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Scott McDonald will trade his Metro Bus operator's uniform, this fall, for Army National Guard Military Police "cammies" and service as a peacekeeper in Kosovo.



Operator Scott McDonald to Start a New Chapter in Life

By RICH MORALLO

(July 1, 2004) A year ago Scott McDonald started a journal. He wanted to record the ups and downs of his life as a Metro operator driving Line 108 along Slauson Avenue in Los Angeles.

"I wanted to express my feelings on what it's like working on the bus day after day," says McDonald, a seven-year Metro employee at Arthur Winston Division 5. "The riding public doesn't see us as individuals with personalities and hobbies and lives, and I wanted to write about that."

This October, McDonald will be starting a new chapter in his diary. He'll be writing about his life as an Army specialist supporting the Kosovo peacekeeping mission in Yugoslavia.

"I'm a little nervous," admits McDonald, who serves with the Army National Guard's 40th Military Police Company. "Something bad could happen over there."

But mostly McDonald is proud to be part of history. "I'm eager and happy to be serving my country, to join in the campaign to keep the peace."

Grew up in South LA

McDonald grew up in South Los Angeles, near 61st Street and San Pedro Avenue. Initially he was uncertain about military service but he saw a couple of cousins join the Navy and the Army.

He finally joined the Reserves when he was 32 years old and completed basic training in Missouri. "At my age, I thought that was an

accomplishment, going through basic and running and competing against much younger soldiers."

Later, he went on assignments to Germany, Italy and San Luis Obispo.

Now facing an 18-month deployment overseas, McDonald will once again exchange his Metro blue operator's uniform and bus schedules for Army "cammies" and an M-16.

"Our job in Kosovo will be maintaining law and order, providing security for the military installation, and working crowd and riot control when necessary," the Metro operator says.

Responsible for weapons

He will be responsible for a Squad Automatic Weapon, which is a powerful machine gun, as well as a grenade launcher and a 9mm sidearm. "I hope I never have to use any of these weapons," he says.

McDonald also will be in charge of maintaining a four-passenger Humvee vehicle. "In the Army, we joke around and say that MP stands for 'Multi-Purpose.'"

"I'll miss my family and friends," says McDonald. But he plans to come back to Metro after his military leave and resume operator duties transporting Los Angeles residents to where they need to go.

"I'm also going to show my journal to some friends and get their opinion," says McDonald. "Maybe even get my journal published."