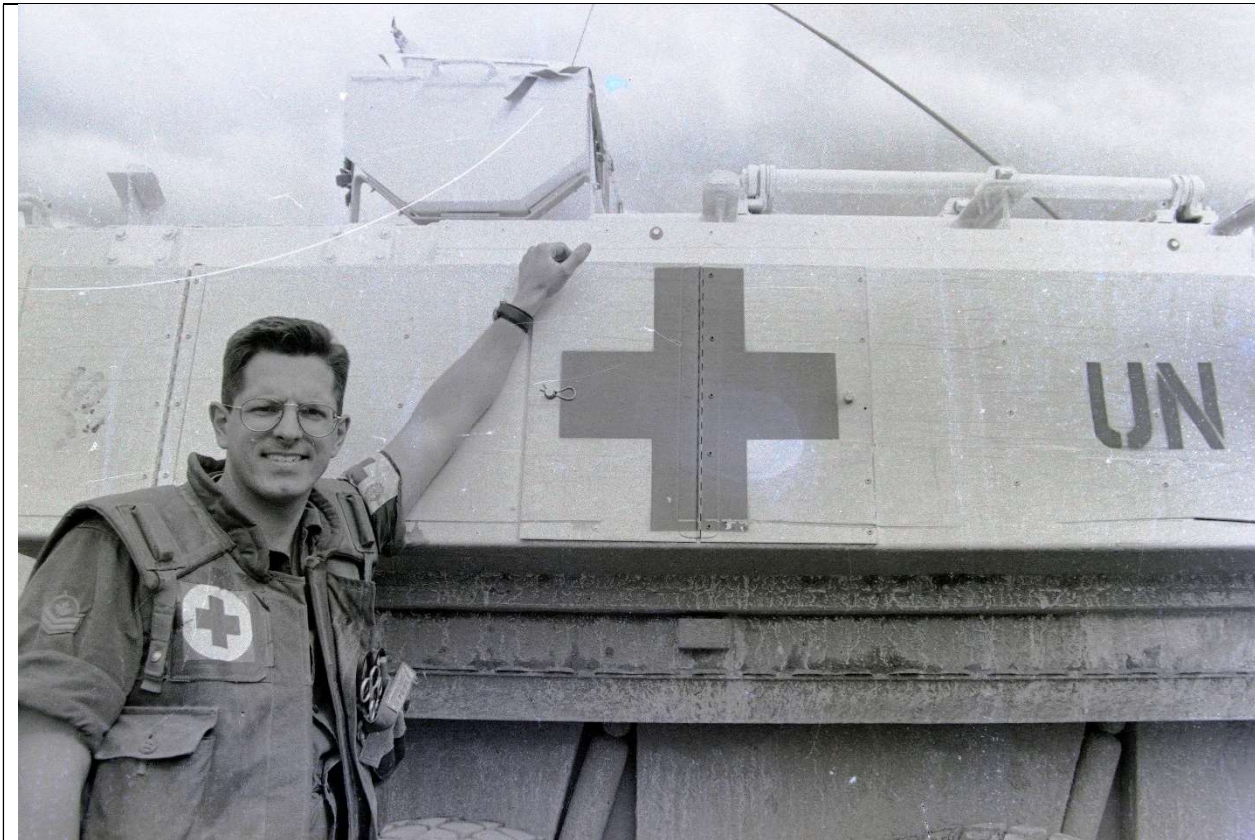


Alex Martel's story

1993-94 - Operation Cavalier with CANBAT 2 Battle Group in Visoko



*Master-Corporal Alex Martel in Visoko beside the Bisson ambulance that he crew commanded and drove.
Photo provided by Alex Martel*

Authors' note

The principal authors of this text, aside from the individual recounting the story, are John Cochrane, a former member of the unit.

This record of events was prepared in 2020, many years after they occurred. The author prepared this record principally using information obtained during interviews with the individual involved. Where possible, this information was corroborated through interviews with others and a review of pictures and other publicly available information. The record presents the events as the individuals involved remember them several years after they occurred.

