

MARTIN, (Capt.) Douglas

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Quinte native helps keep peace

Capt. Douglas Martin can't wait to return to his family, Canada

By Nancy Gummow

The Intelligencer

A Nicholson Catholic College graduate is on the bloody frontlines of Yugoslavia's civil war. But he'd rather be home.

Capt. Douglas Martin — one of more than 1,000 Canadians working with the United Nations peacekeeping forces — is stationed in Daruvar Croatia, 300 kilometres north west of Yugoslavia's worst battle zones.

"It's an extremely volatile situation," said Capt. Martin, 32, yesterday from Croatia. "There's an extreme amount of hate and distrust among the factions."

The United Nations forces — including the Canadians — hope peace will prevail in the Bosnia-Herzegovina capital of Sarajevo, site of the most intense land battles.

"It's nerve-wracking," said

Capt. Martin. "But we're giving people a way out of a very violent argument. And a lot of people's lives are being saved because we're here."

Capt. Martin, who works as a military press liaison, left Halifax, N.S., in April. When Capt. Martin's six-month tour ends in September he returns to his Maritime home.

"It's quite easy to make yourself crazy if you get homesick," said Capt. Martin, who has a wife and daughter in Canada.

But there's no denying Capt. Martin misses Canada.

"You can't describe how good your home is until you leave it. There's no country in the world like Canada. It's an incredible nation."

Even though Capt. Martin is fighting for peace, fond memories about his Quinte childhood aren't lost in the battles of war.

"I miss the very even pace of life they have in Belleville," he said. "I miss the Bay of Quinte, and the people are so nice and friendly. It's a big difference from

there to here."

Capt. Martin grew near CFB Trenton, where his dad was stationed with the Canadian military. He remembers acting in the Belleville Theatre Guild production "Fiddler on the Roof" during the 1970's. One of his first jobs was at a hamburger joint on Highway 2.

Capt. Martin spent five-and-a-half years in the Quinte area and attended school at Bayside Secondary School, but graduated from Nicholson Catholic College.

"Those were the days when every high school dance ended with the song Stairway to Heaven," said Capt. Martin, in an almost wistful tone.

Capt. Martin left the Quinte area for Toronto in 1980 shortly after graduating. Two years later he joined the forces. He climbed the military ranks and calls his Yugoslavian tour of duty the highlight of his career.

Said Capt. Martin: "The kind of things I'm experiencing will never leave me. This is one of the most honorable jobs anyone can do."

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