

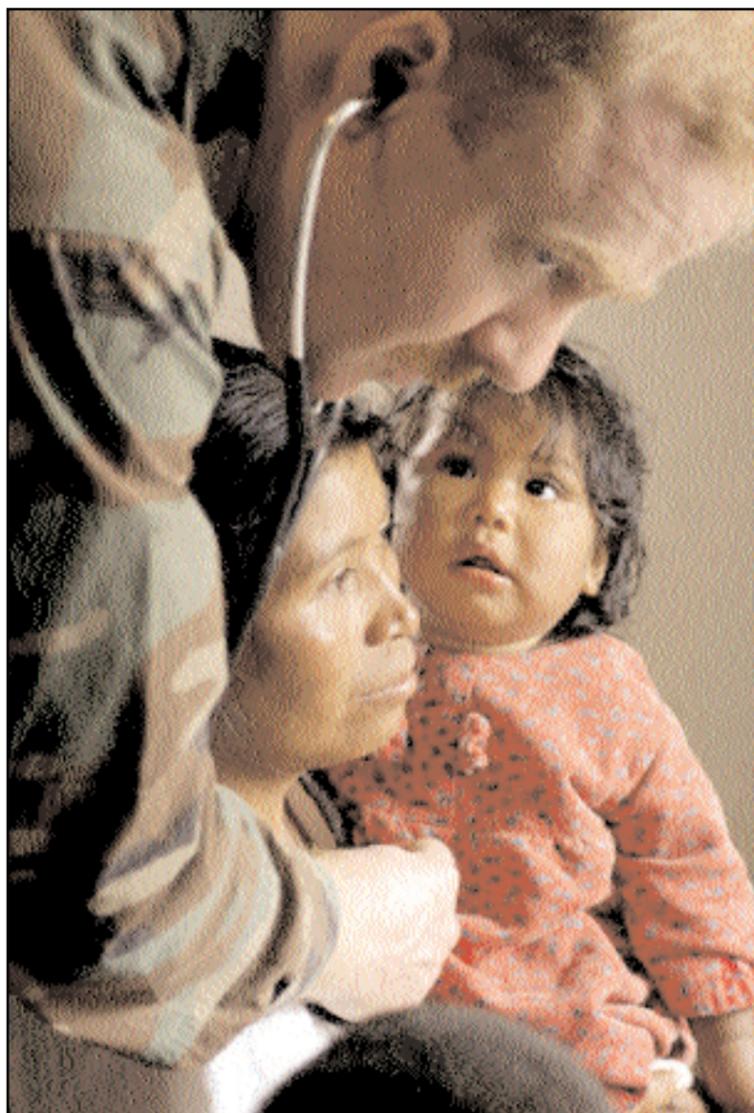


# The IGUANA



Volume 15, No. 7

April 4, 2003



Photos by Spc. Chuck Wagner

Dr. (Lt. Cmdr.) Warren Wollin, Navy reservist from Illinois, listens to a patient's breathing in Santa Ana March 25.

## Mountain Medicine

### Navy reservists cure in remote villages

By Spc. Chuck Wagner  
Editor

Navy reservists from the American Midwest brought their medical skills to remote mountain villages in Honduras last week as part of Joint Task Force-Bravo medical readiness training.

Thirteen members of the Fleet Hospital at Great Lakes Naval Base, Ill., along with Honduran volunteers and Soto Cano Air Base personnel visited seven villages between March 18 and 26.

Altogether, several thousand Hondurans lined up at the pack-and-go clinics, many trudging long distances across steep jungle terrain with three or four children in tow.

"It is a two-fold mission. First, it's training for our medical personnel in remote areas. Many of them work in modern hospitals with highly technical equipment. These are very austere conditions, and it benefits their experience," said the Navy detachment commander, Lt. Cmdr. Lauren Evans of Napierville, Ill. "It also gives aid to people where medical care is very infrequent, if at all."

The Navy team is made up of three physicians, one nurse practitioner, five nurses, three corpsmen and a pharmacist. The team normally has two additional corpsmen, who have been deployed to units fighting in Iraq. Soto Cano Joint Security Force members, the Medical Element and several Honduran soldiers and volunteers, including dentists and translators, helped the team.

