



# The IGUANA



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March 21, 2003

## Son grateful to MEDEL for saving father

By Spc. Chuck Wagner  
Editor

Medical emergency responders don't often know the results of their work once a patient leaves the clinic. For some Soto Cano personnel, a son's letters are energizing their sense of purpose in Honduras.

"We sometimes hear whether they survived or not, but that's usually all the feedback we get," says Capt. William Charles Harris III, an emergency medicine physician's assistant with MEDEL.

The clinic recently received several gripping letters from a patient's son, who's been updating the staff on his father's condition. Roberto Sempe



**Roberto Sempe Agurcia recovering in the hospital**

Valentine's father suffered a serious blow to the chest that caused a collapsed lung, internal bleeding and a broken leg in an automobile accident Feb. 24.

In a letter the son writes: *I truly regard all of the people involved in the operation as heroes, as to save a life is truly a gift that not all people can give and a most sacred one at that.*

The patient, Roberto Sempe Agurcia, a U.S. citizen now living in Honduras, was brought to Soto Cano's gates by a local civilian ambulance crew. First responders from the Soto Cano fire department initially treated the patient, until Harris and Sgt. Paula Demoney, an emergency medical technician, arrived in a MEDEL ambulance.

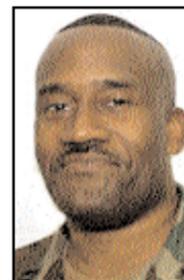
As Harris stepped into the civilian ambulance, the injured man firmly gripped his arm and asked if he was an American. Harris says the patient was relieved to hear he was being treated by a medical professional in the U.S. Army.

"I realized how important that was to him, and I was proud," says Harris, nodding his head slightly.

Harris made the decision to move the

**"Usually we just go about our work, and don't know how much that work affects a lot of people."**

**- Capt. William Charles Harris III**  
Emergency Medicine Physician's Assistant



patient to the base emergency room for a thorough assessment.

Agurcia was in great pain and had difficulties breathing.

A trauma team collected at the clinic minutes after an alarm went out on their beepers and immediately worked to stabilize the patient.

"The medics locked and loaded real quick that night. It was a good group effort by a bunch of medical experts," says Harris. "That's the most anyone treating a patient can want from a staff - that kind of professionalism. Most of all, it's the best a patient can hope for."

Harris inserted a chest tube into the patient under supervision of Dr. (Lt. Col.) Dennis L. Febinger. The tube helped re-inflate the chest cavity, greatly easing Agurcia's breathing and discomfort.

Agurcia was then transported to Tegucigalpa in a military helicopter. Dr. (Maj.) James L. Persson, a surgeon on the flight, changed out tanks for the oxygen-starved patient.

"I do believe that the helicopter flight saved his life. Based on how quickly he

See **GRATEFUL** page 7

## Air Force kicks in Stop-Loss

By Staff Sgt. A.J. Bosker  
Air Force Print News

WASHINGTON - The assistant secretary of the Air Force for manpower and reserve affairs has authorized the use of Stop-Loss to retain specific skills needed to meet national security objectives.

Effective May 2, 43 officer and 56 enlisted specialties will be affected by Stop-Loss.

"We do not take this action lightly," said Secretary of the Air Force Dr. James G. Roche.

"Stop-Loss is designed to preserve critical skills essential to supporting the global war on terrorism, while ensuring we're prepared to meet other contingencies."

"We've implemented Stop-Loss to ensure we have the necessary skilled personnel to conduct operations," said Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John P. Jumper. "We'll use it only as long as necessary to accomplish our mission."

Stop-Loss is being implemented across the active duty, Air Force Ready Reserve and Air National Guard for the affected career fields in the ranks of airman through colonel, according to Maj. Teresa L. Forest, chief of Air Force retirements and separa-

tion policy at the Pentagon.

Both the secretary and chief of staff are acutely aware that the Air Force is an all-volunteer force and that this action, while essential to meeting the service's worldwide obligations, is inconsistent with the fundamental principles of voluntary service.

"We take Stop-Loss seriously and are working hard to ensure the lives of our airmen, their families and their civilian employers are not disrupted any longer than is necessary to meet our national commitments," Jumper said.

Therefore, a waiver process will be implemented for those people with unique circumstances.

"We are doing our best to minimize this disruption," Roche said.

"And we will look at unique circumstances on a case-by-case basis and do all we can to offer appropriate relief."

"We understand the individual sacrifices that our airmen and their families will be making," Jumper said.

"We appreciate their unwavering support and dedication to our nation."

For more information about Stop-Loss, people can contact their local military personnel flight or the Air Force Personnel Center's Stop-Loss Control Center at (210) 565-2374 or DSN 665-2374.

