

Kickin' it



ANTHONY DISALVO/THE BATTALION

Texas A&M Soccer Camp attendees **Whitney Brown** (left) and **Beth Merrifield** practice the "pass-back" drill at the O.R. Simpson Drill Field Monday. The camp, which started Sunday, will run through Thursday.

NATO forces uncover evidence of atrocities

PRISTINA, Yugoslavia (AP) — Ducking at the sound of gunfire, patrolling cautiously to avoid the ire of Serbs, thousands of NATO peacekeepers spread out Monday across Kosovo. Some uncovered grim evidence of atrocities as they tightened their control of the province.

Serb forces complying with the pullout ordered by NATO to end the 78-day air war mixed in with civilians fleeing in columns up to 500 vehicles long. Some ethnic Albanian homes were set ablaze by Serb troops leaving Kosovo.

Aiming to bring a measure of stability to the province shattered by war and a long history of ethnic hatred, NATO and U.S. forces sought to downplay the impasse over about 200 Russian soldiers occupying the Pristina airfield where the allies planned to establish headquarters.

NATO lead commander Lt. Gen. Michael Jackson insisted the airfield was not crucial to occupying forces, although the White House said Defense Secretary William Cohen and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright will meet their Russian counterparts in Helsinki, Finland, within days.

Kosovo's Serbs fear the majority of ethnic Albanians will take bloody revenge on them for years of oppression and for reported atrocities. The West, meanwhile, fears a Russian zone will lead to the partition of Kosovo.

Refugees, who began streaming out of Kosovo after the NATO bombing campaign began March 24, told of Serb slaughter and the massacre of innocent victims.

The accounts could not be independently confirmed at the time, and one of the peacekeepers' grueling tasks will be to investigate what happened. On Monday, they gingerly probed the town cemetery

Standoff raises questions about Russian intentions

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Kosovo airport standoff between NATO and Russia is more than a turf war.

To the Western allies, a main worry is that Russian troops independent of NATO could lead to a split in Kosovo, drawing the minority Serb population to a Russian-controlled zone and excluding the ethnic Albanians.

To the Russians it is a foot in the door, a means of asserting themselves in a part of the world where they held great influence before the collapse of the Soviet empire. It is a matter of national pride — and perhaps political solidarity with Slobodan Milosevic — that Russian troops in Kosovo not fall under NATO control.

Partitioning of Kosovo could

throw a wrench into the negotiations yet to come over the political future — the self-government the pro-Albanians have with Serbia.

Moscow and Belgrade placed on one side as the United States and NATO on the other.

Some suggest parallels to the division of Berlin after World War II, which led to the Berlin wall between East and West.

Those suggestions were drawn, Anthony Costello, a military analyst at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said.

"This isn't the Cold War," he said. "You aren't struggling for control of Europe."

in Kacanik, where the stench of decayed flesh hung heavy over a mass grave believed to contain 81 bodies.

British Capt. Andy Reeds said war-crimes investigators would be called in to examine the site, 30 miles south of Pristina.

Peacekeepers continued to pour into the battered Serbian province from neighboring Macedonia and Albania, and officials said about 15,000 allied troops had entered Kosovo by Monday.

A convoy of 1,200 U.S. Marines began crossing just south of Kacanik at first light, and U.S. forces took over the area, including the site of the graves, from the British troops.

One group of Marines took a main road to Pristina, a combat position behind the houses when they heard coming from houses a mile away.

"We were all a little nervous," Cpl. Will Rapier with the 8th Marines said. "We just hope to get this thing over so we can all go home."

Despite the tensions, troop movements went out a repeat of Sunday's tactical confrontations, when NATO forces shot a Serb in Pristina, and Serb forces killed one wounded another after firing at them from a car on a road of Prizren.

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