Evans said the Navy detachment is a patch-



Volunteer Dr. Marielle Rodriguez of Tegucigalpa prepares to pull a patient's tooth while other patients wait their turn at El Aguacatal March 24.

work from Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and Missouri reserve units, yet the team worked fluidly on its first mission together.

For the participants, the primitive clinics were a labor of love.

"It's the most rewarding thing I've ever done in my military career," said MEDEL's Staff Sgt. Sherry Ebaugh, who acted as officer in charge. "It makes you feel good to support people who need our help."

Ebaugh enjoyed chatting with patients through a translator or playing with children

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## 2,000 'flow' daily into Iraq war

By Jim Garamone  
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON - More than 300,000 coalition troops are deployed in support of combat operations, with more than a third of those inside Iraq, defense officials said Tuesday.

In addition, each day about 2,000 coalition service members "flow" into the theater, Pentagon spokeswoman Torie Clarke said at a press conference. Progress is also being made on the ground.

McChrystal said the air campaign is hammering the Medina, Hammurabi, Baghdad and Al Nida divisions of the Iraqi Republican Guard. Coalition air forces also hit command, con-

trol and communications targets and air defense sites in Baghdad and in northern Iraq.

Coalition forces have fired more than 700 Tomahawk land attack missiles and dropped more than 8,000 precision-guided munitions since Operation Iraqi Freedom began 12 days ago, McChrystal said. These land and air strikes have degraded Republican Guard units significantly, he said.

U.S. officials still believe that the Iraqi regime has the capability and possibly the intent to use chemical or biological weapons on coalition forces. "We are targeting in a number of ways - through information operations, through attacking launchers or capabilities, the different ways

they could deliver those munitions - to try, again, to prevent their use," McChrystal said.

Clarke said the war is going well and U.S. forces can be relieved about the things that haven't happened.

"Unlike the Gulf War, no Iraqi Scud missiles have been fired into Israel," she said. "Unlike the Gulf War, the oil fields have not been turned into a huge bonfire, wreaking enormous economic and environmental damage."

"There has, as yet, been no Iraqi use of weapons of mass destruction. Of course, bad things may still occur," she said. "Some of the toughest fighting, as we have indicated, may well lie ahead."



Photo by U.S. Army Spc. James P. Johnson

Master Sgt. Joe Cross cordons off an uncontrolled natural-gas fire in the Rumaylah oil fields in southern Iraq March 23. Explosives ordnance disposal airmen are disarming unexploded ordnance, land mines or booby traps to help firefighters. Cross is assigned to the 384th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron.





## Carpet as artwork

### Sawdust will soften procession path

By Robin Gonzalez  
MWR Manager

Beginning with Palm Sunday and ending on Easter Sunday, Comayagua transforms itself with processions and celebrations at various churches, streets and plazas.

The most outstanding of the many events taking place during Semana Santa are the colorful sawdust carpets that are made overnight on Holy Thursday in preparation for the Good Friday procession. The procession, which starts about 9 a.m. on Good Friday, re-lives the passion of Christ.

The tradition of sawdust carpets was brought from Guatemala in the

late 1800's by the great-grandmother of the current Villa Real restaurant owners. Over the years it has grown from just a few, crudely made carpets to more than 20 colorful, intricately detailed carpets. These carpets, made by various families, schools, businesses or other groups, are planned for months and take up to nine hours to construct.

The purpose of these sawdust carpets is to decorate the path the procession will walk and symbolically make the trip less painful for Christ. The event will take place April 18. Sign up with MWR Tours to take part in the premier Good Friday event in Honduras.



Iguana file photo

The religious procession walks on sawdust carpets through the streets of Comayagua.

## Lenca crafts glimpse of ancient culture

By Robin Gonzalez  
MWR Manager

MWR is offering a trip to Lenca crafts areas. But, you ask yourself, what's so special about the Lenca, why have a trip?

