recaptured the central Bosnian town of Jajce and the western Bosnian town of Drvar. The Croats captured 2000 sq. km. of territory from the Bosnian

## Macedonia-Greece Peace Accord

In a meeting at the UN in New York, **Macedonia and Greece** signed an agreement normalizing relations. UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali presided over the ceremony. The agreement was the result of 29 months of negotiations.

The accord was preceded by two days of last minute negotiations. At first, Greek and Macedonian diplomats stayed in different hotels while mediator Cyrus Vance shuttled between them. The US twisted Greece's arm to get it to settle the dispute.

Greece agreed to lift its embargo against Macedonia; Macedonia agreed to scrap its current national flag (a gold sun on a red background) and pledged that nothing in its current constitution would be interpreted as a claim on territory outside its current border. Diplomatic relations will be established and the border confirmed.

Still unresolved is the use of the name 'Macedonia'.

*Note: The last point is extremely important. Though Macedonia agreed that it has no legal claims outside its current border, a large part of traditional Macedonia lies within Greece. As a matter of fact, the second largest Macedonia city, Thessaloniki, is a Greek port. It is that port through which most of Macedonia's shipping passed prior to the embargo. Prompted by Greece, the international community recognizes Macedonia only as the "Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia". The acronym for that name, "FYROM", is used disparagingly by Greeks. You can see the problems that could crop up before the agreement takes effect in mid-October.*

Serbs in 92 hours.

The offensive has caused an estimated 50,000 **Bosnian Serb refugees** to flee towards Banja Luka. Relief officials are trying to divert the refugees towards Prijedor. (Banja Luka is already burdened with Croatian Serb refugees and overcrowding and lack of supplies may occur.) The first aid convoy, with 340 tons of food in 16 trucks is on its way to the Serbs.

The Bosnian Serbs have agreed to withdraw their heavy weapons from the 20km **Sarajevo 'exclusion zone'**. They have six days to withdraw their 300 weapons. NATO suspended air strikes for three days; it will extend the suspension if the Serb withdrawal makes significant progress.

The US is seeking assurances from the Bosnian government that it will not seize any land **vacated by the Serbs** and will not use its own heavy weapons against the Serbs. (*An apparent concession that the recent Serb shellings were prompted by government action.*)

The Bosnian Serbs must also **reopen the airport** and allow improved access to roads.

**Macedonia and the US** established diplomatic relations.

Albanian Defense Minister Alfred Serreqi said the US could base F-117A **stealth fighters** at his air bases if Italy continued to refuse access to its.

The **US and Albania** began their seventh joint military exercise, code-named "Peaceful Eagle." The exercise is being held to train Albanian units for future UN peacekeeping missions.

## 15 Sept 95

The **Sarajevo** airport reopened as resupply aircraft began landing. Roads are also reopening, and the Bosnian Serbs are giving convoys free passage. The Serbs are also withdrawing their heavy weapons from the 'exclusion zone'. As a result, the US withdrew its request to base F-117A stealth fighters in Italy.

Despite the ceasefire in Sarajevo, **fighting continues** elsewhere: Two Bosnian Serb SAMs missed NATO aircraft over Gorazde; the jets did not fire back and NATO did not retaliate. Also, the Croat-Bosnian offensive rolled on as Bosanski Petrovac was recaptured; the offensive is moving towards Kljuc, 20km south of Petrovac.

## 16 Sept 95

There are unconfirmed reports that Serbian forces killed Muslim villagers in **Donji Vakuf** as they retreated, and that advancing Croat-Bosnian forces have killed Serb civilians. Bosnian police prevented British peacekeepers from investigating the reports.

The Bosnian Serbs temporarily blocked a UN aid convoy from entering **Sarajevo**. They were objecting to the RRF being used to secure the Hadzici road. Another convoy was rerouted through Kiseljak after a report that angry Serbian civilians would block its passage through Hadzici. It went through Kiseljak instead.

*Note: This raises an interesting question: If NATO bombs Serb military targets for blockading convoys, what will NATO do if civilians block it? Expect to see lots of civilians -- and if not civilians, than unarmed soldiers masquerading as such -- blocking convoys in the coming weeks.*

The Serbs have removed 40-50 of their 200-300 weapons from the **Sarajevo 'exclusion zone'**. They have until 3:00pm to make the significant progress required by their agreement with NATO, or NATO may resume air strikes.

## 17 Sept 95

Saying that Bosnian Serbs had made "**substantial progress**" in **withdrawing heavy weapons**, the UN and NATO extended the suspension of air strikes for another 72 hours.