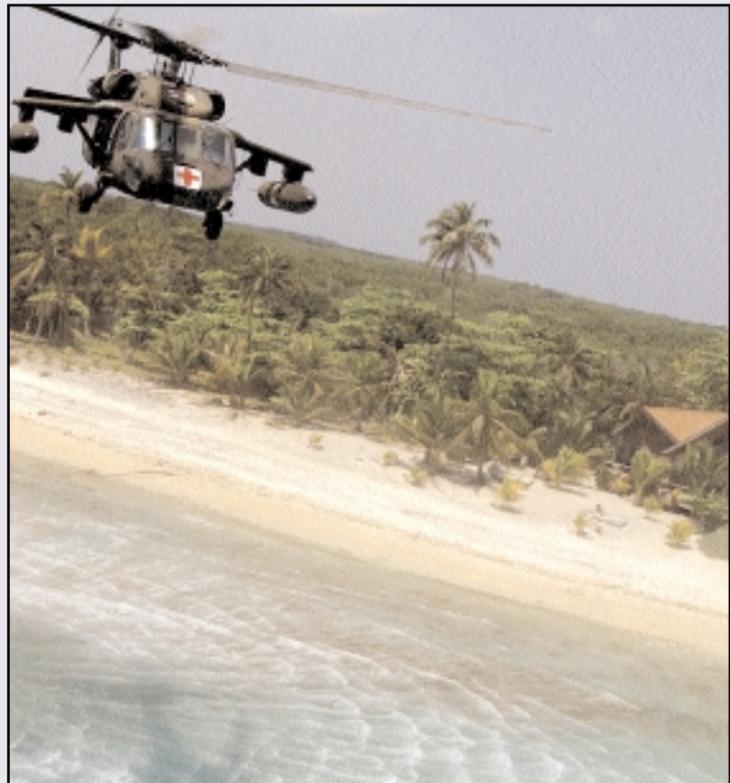


Photo by Spc. Chuck Wagner

### Island training

A U.S. Army Air Ambulance Detachment Black Hawk helicopter hovers over the waters off Utila, Honduras, during water rescue training last week. See story, photos page 4.





# Soldiers, airmen, should seek to improve here

By Lt. Col. Thomas S. Dean  
U.S. Air Force

Last September I was asked to write an article for the Iguana and did so from my heart. It is something I preach to AFFOR at every newcomer's in-brief, and mention at our monthly commanders' calls. Well, the editors at the Iguana have asked me to write again so I thought I would send the one I wrote six months ago because I still believe it, and with our change-over rate here, 50 percent of you have not heard this.

If you are a member of the 612th Air Base Squadron (AFFOR), you most likely have heard me express my desire for you to improve yourself during your time here in Soto Cano. I tell this to the new troops during my newcomers brief, I talk about it at all of our commanders' calls, and took the time to write it down on the AFFOR commander's philosophy memo for the troops. Now I would like to take a moment and use this medium to tell all the airmen and soldiers here at Soto Cano what I mean.

Throughout our careers and time in service we have heard the words "Duty, Honor, Country." These are important words used to express commitment to our nation and to our respective service; and how you should act towards the mission at hand. I would like to talk about your commitment to yourself and to you families at home. Call it personnel growth.

We all have a requirement to accomplish the mission, take care of ourselves, and take care of our families at home. To do this, I ask AFFOR personnel to work on three areas of personnel growth while stationed here at Soto Cano – physical, emotional and spiritual.

**Physical:** some stationed here are physically fit while others are out of shape. Some hit the gym, some jog or bike, and others lounge around their room channel surfing during their off time. What I am suggesting

## Commanders' Corner

is that no matter what your physical status, challenge yourself to improve during your time here. The operation tempo here is such that we all have free time on our hands - use it wisely. Set a personal goal; lose weight, lift more, run faster, trim fat; we all have room for improvement. Start with small goals if you need, then adjust them as you improve. (Please consult MEDEL if you're out of shape). Don't wait until New Year's to come up with a resolution, set it now and go do it!

**Emotional:** no single personal feeling can make your day or ruin someone else's. You need to be on top of your game, your coworkers do, and if you have a family back home, they need you emotionally sound also. There are multiple ways to stay emotionally fit. We have a very generous phone call policy here, 30 minutes a day not to exceed 90 minutes a week. Use those minutes to talk with loved ones, stay in touch with family and friends, or connect with an old buddy. Don't abuse, but use what we have.

The same can be said for email and online chatting after duty hours. Your emotions are directly connected to knowledge of what is happening with family and friends back home. We also have a wonderful MWR program here, get out and see the country and people. Make sure you're using all the quality of life initiatives available to you.