The Lenca Indians have all but disappeared from Honduran culture and the few remaining communities are preserving their heritage through their crafts – especially pottery. Prior to 1997, these crafts were seldom, if ever, seen outside the villages. Now the distinctive brown, black and gray “eggs,” bowls and vases are seen throughout Honduras.

The Lenca are an ancient Central American Indian race with unknown origin. They flourished during the time span of the millennium prior to Christ and well into the following millennium, inhabiting the shores of Lake Yojoa. Descendants of these ancient Lenca Indians still inhabit parts of western Honduras but much of their language, customs and practices have been assimilated into the Spanish culture of Honduras after four centuries of cultural change and interbreeding. Some



archaeologists believe the splendor of the Mayan ruins at Copan can be attributed to the craftsmanship of the Lenca.

This is based on the fact the Lenca lived in peace under the influence of the Maya during the classic period of Copan, which was between

the 5th and 8th centuries. Today there are only a few areas where the true Lenca culture is still found. Though now mostly Catholic and more mestizo (mixed Indian and European descent) than aboriginal, the Lenca still retain some of their aboriginal beliefs. For instance, they still have a supernatural respect for the sun and the shamans, or curanderos, still attend the sick using both practical and ritual remedies. Their beliefs are reflected in their crafts.

For details about this trip to see a vanishing culture, contact MWR Tours at H-401 or 4268/4159. The next trip will be April 12.

## Passing the torch

Lt. Col. William Sternhagen, ARFOR commander, gives the Headquarters Support Co. guidon to Capt. Stacey Moore, right. Moore accepted company command from Capt. Gustavo Perez during a change of command ceremony March 21 in front of the company office. Moore comes from 1/364th Regiment, Fort Lewis, Wash. Perez is joining the recruiting battalion at Dallas.

Photo by Spc. Chuck Wagner



## 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 IGUANA

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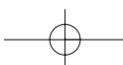
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# News

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## Fire Dawgs train local volunteer firefighters

By 1st Lt. Carla Pampe  
Public Affairs Director

Volunteer Firefighters from the Unilever CIC/Foods factory across the street from Soto Cano got some structural fire training March 26 from members of the Soto Cano Fire Department.

About a dozen volunteer "bomberos" from the plant came to the base to participate in an exercise in which they were required to suit up, run a hand-line (water hose) from a P-22 fire truck and enter a "burning" structure looking for victims.

"We asked the Soto Cano fire department to give us a hand and evaluate our performance in case of an emergency in one of our factories," said Nelson Iscoa, safety and fire brigade instructor with Unilever CIC/Foods.

"Workers at our plant handle very dangerous chemicals that could potentially endanger the base," he said. "The fire department in Comayagua doesn't have the capability to respond to a chemical fire."

That means any major response would come from Soto Cano.

"Surrounding communities rely on us during major incidents because of our emergency response capabilities," said Senior Master Sgt. Gerrodd Stevenson, fire chief. "They know what our capabilities are; however, we don't get the opportunity to jointly exercise our capabilities as often as we should."

Iscoa said joint training helps both groups of firefighters be prepared in case they have to respond to a fire in the factory.

"It's a very friendly relationship we began a couple of years ago," he said. "It's beneficial for both sides." Stevenson agreed.

"This was our first joint training session and considering the fact that they've never had any formal training in fire fighting I think it was an outstanding educational experience for everyone involved," he said.

"Prior to the start of the actual fire fighting exercise



Photos by 1st Lt. Carla Pampe

Volunteer firefighters with the Unilever CIC/Foods factory prepare to enter a smoke-filled building March 26 during a joint training exercise with the Fire Dawgs. Right, firefighters "rescue" Senior Airman James Richardson from the simulated fire and carry him to safety.

we briefed them on the training objective and we conducted a crash course in basic fire fighting and personnel rescue techniques. In addition, we conducted a post exercise critique to discuss and correct some of the mistakes that were made during the exercise. [The volunteers] were very receptive to our input."

Stevenson said all the volunteers were extremely appreciative of the training and eager to learn.