The Croat-Bosnian offensive in northern Bosnia closed to within 25 miles of **Banja Luka**. The Bosnian Serbs

are building fortifications to defend the city. Bosnian Serb President Karadzic said his forces were taking "heavy losses."

The US "**strongly discouraged**" the Bosnian government from attacking Banja Luka, saying it might cause the Yugoslav Army to cross the border into Bosnia.

## 18 Sept 95

The **Croat-Bosnian offensive** rolled into Sanski Most and Krnjic Grad. There was also fighting in Sanski Most and shelling in Bosanska Gradiska, Bosanska Dubica and Novi Grad. Croat aircraft (*unimpeded by NATO*) participated in the fighting. Gradacac and Prijedor appear to be the intermediate objectives on the road to Banja Luka. (There is a 44-mile long stream of 50,000 Bosnian Serb refugees streaming east out of the city.)

## 19 Sept 95

Croatia and Bosnia said they would not attack **Banja Luka**. But their offensive showed no signs of slowing down: Fighting continued near Novi Grad, Sanski Most and Kljuc; Gradiska and Dubica were shelled.

Bosnian Serb military commander **General Mladic** has been hospitalized in Belgrade with what is reported as kidney stones for several days. But his hospitalization may be more political than medical. A UN official said, "Since he's gone to the hospital, everything has started to happen. The heavy weapons are being pulled away from Sarajevo; the transit routes are being opened; planes are coming in; and serious fighting on the ground has practically stopped. That isn't just a coincidence."

However, while Mladic is gone, **Arkan** is making his presence felt. Zeljko "Arkan" Raznatovic, a wanted criminal of the war and mundane variety, has been seen in Banja Luka and Prijedor with members of his "Tigers" militia group. Arkan claimed the Tigers were not a militia but "invited specialists." Arkan is under the protection, if not guidance, of



Serb President Milosevic. If Arkan is indeed under control of Milosevic, his participation in the fight for Banja Luka would be a clear sign that Milosevic is worried about the Bosnian Serb's desperate situation.

**20 Sept 95**

Satisfied that there were no more Bosnian Serb heavy weapons in the Sarajevo 'exclusion zone', NATO **permanently suspended air strikes**. The still-armed Bosnian government fired four mortar shells from Sarajevo at Bosnian Serbs on nearby hills. The UN condemned the act.

Two **Bosnian Serb SAMs** were fired at NATO aircraft today. Both missed.

## Quote

"As long as I am foreign minister no Italian will sit behind anyone."

*Italian Foreign Minister Susanna Agnelli, after US peace negotiator Richard Holbrooke told her Italy should be content to stay quiet and sit behind EU mediator Carl Bildt at Geneva peace talks.*

## Sources

The Economist, InterNet.  
*Secondary sources include Soldier of Fortune, AP, New York Times, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, BBC, AFP, Tanjug, Nasa Borba, MIC, TWRA, OMRI*

## Editor

Preston McMurry

### NOTE

The cut off date for this issue is two weeks ago due to a trip I took to Europe. The events for those weeks will be included in the next issue.

### Contacting the Macedonian Information Center

For additional information, comments or suggestions on this MIC daily report or any other news reported by MIC, please call Vladimir Petreski or Mircela Casule on +389 91221-842 or E-mail on following address: mic@itl.mk

## Anatomy of a Croat Attack

*This story is the last front-line dispatch from Colonel Robert MacKenzie. MacKenzie served with the Bosnian Croat militia (HVO) under Brigadier General Zeljko Glasnovic in Bosnia. This dispatch was prepared posthumously from his notes. (MacKenzie died in February in Sierra Leone.) The following events took place in Fall, 1994 and were published in the September, 1995 issue of Soldier of Fortune.*

*The situation at Bihac, the embattled town 100 miles to our north, bore heavily on the minds of all ranks in the First Guards Brigade of the HVO.*

One in the Byzantine array of combatants and allegiances in this most Balkan wars, the HVO is stationed in central Bosnia. They are allied with the predominantly Bosnian Muslim government army (BiH). Setting aside historical differences, these allies have conducted successful joint operations against the Bosnian Serb forces: It is expected that at some point the BiH and HVO will amalgamate into one army, and such a union would probably last as long as they have a common enemy in the Serbs. On the other side, the Bosnian Serbs have until quite recently they have gotten much logistical and other support from Serbia. The Bosnian Serbs are strong in heavy weapons; the BiH is strong in infantry, and the HVO strongest in terms of leadership.