Alex Martel's story

Master-Corporal Alex Martel was deployed to Bosnia on Rotation 2 of Operation Cavalier from November 3rd, 1993 to May 5th, 1994. In Bosnia he worked as a section commander in the Medical platoon of Canadian Battle Group 2 (CANBAT 2), which was part of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR)

Preparation for the mission

When Alex joined the Royal Canadian Hussars in 1987, he followed the normal progression of becoming a reconnaissance crewman, then an armoured vehicle driver. He then became interested in learning another trade and this led him to obtain his equivalent medical qualification, while continuing as a member of the unit. In 1993, he heard that medical assistants were needed for a United Nations mission in Bosnia and he decided to suspend his university studies to volunteer. When his application was accepted, he was sent to Canadian Forces Base Valcartier where he was attached to the ***5e Ambulance de Campagne*** to start his preparatory training. The training was the normal training and testing aimed at ensuring that each soldier had the physical fitness and battle skills necessary to operate effectively in a combat zone. It was, however, more stringent, and competitive, as eight medical reservists had been invited to participate in the training, whereas only four would be taken to Bosnia.

While in Valcartier, the medical team also started providing services to the members of the battle group. The first task was to vaccinate all 700 or so members. The second task was to deliver elementary first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation refresher courses.

During the weeks just prior to their deployment, groups of soldiers participated in night-time exercises where live ammunition was fired over their trenches. The objective was to train them how to identify the type of ordnances being fired, and their source. Unfortunately, on the night that Alex attended this exercise, something went terribly wrong and a sergeant who was standing in the trench to his left was hit in the neck by a ricochet which severed his jugular. This was the biggest "no duff" (real emergency) that Alex had ever experienced and, unfortunately, the sergeant died in his hands that cold autumn night. This tragedy was a premonition of the risks that the soldiers would face in Bosnia. Alex suddenly realized that he was getting into something extremely dangerous.

As the date for departure approached, Alex felt he was meeting all the criteria, but he was stressed until the final moments, because he had been told that, on the previous tour, several people had been removed from the roster at the last minute. He was not able to relax until he was finally on the plane.

Deployment to Bosnia

CANBAT 2 was already established as the 2nd Canadian Battle Group operating in the Balkans. The first battle group (CANBAT 1) was operating in Croatia. Various units would rotate into CANBAT 1 and 2 for periods of approximately six months. On this rotation, CANBAT 2 was a battle group based on the ***12e Régiment blindé du Canada*** (12 RBC). It included an infantry company from the ***Royal 22^e Régiment*** (R22eR), as well as artillery, engineer, and various support elements. It served as part of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), Bosnia and Herzegovina. The members of the battle group

moved to Bosnia on several flights over a period of two weeks in the fall of 1993, replacing a group of Canadian soldiers who were already present on the ground.



Master- Corporal Alex Martel –
Official picture - 1994



Staff of the medical platoon, and two of their ambulances, outside
their field hospital at the CANBAT 2 camp in Visoko in 1994.

CANBAT 2 Base Camp at Visoko

The Canadian Camp at Visoko was to be the contingent's main home for the next six months. It was organised around two buildings, one was a large multi-story industrial building referred to as the megaplex. Inside this structure, large tents had been set up on the upper floors to provide segregated sleeping quarters for the different units posted there.

The second structure, which was referred to as the Crystal Palace, contained the work areas for the Headquarters, medical, administrative, postal, logistics and transport sections. Around these structures were the different vehicle parks for the different sub-units.

When the medical team arrived, it organised itself to support the battle group's operations and the individual needs of its members. This involved setting up a field hospital within the camp and providing individuals or small teams to accompany and support operations outside of the camp.