"It's important to understand that they are not full-time professional firefighters. They are actually employed in other areas at the plant and volunteer their services in the event of a fire or other emergency," he said.

"Their primary focus is fire fighting in an industrial environment and they never get the opportunity for training on fighting structure fires, emergency vehicle extrication, hazardous materials mitigation, etc."



Both Iscoa and Stevenson said they plan to conduct more joint training in the future.

"Our intent is to conduct similar training sessions on a monthly basis on such subjects as structural fire fighting techniques, search and rescue procedures, emergency rescue tools and equipment (Jaws of Life, hydraulic cutters) familiarization," Stevenson said.

"In addition, we intend to offer similar training opportunities to firefighters from Comayagua."



Photos by Spc. Chuck Wagner

### Jumpin' good time

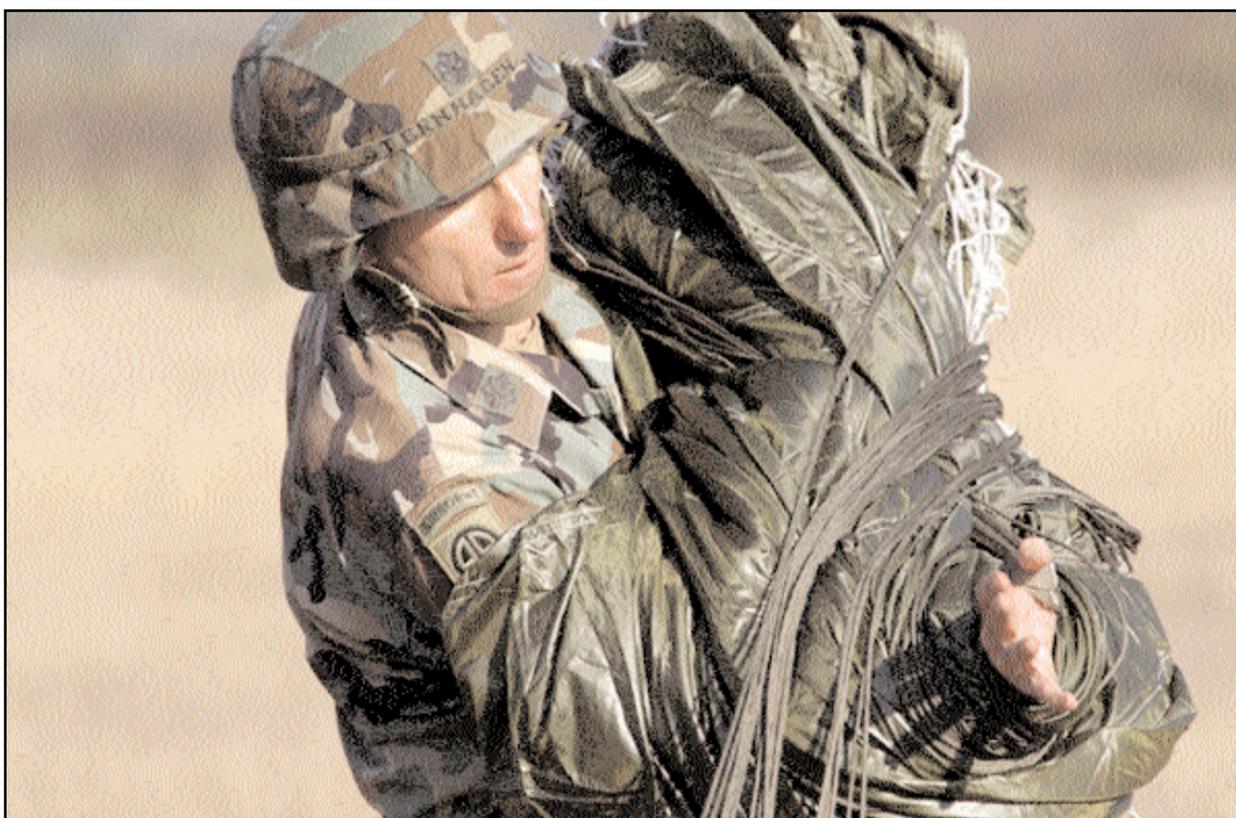
Left, Chief Warrant Officer Sammie Jordan spins rope for a boy at the La Paz orphanage during an ARFOR visit March 22. Above, Staff Sgt. Phyllis Logan signs a sheet for an orphanage raffle. ARFOR visited with the orphans, prepared lunch and brought gifts including several bicycles. Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Trombley collected much of the funds from organizations in the United States to purchase the donations.