You earn 30 days of leave per year, make sure you use these days and take a vacation! Use your time wisely and focus on yourself, but also friends and family in the states. Final comment on emotions, keep an eye on coworkers!

**Spiritual:** How many of you stay up late Saturday night and sleep in Sunday morning? How many of you have visited the chapel and seen what they have to offer soldiers and airmen here? Do you even know where the chapel is? I would encourage you to attend just one Sunday morning (before Christmas) and experience the excitement our chaplain has. Did you know the chapel offers the same trips MWR offers, but at a reduced rate? Did you know they offer a variety of religious services? Did you know improving your spiritual well-being will improve your health and improve the emotional health of loved ones back in the states? I invite you all to visit the chapel and get involved. Be active in your spiritual walk. Take advantage of the entire God-given beauty of this place.

It is my philosophy that if you are aggressively improving your personal growth in these three areas during your free time, you grow individually, your relationships with friends and family at home will grow and will be emotionally sounder, and finally, the mission of JTF-B will improve.

## SUBMISSIONS

The Iguana is always looking for submissions. Any articles, photos or letters to be submitted to *The Iguana* should be sent to the PAO at [charles.wagner@jtfb.southcom.mil](mailto:charles.wagner@jtfb.southcom.mil) or delivered to the Public Affairs Office, Bldg. D-06. If you have questions about possible submissions call ext. 4150 or 4676 to talk to the editor.

## The Chaplain's Corner

### A Biblical perspective on soldiering

By Chaplain (Capt.) Matthew Hall  
Soto Cano Chapel

*"And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages." Luke 3:14, KJV.*

Soldiers of the Roman Army came out to hear the preaching of John the Baptist and came under conviction of their sins. They repented and trusted in God's mercy for their salvation. After being baptized, and as a public testimony of their faith, they then came to John to inquire about the possible conflict of their duties as soldiers and their responsibilities as Christians. It is important to note that John did not encourage them to go AWOL, or to desert, but to remain as soldiers, and conduct themselves in a manner befitting their new found faith in God. John gave them three basic principles by which to conduct themselves.

Soldiers should never be involved in:

1. **Violence:** This word literally means to intimidate or shake down for money. Soldiers of that era many times supplemented their meager incomes through extortion, demanding protection money from people.

Christian soldiers would never engage in such unscrupulous activity.

2. **Perjury:** Service in the Roman Legions often involved overseas tours lasting for decades. Soldiers were sometimes given land grants in the host country as payment for service. This required the confiscation of land from locals. In order to rob individuals of land and possessions, soldiers would bring them up on trumped up charges. After they were imprisoned, the soldiers would take their land.

3. **Greed:** The Bible tells us "the love of money is the root of all evil." The Apostle Paul wrote, "Godliness with contentment is great gain." Once an individual begins to lust for wealth, there will never be enough to satisfy. A meaningful relationship with God should satisfy the believer in Christ. Jesus tells us "seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things (food, clothing, and housing) will be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33). Soldiers should never serve for monetary gain, but for the honor to serve one's country.

These principles are codified in the Army Values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless-service, honor, integrity, and personal courage. Let us rise to the standard and glorify God by incorporating these principles into our everyday lives.

## The IGUANA

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March 21, 2003

# News

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## Soto Cano's Water Dawgs lend hand in Panama

By 1st Lt. Carla Pampe  
Public Affairs Director

When troops began arriving in Panama in January to set up the base camp for Joint Task Force Chiriqui's New Horizons exercise, they ran into a problem.

The two groups of National Guardsmen which were supposed to set up the camp's water purification system and build showers and laundry facilities had to pull out of the exercise due to real world deployments.

Joint Task Force Bravo immediately came to the rescue. They sent two water purification specialists from ARFOR, Staff Sgt. Eric Walborg and Spc. David Hinson to get things up and running. The two arrived at Camp Amistad Jan. 28, and helped set up the purification system along with plumbing, engineering and medical personnel.

"When we got here the base was in its initial construction," said Walborg. "The biggest challenge was falling in on someone else's equipment.

"The challenge was to try to pick up the ball for the folks who had to be mobilized," he said. "We had to figure out how we could use the existing equipment and limited personnel and still accomplish the goals of the task force."

Walborg and Hinson had to provide



Photo by Spc. Chad Menegay  
Spc. James Churchtown, left, of the 120th QM Detachment in Springville, Utah; Sgt. Andrea Vincent, center, Medel; and Staff Sgt. Eric Walborg, ARFOR, check the chlorine levels of Camp Amistad's water supply.

water for drinking, showers, laundry, dining trailer and the medical tent, as well as water for the job sites.

"We devised a plan to make a main water line that would be able to support the entire task force," Walborg said. "We built some plumbing lines, and it took about a week to get all the plumbing done. It's still a work in progress, and

there is still work to do."