The battle group had to be as autonomous as possible in meeting the medical needs of its approximately 700 soldiers. It also provided medical services to the members of similar units from Britain, Belgium and Malaysia that had camps nearby. Consequently, the medical team consisted of 35 medical staff including several doctors and nurses, a surgeon, a dentist, and a preventive medical specialist. Its staff, which was roughly half male and half female, came from all branches of the armed forces – Air Force, Navy and Army. The medical team operated a clinic in the camp where it held a sick parade every morning. There, it dealt with all sorts of medical problems, including at one point a stomach flu that affected almost one third of the soldiers in the camp. The clinic handled most patients on-site, but more serious cases were evacuated by helicopter to a bigger hospital run by the French forces at the UNPROFOR headquarters near the airport in Sarajevo.

The living conditions within the camp were not very nice, so the preventive medical specialist was very busy. The troops lived in tents erected within a concrete building and used portable toilets outside. The climate was relatively cold during the day and colder at night. The environment was filled with dust and the water supply was not potable. Each soldier received a one-liter bottle of drinking water per day. To minimize problems with parasites, many soldiers shaved their heads. One of the potential health problems in the camp was the number of stray dogs, so efforts were made to keep them out of camp.

Operations outside the base

The battle group's armoured squadrons were regularly tasked with escorting and ensuring the security of humanitarian relief convoys operated by the United Nations. The battle group also organised its own administrative and logistical convoys between Visoko and other locations. One or more medics were assigned to accompany each convoy. They would ride either in a convoy vehicle or their own ambulance.

Unlike the armoured soldiers they accompanied, who were well protected in their Cougars, the medical staff initially used 1¼-ton truck ambulances. The use of these soft-skinned vehicles was a cause for concern for the medical staff as the vehicles did not provide any protection from the harassing rifle or mortar fire that was occasionally directed towards United Nations convoys. An armoured personnel carrier was also available, however its use was less practical, as its tracks prevented it from moving any substantial distance or as quickly as the wheeled vehicles. Partway through the rotation, the concerns of the medical staff were calmed by the delivery of four Bisson ambulances. These vehicles arrived correctly painted but with none of the interiors assembled for ambulance service. All the necessary components were packed neatly in some large boxes that were found inside. Upon their arrival, Alex and his colleagues unpacked the boxes and assembled the fittings piece by piece, a process that took almost six weeks. This resulted in usable armoured ambulances that had lots of room for storage and, could transport up to four patients each. Once everything was assembled, the next obstacle was finding qualified drivers. Since there was a shortage of qualified Armoured Vehicle General Purpose (AVGP) drivers, and Alex had his qualification, he played a dual role from March to May, acting simultaneously as crew commander and driver.

The routine for a convoy was generally as follows:

- The medical section would get their assignment the previous day. They would gather their ration packs and ensure they had enough food and water for the duration of the mission and two additional days. They would also check their vehicle, radio, and medical supplies to ensure that everything was in order. One of the key items to check in the vehicle was the oxygen supply which was used to sustain a patient during an evacuation. The crew members would also check their personal kit and clean their personal weapons. Since a convoy often involved a lot of waiting time, Alex also made sure he brought a book.
- The ambulance vehicle was usually staffed by two qualified medics, one who doubled as the driver and the other as the crew commander and radio operator. During quiet periods, they were occasionally accompanied by a curious member of the field hospital staff, who were interested in getting out of camp and seeing the surrounding territory.

- At 05:30 hours on the day of the convoy, they would attend the convoy commander's orders. Then they would finalize their personal preparations and assemble at the vehicles. Before departing, a radio check was conducted to ensure that every vehicle was able to communicate. This usually took some time, as one or more vehicles often required last-minute trouble shooting.
- Finally, the convoy would pull out of the camp with a Cougar armoured vehicle leading and another one following at the end. The ambulance usually took up its position as the second-to-last vehicle.

Depending on the nature of the convoy, the vehicles in-between would differ. If the convoy was going to the airport in Sarajevo, or one of the outlying positions, 2½-ton cargo trucks operated by the transport troop would carry supplies or soldiers going to or returning from leave. If it was a humanitarian relief convoy operated by the United Nations Refugee relief agency, civilian-pattern trucks would carry foodstuffs, blankets, or medical supplies. If it was a convoy to one of the arms collection points, engineer squadron vehicles would carry the personnel and material to be used to destroy the ordnances and weapons that had been collected there.