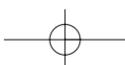


# ARFOR goes Airborne

A 1-228th Air Regiment Chinook helicopter disgorges parachutists during a pass over the drop zone at the Honduran Army's Tamara airfield March 20. *Photos by Spc. Chuck Wagner*



Above, Air Force Staff Sgt. Carol Eifert and Senior Airman Andrew McGee check weather conditions before the jump. Left, ARFOR commander Lt. Col. William Sternhagen collects his parachute after landing.

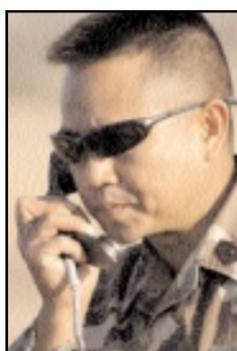




Headquarters Support Co. First Sgt. Ramon Bual and Sgt. Elvis Saucier, ARFOR parachute rigger, place markers on the drop zone at Tamara airfield.



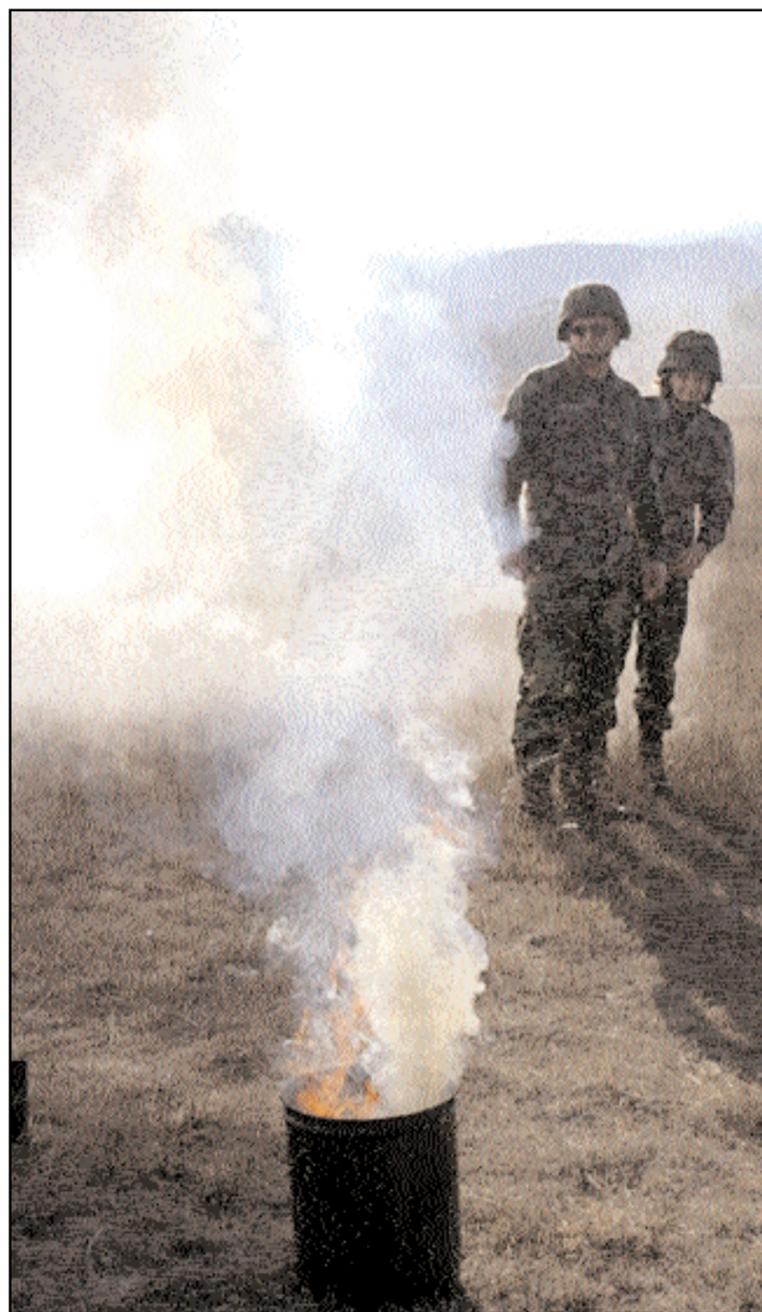
Several dozen parachutists jumped on a clear, windless day over Tamara.