Hinson said the hands-on training was great for him.

"I enjoyed the operations part - getting it set up and put into operation," he said. "Getting set up with the Reverse Osmosis Water Purification Unit was the biggest challenge for me. This one does 3,000 gallons per hour, whereas the one at JTF-Bravo does 600 gallons an hour."

Capt. Dominic Ciaramitaro, J-7 liaison to Joint Task Force Chiriqui, said the Water Dawgs saved the day.

"The Water Dawgs were the single reason this task force has a means to drink water, shower and do laundry," he said. "The task force lost their 77Ws in early January, leaving them unable to provide potable water to sustain their troops. Our Water Dawgs took two Reverse Osmosis Water Purification Units shambles, put them back together like a puzzle, and provided continuous potable water. They were a godsend."

Capt. Tom Clark, JTF-B Liaison officer to JTF-Chiriqui, also praised Walborg and Hinson.

"Their work was exceptional. I can't say enough good things about our Water Dawgs," he said.

"The biggest challenge you have here in Panama is the excessive heat and dust. It is wonderful to have showers to clean

off at the end of the day and clean water to keep you hydrated.

"When they got here, they did an assessment and found a lot of the equipment was damaged or poorly maintained, and in just a few days, they had it up and running," Clark added. "They are lifesavers - essential to getting this mission up and running."

Walborg said they couldn't have done it without help from the task force.

"We got together with the engineers, and everyone had a piece of the pie in getting this system up and running. People here bent over backwards to give us assistance."

Now that the system is up and running, two volunteers from the Utah National Guard will be the duration staff to man it. However, Walborg said Water Dawgs from Joint Task Force Bravo will continue to seek to get opportunity training in Panama and to provide technical guidance to them as needed.

"Our job at Task Force Bravo is to be ready for anything in these seven countries, and this is just an example of the kind of support we can provide," he said.

Author's note: Spc. Chad Menegay of the 196th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment in Columbus, Ohio, contributed to this article.



Photo by Spc. Chuck Wagner

### New MEDEL Top

MEDEL First Sgt. Joy M. Montoya shares a laugh with her replacement First Sgt. Alvin Holman after a change of responsibility ceremony March 5 outside the MEDEL clinic. Montoya will return to First Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas, after a six-month tour at Soto Cano Air Base. Her unit is on orders to deploy. Holman arrives from Headquarters, Headquarters Co., 1st Corps, Fort Lewis, Wash.

## Iguana Voladora takes off in April

By Spc. Chuck Wagner  
Editor

Airborne troops from across Central America are gearing up for the second Iguana Voladora sponsored by Joint Task Force Bravo and the Honduran air force April 8 through 11.

About 70 parachutists from Honduras, El Salvador, Mexico, Guatemala and the United States will participate. The U.S. contingent will include jumpers from Joint Task Force Bravo and the 7th Special Forces Group out of Fort Bragg, N.C.

The purpose of the multi-national event, which in English means "the flying iguana," is to build camaraderie among countries, share knowledge and tactics, and allow jumpers to earn airborne wings from the different participating nations, according to 1st Lt. Thomas J. Swint, action officer for the Voladora and ARFOR deputy S-3 engineer.

"It fosters unity among Central American countries. There are delegations of soldiers meeting soldiers, and it's not political," said Swint. "We also focus on the benefits and capabilities of Joint Task Force-Bravo."

The highlight of a series of Voladora events is the drop, which is scheduled April 9 and will take place at a drop zone near Tamara, about 45 minutes drive from Soto Cano. Spectators are welcome, but public transportation is not provided.

Other events include an informal airborne social at Soto Cano's "The Zone" beginning at 6:30 p.m. April 8, a banquet at the Soto Cano Dining Facility Annex 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. April 9, a soccer match at the base field starting at 8 a.m. April 10 and open house events at the Dining Facility, MEDEL, the fire station and the south end of the runway between 10 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. April 10.

All event dates may shift around the Tamara drop, said Swint. If weather conditions are poor on April 9, the drop will be April 10, and the other events pushed forward.





