

Milton soldier walks fine line in ravaged Balkans



Photo courtesy of NATIONAL DEFENCE

Milton's Matthew Herder is a machine gunner currently stationed in Bosnia, where the Canadian military continues peacekeeping efforts.

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
The Champion

At one time or another just about everyone wishes for peace on Earth. Some put the hope into action.

Matthew Herder now finds himself in the latter group, helping champion the call for multi-national harmony in the former Yugoslavia.

The 24-year-old Milton native is among hundreds of Canadian peacekeeping soldiers currently stationed in Bosnia, where ethnic tension and the potential for violence simmer.

"There hasn't been too much trouble here lately but there are so many different factions — Muslims, Croats, Serbians — and they're all very nationalistic," said Private Herder during a recent overseas telephone interview.

The Bishop Reding Secondary School graduate is part of mortar platoon with the 3rd Battalion of the Royal Canadian Regiment.

These three dozen platoon troops currently make their home in Coralici, near the Croatian border, which had to be moved back five kilometres during a minor holiday skirmish.

Recalled Private Herder, "There really wasn't any resistance at the time, but there's always a chance they (Croats) will want that area back."

The young man is a machine gunner with the quick reaction force, whose primary function is to provide indirect fire support in all cases of violence.

Fortunately this hasn't been needed in the six months he's been away from home, although there have been some instances requiring an emergency response.

"Back in September there was a rocket launch attack against one of the less popular political factions just 40 kilometres away from our camp," recounted Private Herder, who said worst-case scenario training in Ottawa thoroughly prepared him for responsibilities in Bosnia.

"There were no casualties but we did have to pro-

• see BOSNIA on page 8

Board officials are worried RC students will go public

• from CATHOLIC on page 3

elementary schools.

Grants follow students around nowadays, so provincial funding is not a major factor at the secondary school level, noted Mr. Johnson.

He said students often simply attend the high school that is newer and more convenient, regardless of their religion or the

school's affiliation.

"There is a new school phenomena," said Mr. Johnson. "When Notre Dame opened in the central northeast part of Burlington, there was no secondary public school nearby. So people clearly chose to go to school in their neighbourhood."

Talks early last week failed to resolve the Catholic board-teacher labour dispute.



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