First Sgt. Ramon Bual radios to the Chinook pilots.



duran soldiers of the 2nd Airborne Battalion jumped with ARFOR and earned U.S. Army wings in a ceremony after landing at the Tamara drop zone.



The weather team, Air Force Staff Sgt. Carol Eifert and Senior Airman Andrew McGee, watch a can in which they ignited smoke grenades to mark the drop zone for pilots and parachutists.





# AAFES provides to troops in Panama, Belize

By 1st Lt. Carla Pampe  
Public Affairs Director

With New Horizons exercises in full swing in Panama and Belize, hundreds of soldiers, sailors and airmen are rotating in and out of the base camps every couple of weeks.

While a number of members of Joint Task Force -Bravo are heavily involved in supporting the exercise, it's not just military members who are there to help. For the duration of the exercise, two employees from Soto Cano's Army, Air Force Exchange Service are providing these military members some of the comforts of home.

Roberto Capata and Carmelina Manueles, both from the base exchange here, volunteered to go to Panama and Belize, respectively, to support New Horizons.

"This is my tenth time to do a New Horizons exercise," Capata said. "It's part of my job to come here, and also another opportunity in my job. It's a great way to get experience for step promotions and such."

For Manueles, this is her second trip in support of New Horizons.

"I volunteered to come here because I like to see other countries in Central America, I like to meet new people and I enjoy helping people," she said. "I think it's really important to have AAFES here because we have almost everything [the



Carmelina Manueles works a cash register in Belize.



Roberto Capata, AAFES employee, serves a customer at Camp Amistad in Panama.

military members] need. There is no other place nearby for them to find these things."

Items stocked in the mobile AAFES 18-wheel trailers include toiletry items, uniform items such as T-shirts and socks, a variety of food and snacks and entertainment items like compact disks, magazines and books.

"Resupplies come in once a week, and we carry the basics soldiers might need while they're here," Capata said.

Manueles said the troops really appreciate having AAFES at their base camp.

"The first day I opened, people were so happy," she said. "It's hard for them being out here in the middle of nowhere."

Both Capata and Manueles said that they are proud of the work they do to support the troops.

"I enjoy serving the soldiers and seeing other countries besides Honduras," Capata said. "I would definitely do this again in the future."



Photos by 1st Lt. Carla Pampe

In Belize, as in Panama, AAFES has set up two trailers – one to serve customers, and the other for the AAFES employee to live in.



Customers can find a variety of items in the mobile AAFES trailers.



Photo by Spc. Chuck Wagner

## Winds of change

Strong winds lash at Honduran candidates of the Academia Militar de Aviacion standing in formation during a change of command ceremony for the academy commander March 18. Below, Lt. Col. Jose Eduardo Andino Varela, left, replaced Lt. Col. Gustavo Alonso Lanza Lagos, right, as commander.



Courtesy photo





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# News

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Photos by Spc. Chuck Wagner

## Rewarding swim

Left, a resident of Casa Alianza, a runaway shelter in Tegucigalpa, enjoys a swim at the Soto Cano pool March 21. Above: 1st Lt. Holly Andrews, AFFOR, plays "monkey in the middle" with boys from the shelter. Both boys and girls from Casa Alianza have made AFFOR-sponsored visits to Soto Cano. During this visit, a group of boys visited the fire department, base operations and the control tower. They were given lunch at the base swimming pool and enjoyed the afternoon interacting with AFFOR members, who try to provide the children with positive role models.