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# Feat



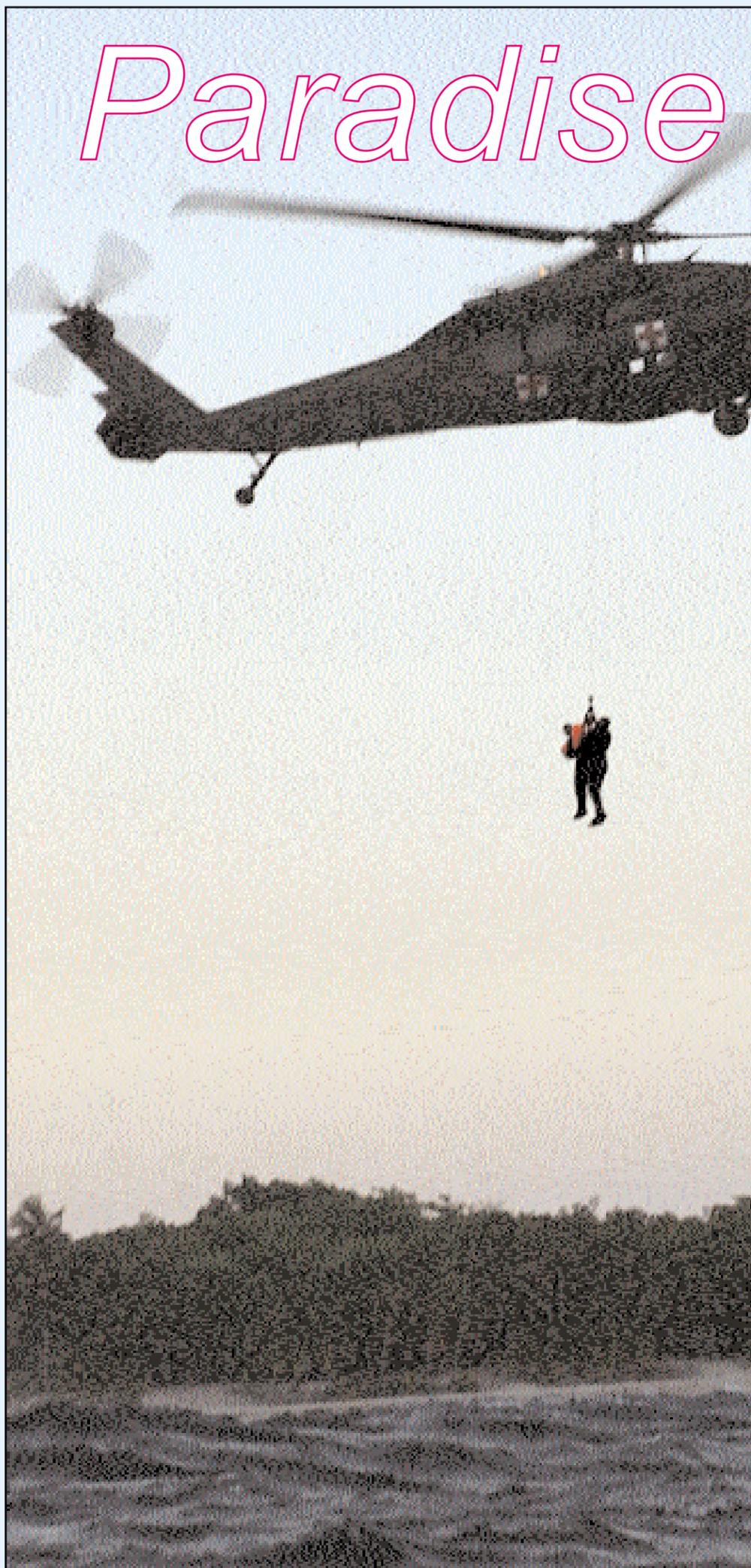
Choppy waves and large swells force Warrant Officer Brandon Shelton to cling to a flotation device and wait for the circling Black Hawk to spot him.



Preparing to descend into darkness, Sgt. 1st Class Gerald Beal, right, leans out the helicopter. Above, difficult night exercises are a surreal blur of chemical lights and markers.



The helicopters landed on wood strips set on the rough island terrain. The property owners used four-wheel-drive carts to move equipment to the make-do landing pad.



# Paradise

In the failing light of dusk, a victim and his rescuer are hoisted into the helicopter and





# Lost

## Air ambulance team practices water rescue near Bay Islands

By Spc. Chuck Wagner  
Editor

In the tropical waters around the Bay Islands, a boater or diver can quickly get in hot water. The Army is prepared to help.

Two flight crews with the U.S. Army Air Ambulance Detachment at Soto Cano practiced hoisting victims from the clutches of the seas around Utila March 12-14.

The detachment honed water rescue skills by switching out crews over a continuous cycle of exercises that included night-time missions.

A victim was given a flotation device and put over the side of a boat, which then sped away from the scene. A helicopter circled overhead until crew members spotted the victim bobbing in the large swells.

A rescuer was lowered from the Black Hawk helicopter on a safety line until he was partly submerged in the choppy water, then pulled to the victim. Once secured together, the rescuer and victim were hoisted into the hovering helicopter, and quickly flown to shore.