Scenes from different patrols and convoys (Photos provided by Alex Martel.)



Scenes from different patrols and convoys (Photos provided by Alex Martel.)



Alex remembers that these convoys would often get stopped at roadblocks established by one or another of the belligerent groups. Sometimes it seemed like every little locality established their own roadblocks. The convoy commanders had to approach each roadblock and negotiate passage. This was sometimes difficult, especially later in the day, if the belligerents staffing the roadblocks had been drinking. At one roadblock, Alex remembers seeing NATO jets fly over and drop flares in a show-of-force aimed at facilitating passage.



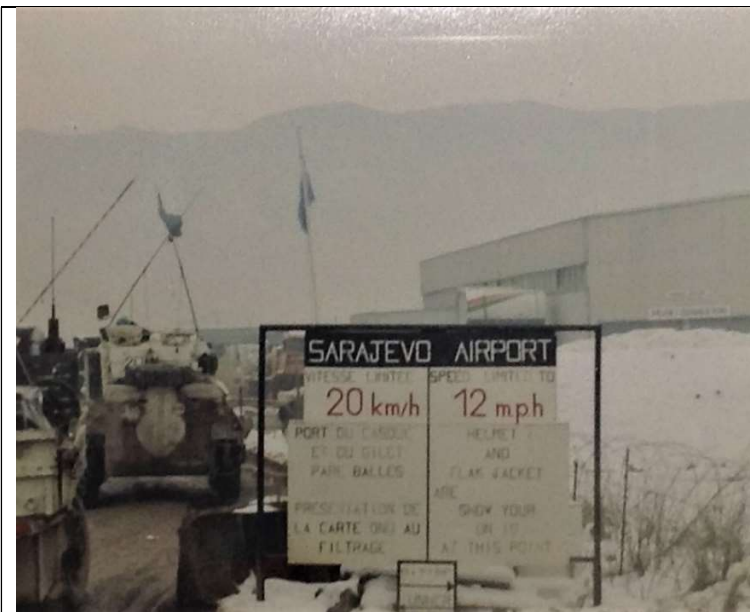
Children looking for hand outs, and war-damaged buildings, were frequently spotted during patrols and convoys. The soldiers often handed out rations or other items. (Photos provided by Alex Martel.)

On one occasion, Alex and his assistant/driver accompanied an armoured troop that had been assigned to temporarily occupy a buffer zone between two groups of belligerents. Once the troop was in position and everything went quiet, the ambulance was approached by several civilians in need of medical assistance. Officially, the medical staff had been told that they were not to provide health care to the local population, notably because it might overwhelm their capacity, exhaust their medical supplies, and give the perception of favoritism towards one belligerent group or another. Alex and the other medical staff, however, found it hard to suppress their compassion in certain circumstances. Alex remembers the visit of a young teenage boy who approached him with a very swollen, and possibly broken, hand wrapped in some leaves. Alex unwrapped the hand and was applying pressure to it when it erupted, projecting a foul-smelling liquid onto him and his assistant/driver. He cleaned and dressed the wound and gave the boy some painkillers. Later, when his team was replaced at the site, he informed his replacement about the boy and asked them to follow-up if the boy returned.

The medical team was also asked to intervene in certain other situations. On one occasion, Alex and his team had to take an ambulance to recover a civilian whose Moped had collided with one of the battle

group's transport trucks. To avoid potential conflicts with the local community, that casualty was treated at the camp hospital for a concussion and a broken limb before being released back into town.

On several other occasions, Alex and other members of the medical team were asked, as a good-will measure, to transport civilian patients to a local hospital. On one such mission, they went to Zenica to transfer of a 5-year-old child in the terminal phase of Leukemia. On this and several other occasions, Alex got to enter the local hospitals and found them to be less clean, less well-heated and less well-staffed than Montreal area Hospitals. During his visits to the hospitals, he was surprised by the interest of some of the civilians in his C7 rifle. At least one person who saw its scope, asked him if he was a sniper.