## Medicine From Front page

with exaggerated gestures after the clinics were set up and under way.

One patient, a 79-year-old woman complaining of sore eyes, repeatedly reached out to medical team members as they walked past and said in a soft voice "gracias, gracias."

Planning for the medical readiness training begins 120 days in advance, and is no small feat to organize, Ebaugh said. The clinics are usually held in local schools, and the staff moves into several classrooms or open areas to establish a triage, doctors' office, and pharmacy. Nine vehicles transported the team and its equipment to the sites.

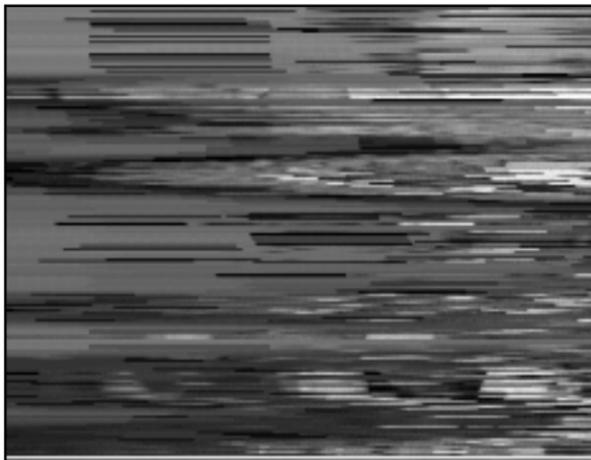
The dentists usually work with their patient's chair backed against an outside wall, and their services exclusively involve pulling decayed teeth.

All clinic patients attend classroom lessons in personal and communal hygiene. Then they sit in triage with a nurse and translator and describe their ailments. Evans said each community has distinctive complaints, but most involve respiratory problems, fungal infections and rotting teeth.

The nurses hand out over-the-counter medicines for simple ailments, and refer patients with more serious conditions to the doctor. Local health authorities have already screened patients for dental work before each clinic.

Nancy Etheridge, wife of Southern Command's Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Etheridge, worked with Lt. Cmdr. Amelia Sweeney of Southern Command during missions in El Aguacatal and Santa Ana.

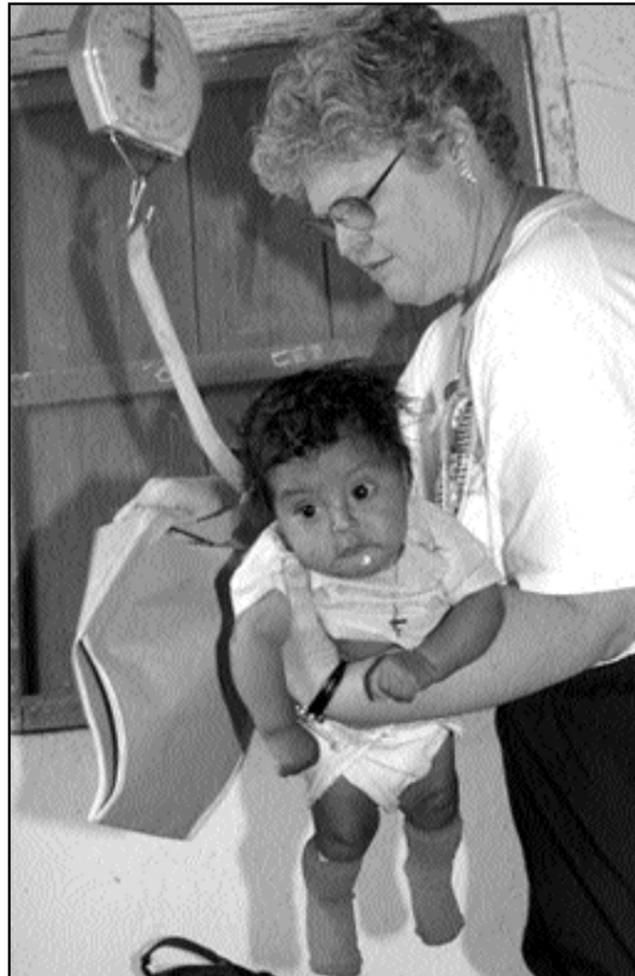
"It's overwhelming. I never dreamed there was