The appearance of a smooth, swift maneuver is deceiving: the radio waves ignite with banter between pilots and

crew members as they try to align the helicopter and avoid a fatal mistake. A sagging cable can loop around the rescuer or victim, creating a deadly noose if the helicopter suddenly pulls the line tight.

"This is the pinnacle of helicopter rescue training. On land, pilots can orient themselves to a tree or building, but over the water, they have to count on good flying and good feedback from the crew, who constantly tell them how to adjust," said 2nd Lt. Dwayne McJunkins.

The training takes on a surreal atmosphere at night, as chemical lights, splashing waves, and the roar of rotors create a storm of confusion.

The pilots and flight crew wear night-vision goggles, but the rescuer about to be lowered into the water is almost blind.

"You're just feeling your way through most of it. You can't see much in the spray caused by the rotorwash and it's total darkness. You have to count on your instincts and a few small lights to lead you to the person and to hook up to them," said Sgt. 1st Class Gerald Beal,

detachment first sergeant.

Seventeen pilots, flight medics and crew chiefs were certified in day and night overwater hoist operations.

"Over two-thirds of our area of operation is ocean. We have to make sure it's realistic training," said Sgt. Brian Brockett.

"When there is a real case of an injured person in eight-foot swells and it's night, that's the worst time to be training. You need to train beforehand to know you will be comfortable in the water, doing what you have to do to save a person's life."

The training took place on Utila's southern end, where coral reefs line the seabottom.

The detachment overnights in a beachhouse hosted by an American couple.

Jim and Kristy Engle, operators of Coral Beach Resort Community, have lived on the island for 10 years and offered accommodations to the crews – as well as a grilled seafood dinner – at no cost to Uncle Sam.

"We appreciate what you guys are doing and we feel we are doing our part," said Jim Engle, who also captained the boat that shuttled victims into the water.

"You are training so that you can help everybody else, and we are trying to pay you back."



The beauty of Utila island can hide dangers.



Spc. Jadie Barringer is a flight medic



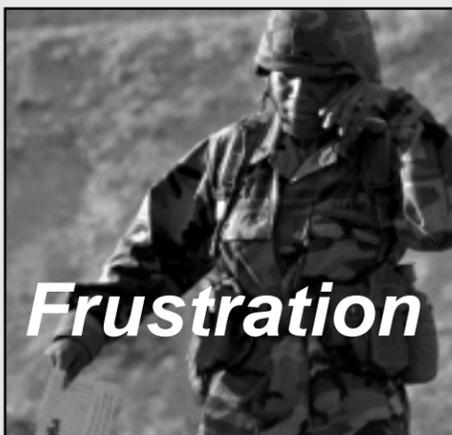
Just before the Black Hawks take off from a makeshift landing pad, 2nd Lt. Dwayne McJunkins explains to the crew how the helicopters will fly in formation as they leave Utila for Roatan to refuel.

Photos by Spc. Chuck Wagner  
after being plucked from the seas off Utila.





**Aim**



**Frustration**

## On the range

ARFOR Sgt. Kim Laurinaitis with the legal office was one of about a dozen soldiers who went to the Soto Cano Air Base range March 4 to qualify with the M-16 rifle. It took Laurinaitis several attempts to zero the rifle, after which she scored 37 to qualify, the highest score for the day. ARFOR Headquarters and Support Co. 1st Sgt. Ramon Bual, below left, and Staff Sgt. Sergio Negron offered suggestions to Laurinaitis while zeroing.

*Photos by Spc. Chuck Wagner*



**Suggestions**



**Success!**

## President approves two War on Terrorism medals

WASHINGTON (AFP) -- A presidential executive order signed March 12 authorizes the Department of Defense to create two new military medals for service in the global war on terrorism.

The Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal will recognize servicemembers who participate in an expedition to combat terrorism on or after Sept. 11, 2001. It is limited to those who deploy as part of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The Global War on Terrorism Service Medal will recognize service in military operations to combat terrorism on or after Sept. 11, 2001.

It is limited to Operation Noble Eagle and to those servicemembers who provide support to Operation Enduring Freedom from outside the area of eligi-

bility designated for the expeditionary medal.

The medals were recommended by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld.

Specific eligibility for the medals will be established by DOD awards policy officials. The combatant commander has the authority to award the medals to units and people deployed within his theater for approved operations. Each service department will prescribe the appropriate regulations for processing and wearing the medals.

Members of the U.S. armed forces and Coast Guard are eligible for the medals, including Reserve and National Guard members activated to support approved operations. Civilians, foreign nationals and foreign military are not eligible.



*Photo by Spc. Chuck Wagner*

## Man and machine

Staff Sgt. Todd W. Robbins, ARFOR ammunition sergeant, peers into the undercarriage of an M978 HEMMT Fueler truck March 6 just before an ARFOR convoy took to the roads. The entourage traveled about 26 miles, turning around just outside of Marcala and returning after sundown to train in both day and night driving.