*A Canadian convoy from Visoko arrives at the Sarajevo Airport
Photo provided by Alex Martel*



*Tall buildings used by snipers in "Sniper Alley" near the airport in Sarajevo
Photos provided by Alex Martel*

Assignment in Fojnica at the Drin Institution for Mentally Disabled Persons

On or around 12 November, shortly after Alex arrived in Bosnia, a confrontation between Bosniak and Croat forces created a problem at two institutions that cared for mentally disabled patients. Located several kilometers from each other, one institution cared for children and the other cared for adults. At one stage of the armed confrontation, one was in the hands of one group of belligerents and the other was in the hands of the other. Eventually, the Croat forces seemed to gain the upper hand and started to consolidate their control over the area. Stuck in unfriendly territory, the mostly Bosniak hospital staff abandoned their charges and left them to fend for themselves. At this point the United Nations mobilized different groups of soldiers to help address the situation. Apparently, this was the second time this had happened during the year, except the roles of the belligerents had been reversed during

the previous episode. It was a sad development in a community who's religious and community leaders had agreed, for several months, to ignore the bigger conflict and live together peacefully.

Back at the camp in Visoko, Alex was told that he was going to be sent alone to the Drin Hospital the following day. Later that night, around midnight, he was woken from his sleep and told that the mission was cancelled. Around 03:00 hours he was woken again to be told that the situation had changed again and that the mission was back on, but that more Canadian and Danish soldiers would be participating.

The next day around 13:30 hours, the Canadian convoy finally left Visoko. After taking a circuitous route through the mountains to avoid conflict zones, it arrived at the Drin hospital in Fojnica at around 17:30 hours. On arrival, Alex spotted some news reporters parked out front, so he started to fear the worse. As he entered the building, he found the stench of urine and feces to be overwhelming. He and his sergeant went upstairs where they found mentally and physically handicapped children screaming for food and attention. The patients had been on their own without care for two days. The soldiers stored their weapons and gear in the first-floor conference room and set about addressing the problem. One soldier took charge of cleaning dirty clothes and sheets, another cooked supper, while others fed and provided water to the children. By 20:00 hours all the patients were fed, but without light, heating, electricity, or hot water, cleaning was not possible until morning. The shocked and exhausted soldiers bedded down in the hospital conference room. All the glass had been blown out of the conference room windows, so it was a very cold night.

The next morning, the troops were woken by the explosion of two artillery rounds in the hospital yard. One of these explosions landed very close-to the building and impaired Alex's hearing for several weeks. The soldiers quickly set about setting things in order and cleaning and feeding the patients, something that was completed around 11:00 hours. Shortly after, Canadian reinforcements arrived. As well, some of the regular hospital staff showed up, having been reassured by the pause in fighting and the presence of the United Nations soldiers. Alex and the other medics continued working there for several days until the institution was able to re-establish normal operations.

During this time, a Doctor from the Danish contingent came on-site to inspect the facilities. He sat with Alex and discussed the situation. He explained that the hospitals were generally well run, but that an attack by the Croats had overrun them, so the Bosniak staff had fled. He felt that the Croats should withdraw and let normal operations continue. Alex is not sure how the tactical situation evolved, but the arrival of winter and a significant snowfall on November 16th seemed to result in the cessation of local hostilities.

Initially, the hospital had no heating, no electricity, and the kitchen was not operating. The central heating system had stopped when the coal supply had run out. The UN forces had to resolve the situation by organising a delivery of coal, and by installing generators.

During this time, Alex continued to work on site, helping provide patient care. Many of the patients were mentally or physically deficient, while others suffered from mental disorders. Some of the patients were bed-ridden, while, strangely, others were perfectly normal. Despite their handicaps and complications, each patient had a distinct personality, and many were easy to adore. Alex remembers that one Canadian senior non-commissioned officer wanted to adopt a normal child who had been born

at the institution and resigned from the armed forces almost on the spot to do so. During this time, Alex also assisted with the care of a baby, Edlina, who, after having barely survived the ordeal, was very close to death. The Canadian Forces padre was called in to baptise her, and later, to read the little girl her last rights.

