



In August, 2016, the Washington-Centerville Public Library and the Teen Department wished teen librarian [Charlie Hacker](#) well as he set off for an [18 month deployment](#) as part of the 37th Infantry Brigade Combat Team of the Ohio Army National Guard. Follow Charlie's unit on his [Combat Team's facebook page](#) or the [KFOR Multi-national Battle Group East facebook page](#) and check out his [library photo album](#)! Read about Charlie in this [Not Your Average Librarian](#) article.

9/26/2016: Made it to Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas. We will be here for about a month doing pre mobilization training and medical screenings. I took some pictures of the mountains here which are really cool. It's been a long last few weeks as we prepare to leave for Germany in just a couple weeks. We were doing some weapons training in the pictures and this a friend of mine with me. We had just finished qualifying with our M4 in the picture with me and Staff Sergeant Little. In the picture of me shooting I am doing advanced shooting techniques with an M9. In the last picture I am coaching someone how to shoot an M4. The last picture is a group shot of all of us that shot the M4.



10/28/2016: We all made it here to Hohenfels, Germany for the last piece of our training before moving to Kosovo. Along the way we picked up another unit that will be serving with us, 1-33 Cavalry, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne (RAKKASANS), and the 20th Public Affairs detachment from Fort Lewis in Washington. I have made some new friends from Albania since we are part of a multi-national group and he tells me that he wants to move to Florida when he retires. We have done some pretty unique training here in Hohenfels, mostly riot control driven and the most unique was the fire phobia training ran by the Portuguese. They basically throw a Molotov cocktail at you and you have to get out of the fire. Remember to follow the 37ths facebook page for some pictures and updates to what the 37th is doing!

11/20/2016: We finally made it to Kosovo and Camp Bondsteel. We carried out the transfer of authority ceremony on 19 November, where we took over command of KFOR Multi-national Battle Group East. The history is rich and the scenery is great here in Kosovo. There are many Roman ruins and the Church of the



Black Madonna (church where mother Teresa found her calling) is near Camp Bondsteel. They also love the U.S. here. It is not uncommon to see an Albanian flag and an American flag flying outside of a business or



a home. A lot of the highways here are named after Americans. There is Bill Clinton Blvd, Beau Biden Hwy and George Bush Highway. Mount Duke which overlooks Bondsteel is stunning. Food here is amazing. One of my new favorite restaurants is Apollonia 1991 in Faerizaj, one of the best places to eat ever.

2-6-2017: Camp Bondsteel recently got buried in snow. We experienced the worst snowstorm in the Balkans in years. We are still digging our way out of 24 inches of snow. I also recently got to visit the neighboring



nation, Macedonia, and got to see some of the monuments there. One of the best is the Alexander the Great statue of him riding the horse, which overlooks his father's statue on the other side of the city. Also in Macedonia is the location of the once Sacred Heart of Jesus Roman Catholic Church, where Mother Teresa was baptized. Inside the museum there are many items that belonged to Mother Teresa, who was from Macedonia, including her head scarf. One of the most unique things that I have done recently is teach Military writing to the host nation's security force, with help from Corporal Gashani. On our free time we created a basketball league as well and I helped put together a team that finished as runners up, it was an exciting day, included in that picture is Captain

Keller, Lieutenant Colonel Mackin, Sergeant First Class Williams, Thomas from Torres, and myself. Some things to look forward to I will have pictures for soon are from a DANCON march which is a 25 miles road march carrying 35 pounds in a ruck sack, sponsored by the Danish Contingent here and the edelweiss, where you climb a mountain up to the elevation of about 7500 ft, and earn the German mountain troops badge.

3-31-2017: Winter is finally over here in the Balkans and spring has arrived. I recently participated in some awesome events. I earned one of the most coveted foreign badges, the German Schutzensnur, for my proficiency on the Germans weapon systems. It was an awesome experience working with German soldiers to earn this silver badge. I also went on an air patrol of the entire country in a Blackhawk helicopter. Last, but not least, we recently had an exciting visitor. Senator John McCain came to visit Camp Bondsteel just to see a select group of service members, myself included!



5-5-2017: [Not Your Average Librarian](#), May 4, 2017, [37th Infantry Brigade Combat Team](#). When most people stop and think about an American Soldier, they picture an infantryman; a gruff, beaten down guy living in the dirt. A children's librarian is not what most people would imagine. However, that is exactly what Sgt. Charlie Hacker is.

6-26-2017: As our time gets short here, I look back at what I've experienced and the people I've met over the last 9 months. I've taught local forces, met a very gracious society of people, trained with NATO, and viewed historical landmarks that are often forgotten in History class. Nothing was more rewarding than to see what KFOR means to the people here. Last month, I took a small trip to Germany for an Article 6 visit where I met Lieutenant General Flora Darpino, the Army Judge Advocate. I was able to spend a day in Frankfurt and saw the Frankfurt am Main area which was bombed heavily in WWII. In one of my photos, you can see that many of the buildings were burned. I sent a picture of what it looked like after the bombings and how it looks now. Congressman Steve Stivers, who is also Brigadier General Steve Stivers, from Ohio visited with us as well. I also recently went on a flight with the doors open. Seeing the mountains and the top of Mount Duke (the mountain in the background of Camp Bondsteel) is something I will never forget. Shortly, I will redeploy to the United States and take a break before returning to the Library. I look forward to seeing family, friends, and coworkers again.



8-2-2017: Welcome Home Charlie! More than 75 library staff and patrons surprised Charlie with a [Welcome Home](#) event at Centerville Library. Charlie was clearly touched by everyone's support, and specifically thanked Washington-Centerville Public Library for their ongoing support of his military service. Charlie presented a flag, flown over Kosovo in a Blackhawk helicopter, to Assistant Director Liz Fultz. Charlie returns to his duties at the Library in late September.



9-22-2017: The Teen Department wants to congratulate Charlie on his move to the Adult Services Department. Charlie says he enjoyed working teen programs and will miss it, but says he's not far away, so feel free to stop by the Reference Desk at Centerville Library any time to say hi or ask a reference question.