Photos by Spc. Chuck Wagner

## Feel the 'Vibe'

The Nashville, Tenn. band "Vibe" performed a mix of pop, reggae and soul March 7 and 8 in Soto Cano's Oasis Club. Members are Craig Carter on bass/vocals, vocalists Jennifer Potter and Melody Chambers, Sigfrido Diaz on keyboards, Richard Pena on drums, and, Sharriff Williams, at right, on guitar/vocals.



## Army releases names of soldiers killed in N.Y. Black Hawk crash

FORT DRUM, N.Y. —The Army has announced the names of the 11 soldiers killed and the two injured when a UH-60L Black Hawk helicopter crashed here in a wooded area.

"We have notified our family members," said Maj. Gen. F.L. Hagenbeck, commander, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) and Fort Drum.

The accident occurred as the unit was conducting a normal training exercise.

Dead are:

Cpt. Christopher E. Britton, 27, from Ohio, assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 10th Aviation Regiment.

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Kenneth L. Miller, 35, from Calif., assigned to Company B, 2nd Battalion, 10th Aviation Regiment.

Staff Sgt. Brian Pavlich, 25, from Port Jervis, N.Y., assigned to Company C, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment.

Sgt. John L. Eichenlaub, Jr., 24, from South Williamsport, Penn., assigned to Company C, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment.

Sgt. Joshua M. Harapko, 23, from Peoria, Ariz., assigned to Company C, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment.

Spc. Lucas V. Tripp, 23, from Aurora, Colo., assigned to Company B, 2nd Battalion, 10th Aviation Regiment.

Spc. Barry M. Stephens, 20, from Pinson, Ala., assigned to Company B, 2nd Battalion, 10th Aviation Regiment.

Pfc. Shawn A. Mayerscik, 22, from

Oil City, Penn., assigned to Company C, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment.

Pfc. Tommy C. Young, 20, from Knoxville, Tenn., assigned to Company C, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment.

Pfc. Stryder O. Stoutenburg, 18, from Missoula, Mont., assigned to Company C, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment.

Pfc. Andrew D. Stevens, 20, from Rockingham, N.H., assigned to Company C, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment.

Injured are: Spc. Dmitri Petrov and Spc. Edwin A. Mejia, both from Company C, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment.

The Army has provided a casualty assistance officer for each family, who will work closely with the family on all details throughout the entire process. Assistance officers will help by assisting with transportation, housing and funeral arrangements.

"Soldiers and families are our Army's most important asset," said Hagenbeck. "We will come together in this time of great sorrow and work to take care of those who have served so bravely."

Memorial services are pending.

The cause of the incident is under investigation. Army aviation safety experts from the Army Safety Center, Fort Rucker, Ala., are working with the command to conduct a full examination of the circumstances surrounding this accident.

## Grateful From front page

went through our oxygen tanks, I don't think the ground ambulance would have had enough oxygen to make the 1-1/2-hour trip to the hospital. In that sense, we did save the patient's life, but I feel that is more attributable to the command and the aviation community letting us MEDEVAC the patient by air," says Persson.

Although saving lives is part of the

job for MEDEL staff, getting a heart-warming pat on the back is refreshing.

"It makes me feel great to hear from the family. Usually we just go about our work, and don't know how much that work affects a lot of people," says Harris.

"I think it's obvious from his letter that the job our entire team did that night is appreciated. It's nice to hear what the impact was and to remind us how important our role is here."

## The son's letter to MEDEL...

This is a compilation of several letters written to Army medical staff:

*I haven't written to you because we have been busy with my father's operation. I wanted to write to you to thank you for all the help you guys provided us, which without it I think my dad would have not made it. I have spoken with the doctors and they assure me that he will be OK.*

*What the base and the medical staff did for us has no price. You have to understand the appreciation we have for all who participated in the operation since without their help I don't think my dad would have made it. This is the opinion of the medical staff here in (Tegucigalpa) as well.*

*I truly regard all of the people in-*

*involved in the operation as heroes, as to save a life is truly a gift that not all people can give and a most sacred one at that.*

*I thank the helicopter's pilots who did an outstanding job in their ability to mobilize so quickly and efficiently.*

*I am proud to say that I am an American citizen. I feel secure to know that in any emergency our government is willing to help any of its citizens.*

*I have also spoken to my dad and when he recovers he wanted to throw a thank-you barbecue on our farm and invite them all. He is truly thankful.*

*I thank you again for everything.*

*Sincerely,*

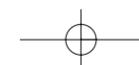
*Roberto Sempe Valentine*



Photo by Spc. Chuck Wagner

## Hippest threads

ARFOR Pfc. Rickey Draper poses as he is announced by Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Trombley during a best-dressed competition at Santa Maria hotel near Comayagua March 14. Draper beat out Sgt. 1st Class Dione Roberts to win a flower arrangement. Members of ARFOR, J-Staff and AFFOR came together for the off-base social. Joint Task Force-Bravo commander Col. Raymond A. Thomas was guest speaker. The social event included cocktails and dinner.