Nearby, at the adult facility¹, the situation was more chaotic. Many adult patients were free to come and go on their own. Some left during the day and returned to the hospital in the evening with injuries that needed to be treated, and some returned carrying unexploded munitions. Some were violent and they occasionally fought amongst themselves. One patient, who was particularly violent, killed several others and had to be isolated. Alex was called upon to visit that hospital and treat several injuries there. He also helped with the burial of an elderly patient. She seemed to have died from natural causes, but the stress and exposure could not have helped.

Alex and his fellow soldiers found this work to be particularly challenging mentally, largely because of the hopelessness and uncertainty of the situation. It was certainly not something that they had trained for.



¹ After the rotation, a board of inquiry investigated the misbehaviour of certain Canadian soldiers at the Bakovici Hospital including misuse of alcohol, abuse of patients, and sexual misconduct. It found that there had been unprofessional conduct on the part of certain individuals and that appropriate disciplinary action had not been taken at the time. The board of inquiry also found that most of the soldiers at the location had acted appropriately and provided an invaluable service to the patients.



At left, a view from the hospital window of Danish troops burying a deceased patient and, at right, a view of hospital with United Nations vehicles in parking area. Photos provided by Alex Martel

Road accident in Zenica

On the 29 November 1993, a significant road accident sadly resulted in the death of two Canadian soldiers. A Cougar armoured vehicle slid off a bridge and landed upside-down in a river. The Medical platoon was called on to supply an ambulance for the recovery operation. This call further exposed the weakness regarding the Medical platoon's vehicles and resulted eventually in the delivery of the new Bison ambulances. That morning, none of the platoon's 1¼-ton truck ambulances could be started on its own, and then when one was finally started, it broke down on the road and never reached the recovery site. Consequently, the deceased were returned to the camp in an ambulance operated by the British Forces. Alex was one of the medical staff that prepared the deceased for repatriation to Canada. Later, he and the other soldiers then said good-bye to their fallen comrades in a special ceremony.

Assignment in Srebrenica

Later during the rotation, Alex was part of a medical team that spent two weeks in Srebrenica. The area was an enclave approximately sixteen kilometers by fourteen kilometers, high in the mountains of eastern Bosnia. It was inhabited by approximately 30,000 Muslim Bosniaks, many of whom were refugees from the surrounding areas. It was under siege by Bosnian Serb troops who continuously harassed the residents with mortar, artillery, and rifle fire from their positions in the surrounding hills.

At this location, different international organisations had established outposts from which they provided humanitarian assistance. The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHRC) distributed food, and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) distributed clothing. A Swedish non-governmental-aid-organisation built shelters for refugees and "Doctors without Borders / Médecins sans frontières" operated a medical clinic.

The United Nations Protection Force had also positioned a Canadian infantry company from the battle group in and around the town to help ensure the security of these organisations and to "observe the peace." The company's headquarters was in town, but it operated observation posts in the surrounding hills.

A small medical section was co-located at the company headquarters. From there, it operated a small medical post and provided medical assistants for the resupply convoys going to the outlying observation posts. Generally, medical teams from Visoko were rotated through this location every two weeks. Living conditions there were very rudimentary. The headquarters was very cramped, and there were no fresh rations, no showers, and no toilets. Personnel defecated in garbage bags which were disposed of at the local dump.