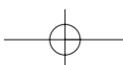
Members of the Navy medical team examine a patient with an eye infection at Santa Ana March 25. The patient required immediate surgery and was referred to Honduran medical personnel to be sent to a hospital in Tegucigalpa. Right, Nancy Etheridge, wife of Southern Command's Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Etheridge, weighs a baby while volunteering in Santa Ana.

this many people in need of basic medical care. It opens your eyes to what we have in our country, and what we can offer them with our help," said Etheridge, who also works in the neonatal wing of the Miami Children's Hospital.

"It's good for them to see the military helping in this way, because right now they are seeing so much of the fighting in Iraq. They need to know we do more than fight. They need to see that we are willing to help wherever we can."

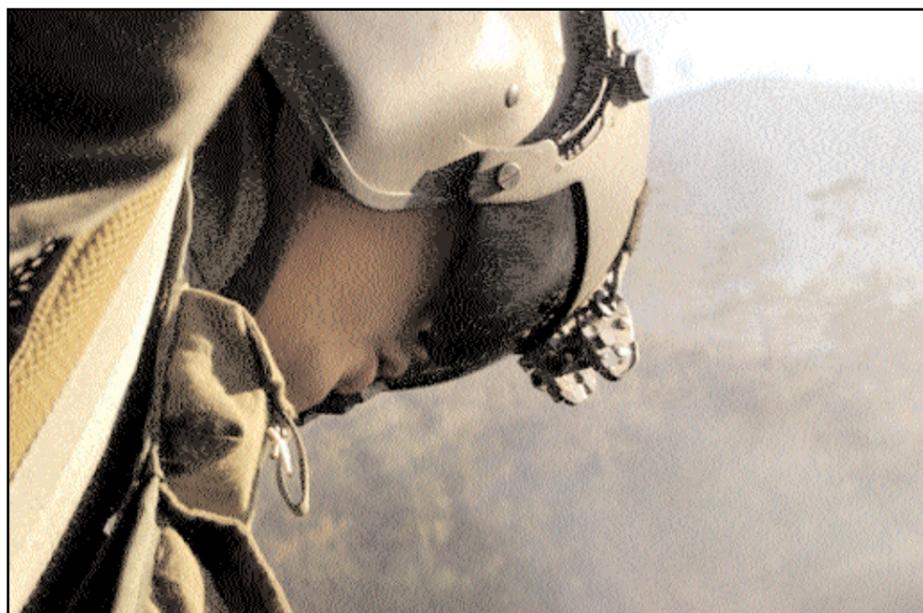


Photos by Spc. Chuck Wagner





Bravo Company's Chinook helicopter collected water from ponds near base to dump on the fires. *Photos by Spc. Chuck Wagner*



Staff Sgt. Vincent Mendiola peers out the helicopter window into thick smoke.

# Bucket brigade

By Spc. Chuck Wagner  
Editor

The 1-228th Air Regiment's Bravo Company helped douse a forest fire in the mountains west of Soto Cano Air Base March 19.

The fire likely started because of extremely dry conditions in Comayagua Valley. The fire threatened crops and homes in the area.

A Bravo Company Chinook helicopter lugged a large water basket, called a "Bambi Bucket," to drop on the flames. The helicopter collected water from ponds near base. The bucket can hold 1,600 gallons.

Bravo Company dumped the first bucket about an hour after the initial call and had 80 percent of the fire contained by nightfall.

Farmers later extinguished any remaining hot spots.



Staff Sgt. James Goodlett, flight engineer, watches through a hatch while at the controls for the water bucket.



Sgt. First Class Thomas Nee, Bravo Co. Platoon Sergeant, and Staff Sgt. Vincent Mendiola, flight engineer, discuss the helicopter's approach to the fire.



Ribbons of spreading fire on the mountain threatened crops and homes.