# New Horizons exercise under way in Belize

By 1st Lt. Carla Pampe  
Public Affairs Director

Opening ceremonies for New Horizons 2003 in Belize took place March 13 in the town of Dangriga.

The ceremony was attended by Belizean Prime Minister Said Musa; U.S. Ambassador to Belize Russell Freeman; Jose Coxe, Belizean Minister of Health; Sylvia Flores, the Minister of Defense and Dangriga area representative; Cassian Nunez, mayor of Dangriga; Brig. Gen. Robert Williamson, deputy commander of the 416th Engineer Command, located in Darien, Ill.; Col. Tony Thomas, Joint Task Force -Bravo commander; Lt. Col. Michael Sigmund, JTF-Jaguar commander; and a host of American and Panamanian military dignitaries.

"[Making this project possible] was not easy," said Freeman. "Despite the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, the subsequent military action in Afghanistan and the build-up in the Middle East, which has lessened resources for other operations, we are still here today . . . to celebrate the strength of our combined efforts and the importance of this attachment, New Horizons."

Prime Minister Said praised the military members participating in New Horizons, saying their hard work will bring endless opportunities to the students of Dellile Academy and the people of Dangriga.

During their three months in Belize, members of JTF-Jaguar will construct three two-room school buildings, one three-room building, a community center and a latrine for the children of Dellile Academy, a school run by nuns in Dangriga. Medical teams will also conduct medical readiness and training exercises throughout the region, providing free medical care for thousands of Belizean people.

While the majority of the work on the



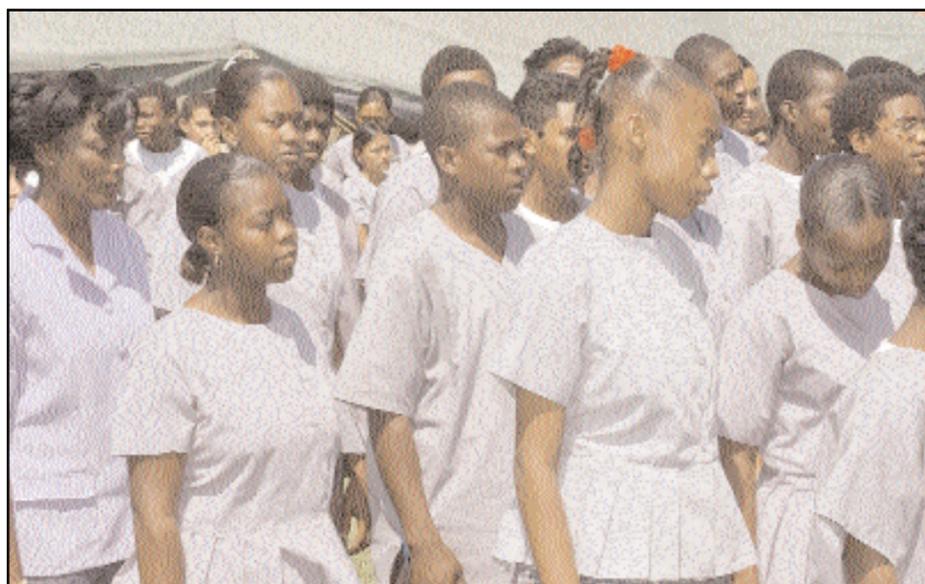
Members of Joint Task Force – Jaguar work on the foundation for one of four school buildings being built for the students of Dellile Academy in Dangriga, Belize. Photos by 1st Lt. Carla Pampe

ground is being done by Reservists from the Army and Air Force and some active-duty and Reserve Navy units, members of Joint Task Force Bravo are playing a critical role at Joint Task Force Jaguar, serving as quality assurance inspectors and liaison officers. The exercise is scheduled to last through May.

*Editor's note: Watch for upcoming stories on New Horizons Belize and Panama in future Iguana issues.*



U.S. Ambassador to Belize, Russell Freeman, addresses the audience at the opening ceremony. Freeman praised the New Horizons Exercise as an example of the outstanding spirit of cooperation and friendship between Belize and the United States.



Students from the Dellile Academy in Dangriga, Belize, prepare to sing their school song during opening ceremonies for New Horizons Belize March 13.