Scenes from Srebrenica – On the left, logs cut for firewood are stored in front of apartments. Wood was used for heating and cooking as gas and heating oil were not available due to the siege. In the centre, an apartment building and pedestrian traffic in town. On the right, the Canadian base for operations included some old, armoured vehicles. Other pictures of Srebrenica are provided at the end of this document. (Photos provided by Alex Martel)

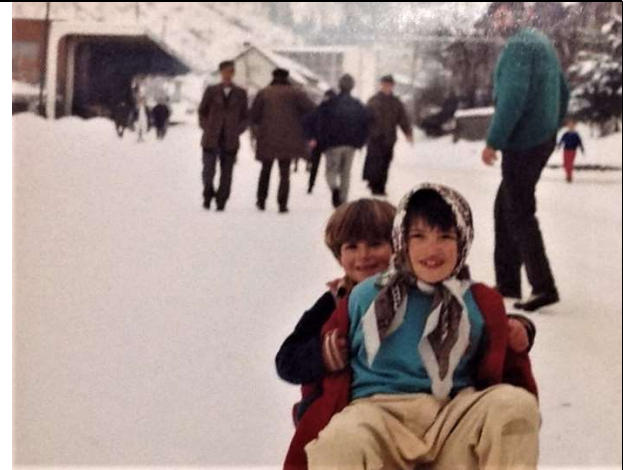
At the Srebrenica camp, Alex was able to attend some of the company commander’s morning meetings and hear about the different issues. He was surprised to hear that some of the outlying observation posts had taken and returned fire and needed a resupply of ammunition. He also understood that the company commander had met with a representation of the Bosnian Serb forces who had asked him to withdraw the Canadian company from the area. Alex saw, however, that the company commander and the other members of the outpost seemed to be quite committed to continue with their mission, despite the unfavourable conditions.

The staff of the Canadian medical post at Srebrenica unofficially collaborated with the “Doctors without Borders / Médecins sans frontières” staff, notably by sharing some of its supplies and food, and helping them provide services. On a typical weekend, the “Doctors without Borders / Médecins sans frontières” clinic might see 150 residents suffering from a variety of minor problems such as lesions, scabies, ulcers, and other intestinal ailments. By helping, Alex and the other Canadian medics were able to meet some of the local population and better understand how they were living. In 1995, after he had returned to Canada, Alex was heartbroken to hear how the community had been purged from the area, and how almost all the male residents, including young boys and elderly men had been killed.²

² Source Wikipedia: The Srebrenica massacre of 1995 was a genocidal killing of possibly 8,000 Bosniaks, mainly men and boys, in and around the town of Srebrenica. The killing was perpetrated by units of the Army of Republika Srpska under the command of General Ratko Mladić. In April 1993, the UN declared the besieged enclave of Srebrenica in the Drina Valley of northeastern Bosnia a “safe area” under UN protection. However, in July 1995, the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) was not able to prevent the town's capture by the VRS and the subsequent massacre. Serbia and Montenegro were cleared of direct responsibility for or complicity in the massacre but were found responsible for not doing enough to prevent the massacre and not prosecuting those responsible, in breach of the Genocide Convention.



Alex poses for a picture with a group of children outside the Canadian outpost in Srebrenica. Photos provided by Alex Martel



Children outside the Canadian outpost in Srebrenica. Photos provided by Alex Martel

Intimidation tactics against United Nations troops

When Alex first arrived at the Camp in Visoko, he could hear plenty of combat sounds from the surrounding hills. He was also aware that convoys often received harassing fire in certain areas.

In the area immediately around the camp, however everything seemed peaceful. The battle group was isolated from the population in a compound that was surrounded by barbed wire. The soldiers were able to see what was happening in the surrounding community and interact occasionally with children that would approach the fence, looking for a handout or some conversation. This was destined to change over the next few months.

The first hint of trouble came when the Bosnian Serbs decided, around 21 November, to ask the United Nations Forces to leave by the end of the month. To back up their demand, they blocked certain of the roads that were used for resupply. During the next few weeks, the battle group had to ration water, food, and fuel. Ration packs rather than fresh foods were used to feed the soldiers, and the heat was turned off in the sleeping areas to save fuel. Concurrently, there was an increase in artillery or mortar shells that landed in the fields surrounding the camp. While none of these rounds landed within the camp boundaries, the Canadian soldiers were required to wear their helmets and flak jackets whenever they worked outside. Further, when in the parking areas, they were instructed to run from point-to-point and to avoid meeting in groups. Alex is not aware of how the issue was resolved but the blockade was eventually withdrawn even though the United Nations troops stayed in place.