On 28 October our commander, Brigadier Zeljko Glasnovic, issued a warning order for an assault on the Serbs' southern lines, which had been left vulnerable by their concentration of forces to the north. As commander of the brigade commander's reconnaissance team, I was leading six foreigners, all of whom had a great deal of military experience. In addition we had two English-speaking HVO soldiers as interpreters. The brigade also had a recon platoon comprised of local troops, but they were assigned to other tasks in the opening phases of the operation.

H-hour was supposed to be 0430 on 1 November. Several other HVO formations were also involved in the attack, and for various reasons H-hour was delayed several hours. Meanwhile, in the freezing darkness, First Guards Brigade moved to the start line with two battalions up and one in reserve. Our anti-tank detachments were moving with the infantry companies and our T-55s were in overwatch. Our artillery fire plan called for initial preparatory bombardment to begin just prior to H-hour, with targets on call thereafter. Finally at 0730 our leading companies crossed the start line.

Amazingly, we caught the Serbs by surprise and resistance was light, with the Serbs fleeing in the face of our artillery and tank fire. Several pockets of resistance were neutralized by a combination of 120mm mortars, 107mm and 122mm rockets, and the 100mm guns on our T-55s.

By 1430 enemy resistance was crumbling all along our front. For the rest of the afternoon our infantry advanced through the thickly wooded hills, and just before evening the Serbian forces on our right broke and the reserve battalion was committed to exploit the breach. By nightfall all of our units were well past their initial objectives. Since neither side does much fighting at night, we stopped and dug in while the Serbs continued to withdraw.

On the second day of the operation my group, which had been at brigade HQ in reserve, was tasked with reconnaissance of a road on our right flank. Proceeding up the road we started coming upon well-built Serbian log bunkers. When we were about 7 kilometers in front of our lines we were told to stop and wait for the infantry to catch up. By the time they reached us it was after lunch and since their instructions were to proceed no further, we went forward another kilometer and found a small ridge from which we could watch Serbs abandoning their positions in front of us. We watched for the rest of the afternoon and then returned to HQ. Along the rest of the brigade front the advance was disappointingly slow in the face of light or no opposition other than a few land mines.

D+2 saw us in reconnaissance again, this time moving through forested hills trying to get around the enemy's flanks and into position where we could observe their HQ in a village called Rilic. The rest of the battlefield echoed with the sounds of artillery fire as Serbian positions were shelled. About 1100 my team got into position overlooking Rilic. HVO intelligence sources had told us that Rilic would be heavily defended by hundreds of troops with armor and artillery support, so we were surprised when our first glimpse indicated no activity.

Creeping through the woods into the outskirts of town, we confirmed that Rilic had in fact been evacuated. There was not a soldier to be seen, but there were mess tins, gas masks, overcoats and blankets strewn all over the place. Radioing the news back to HQ, we moved into a secure ruin and waited impatiently for the brigade to catch up, since nine men are a bit sparse to hold an entire town. The lead elements finally arrived at about 1330, and brigade HQ and the rest of the brigade followed, so that by nightfall we were firmly in possession.

Morning came with rumors of a Serb counterattack. To preempt any such action the brigade commander ordered artillery fire on likely enemy assembly areas and no attack materialized. In fact, that day the Serb resistance was completely shattered, and our tanks and troops rapidly advanced 11 kilometers to the town of Kupres, which the Serbs had hurriedly abandoned. When we arrived in Kupres we found that the predominantly Muslim Bosnian army was also pressing the Serbs, and we linked up with them on our right flank. At this stage our advance stalled, and we only managed another 2 kilometers before encountering serious resistance from entrenched enemy infantry and armor.

Another reason for the slowdown of our advance was the fact that both of our flanks were dominated by Serb-held mountains, and efforts to dislodge them were not going well. HVO commanders decided to secure KUpres, a town formerly of some 8,000 Croatian residents, which had been fought over several times in the past and finally taken by the Serbs in 1992. The recapture of Kupres by the HVO was of considerable emotional importance, and many vows were sworn never to let it fall into enemy hands again.

Both sides then continued consolidating their positions and for the next several weeks trench systems reminiscent of World War I were dug, creating a no-man's land varying from 1 to 4 kilometers in depth. Part of this area was comprised of a deserted town and buildings from which my team conducted numerous operations to harass the Serbs.

As the weeks dragged on, neither side showed serious inclination to advance, and we varied the type and location of our missions so as not to set a pattern. Other brigade activities during the period mostly consisted of using our artillery against Serb rear areas. There was also some patrol activity on our part, probing their defenses. From the enemy's side came some return artillery and tank fire, but no patrols. As Christmas approached, hostilities diminished while the snow fall increased. As of this writing it is uncertain whether anything else will happen during the winter months, especially since yet another cease-fire, leading no doubt to peace in our time, has been signed in Bosnia.