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LIMERICK'S SOLDIERS HEAD FOR KOSOVO

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By Mike Dwane

TWENTY soldiers from Limerick's Sarsfield Barracks head to Kosovo next week to take part in peacekeeping operations at a time of heightened tensions between Albanians and Serbs.

Ethnic violence erupted between the two sides in recent weeks with up to 40 people dying in the violent clashes.

But the Limerick soldiers while wary of the dangers they face are looking forward to their tour of duty in which they hope they will never have to use their weapons.

Corporal Alan Hayes,



Private Trevor Corbett, left, and Corporal Alan Hayes, both from Sarsfield Barracks and heading off to Kosovo

Corbett and Private Trevor Corbett, Raheen are part of the 20-strong troop from Sarsfield Barracks' 12th Infantry Battalion joining up with the UN mandated KFOR mission.

Their first overseas tour

sees them based at Camp Clarke outside Pristina, capital of the province where ethnic tensions have once again flared in recent weeks.

"We'll be doing foot and vehicle patrols," said Corporal Hayes, who has been

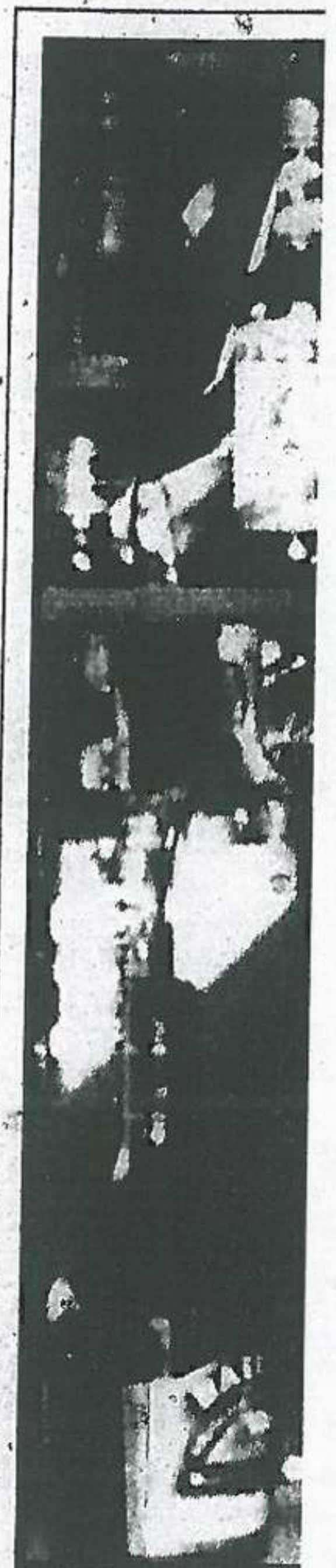
In the defence forces for four years.

"As you saw in recent news reports, there's a lot of trouble and antagonism between the two main factions and NATO needed to bring in something like 5,000 extra troops."

The soldiers from the Edward Street barracks were not drafted in to deal with the latest explosion of violence however and have been training in Kilkenny and the Glen of Imaal (for helicopter training) for the last six months. Already in the region are the Limerick based Kosovo Ambulance project who have brought an ambulance, fire engine and truck along with medical supplies to the Shale area.

Both soldiers are proud

P2



PJ Barry with

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By BARRY

ONE man del beat the sm built his own that he and hi drink and smc comfort.

In a defiant the smoking b from Ardnacr 'his silent par barman' - Mac have establish Shebeen.

PJ has stock specially conv with all types liquor, cigaret and nicotine " currently beer

New Age Interiors

Paul's new fan clu

By BARRY DUGGAN

WHEN Munster star Paul O'Connell...

Mr Ryan.

At Wednesday's opening, Paul O'Connell told his young fans that it was a pleasure to...

The children at the pre-school, Ryan, Scott, Lau Patrick are aged b...

Soldiers

• FROM P1

to be part of the Irish army's distinguished history in peacekeeping operations from the Congo to the present day.

"I suppose we're known as a people to possess the gift of the gab and we tend to talk with the mouth rather than with the weapon," said Corporal Hayes.

The weapons they will be bringing include Steyr rifles and 50 calibre machine guns but they won't shoot unless shot at or in immediate danger. They are also equipped with wooden batons and shields for riot control.

The bulk of the work will be "low level peace support operations" including stop and search duties in what is one of the world's hotspots for arms, drugs and even people

trafficking.

Though his first tour of duty, this will be Private Corbett's second time in Kosovo. The former Sexton Street student worked there for the humanitarian aid agency Friends of Bosnia, where he had to help clear crime scenes and dispose of bodies after atrocities.

"I remember once we walked into a minefield and only noticed when one of our escorts checked out his global positioning system. We had to retrace our steps fairly carefully," recalled Private Corbett.

Around 40 people were killed and 1,000 injured (including 80 peacekeepers) in last month's violence and though Corporal Hayes's family sometimes wonder what he's at, he says "it's all part of the job."