At the beginning of the tour, the battle lines separating Serbs, Muslims and Croats had generally been established. The fighting had lulled, and significant engagements were limited. In or around March 1994, the negotiations for a more permanent settlement started. This resulted in an increase of activity when each faction tried to jockey for a better position before the final lines were drawn.

In response to the increased level of aggression, additional protection was added to the camp perimeter by filling hessian cloth frames with earth to build a thick wall. This made the Canadian soldiers feel even more isolated.

Vacation and leave

During the rotation, each participant was entitled to a two-week vacation and a four-day holiday.

For his four-day holiday, Alex participated in an organised trip to Rome, Italy. To minimize administration and to maximize the use of vacation time, the battle group had established a permanent vacation centre there. This centre was staffed by another member of the Royal Canadian Hussars, Master-Corporal William Menon. Menon had gone to Bosnia to be an armoured crew member, but he was redeployed to the vacation center in Rome, when it was found that he was fluent in Italian. In Rome, Menon had reserved hotel rooms for each of the vacationing soldiers and made arrangements for them to be joined by their partners from Canada. For Alex, with such fine food, accommodations, and company, it was like going to heaven. For his two-week vacation, Alex chose to return to Canada and visit his loved ones.

The route away from the camp to the outside world was either through the international airport at Sarajevo, when everything was quiet and the weather was good, or through the port city of Split, when it was not. Since the trip to Split took two days, it was not practical for the four-day vacations and it shortened the leave for the soldiers going to Canada. Alex was lucky that he was able to leave through Sarajevo and fully enjoy his both his holiday and vacations. Other soldiers were not so lucky, and some became very frustrated when the fog, weather, or war activity prevented their plane from taking them away.

In 1993, the means of international telecommunications were still quite limited. Alex wrote regular letters to his loved ones, but these took about two weeks to deliver. Each soldier was also allocated two 10-minute telephone calls per month. However, this was like playing the lottery, because if no one answered or if the phone was busy, the caller lost his turn.

The camp had a junior ranks club where the soldiers could relax and socialize, when they were not on duty. At the beginning of the rotation, there was no limit on the amount of beer that could be consumed by any one person. However, after one soldier got inebriated and threatened others with his bayonet, this privilege was withdrawn. After that, each soldier was given a ration of two beers per day.



On his way to Bosnia, Alex did a little tourism in Paris when his airplane broke down. Photo provided by Alex Martel.



Alex with a Unimog ambulance truck at Visoko. Photo provided by Alex Martel.

Return to Canada

In May 1994, the battle group started leaving in phases as the replacements started arriving. Alex was one of the soldiers scheduled to leave with the second of three large groups of soldiers. They flew from Sarajevo to Zagreb and then on to Quebec City. There, it took all day to go through customs and return weapons before a dismissal parade was held late in the day.

Life thereafter

During his tour, Alex felt he had performed well. He had been the first responder for several situations and had helped provide a variety of important medical services within and outside the camp. His superiors must have agreed, because they tried hard to convince him to volunteer for a subsequent mission that was being deployed to Rwanda. Alex, on the other hand, had already decided to return to McGill University, complete his Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and focus on building his career and family.

At the time that Alex was interviewed for the purposes of preparing this document, he was working in the sales department of a prominent provider of medical equipment

Additional pictures - various scenes from Srebrenica, a town under siege in Eastern Bosnia

The town's economy had collapsed, and its inhabitants carried on as best they could. On the left, note the absence of vehicles on the street, as fuel was rare. On the right, a group of men dividing up some fresh meat. Food supplies were limited.



Below: residents stripped the surrounding hills of trees and used the wood for heating and cooking.





Above: Since the supply of electrical power had been cut off as part of the siege, some of the local workmen had built their own hydro-electric power generating stations.

Below: As a medic, Alex travelled in the vehicles that resupplied the Canadian Infantry sections that operated observation posts high in the hills around the town.



