



The IGUANA



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Capt. Dominic Ciaramitaro, right, lunges at Staff Sgt. Michael Peterson during Iron Iguana II "Baddest Lizard Bash" competition on Soto Cano Air Base April 25. Ciaramitaro won the men's overall pugil event.

Photos by Spc. Chuck Wagner

Tough as Iron

Iron Iguana II tests fitness, fun

By Spc. Chuck Wagner
Editor

Hundreds competed or cheered feats of fitness and fun during the second annual Iron Iguana on Soto Cano Air Base April 25.

Soldiers, airmen, about a dozen cadets from the Honduran Air Force Academy, as well as scores of civilian base employees turned out in throngs almost double those of the first Iron Iguana last year.

"It's a lot of fun. I enjoyed it," said ARFOR Staff Sgt. Patti Rodriguez, a race participant. "I think it was also great that they included the Hondurans."

"It was very entertaining. They made a really good job about it,"

agreed Debbie Lezama, Honduran Air Force Academy cadet. "This is my first one, and it's fun being here. I hope they invite us again."

The day started early with endurance events; a triathlon and 10-kilometer race. The Honduran contingent won several individual and team racing events. The triathlon included a 5-kilometer run, 10-kilometer bike race, and 10 laps in the base swimming pool.

Softball and basketball tournament play started by mid-morning. The tournaments would break for lunch, then start again in the afternoon.

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Bounding into the air, Honduran Air Force Academy cadet Hugo Antonio Ayala competes in the "Crazy Dive" competition.

Tackling terrorism

Caution, prevention Soto Cano's battle in U.S. global war

By Spc. Chuck Wagner
Editor

Soto Cano Air Base is far removed from many of the globe's political hot spots. That's precisely why military personnel should be cautious.

"Yes, the threat of terrorism is low, but we know that terrorists are looking to inspire terror by striking soft, unsuspecting targets where it is not expected, and where they have not struck before. In this sense, you could say Central America is in the line of fire," says Master Sgt. Charles Warren, Joint Task Force-Bravo anti-terrorism/force protection sergeant.

Warren says there is no evidence that terrorist cells have established themselves in Honduras, but that is no reason to assume the best, rather than the worst.

"Central America is the backyard to the United States. It is a place that we used to be able to assume is like our neighborhood – very safe because we know it well," he says.

The bombing on Bali this year demonstrates that terrorists are seeking out westerners, including Americans, in places where they congregate for leisure, and in places normally not associated with political affiliations. He says Bali is very much like the Bay Island of Roatan in this way.

In March, Gen. James Hill, Commander of U.S. Southern Command, told Latin American military leaders and regional intelligence analysts in Miami that groups such as Hizbollah, the militant Shia Muslim group, had established bases in Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay. Hill believes other terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda may seek haven in Latin America.

"Latin American countries are vulnerable," agreed Gen. Carl Freeman, president of the Inter-American Defence Board. "Terrorists will find the weak link in the chain and take advantage."

Warren says Soto Cano has taken

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measures to "harden" defenses against terrorism, including increased patrols, cement barriers, video surveillance, and working more closely with Honduran authorities.

Individuals on Soto Cano are the "eyes and the ears of the program" and installation security counts on simple individual initiatives.

"Report anything unusual you see. It doesn't matter if it's along the base perimeter road or in a bar, if it doesn't seem right to you, it is something we'd like to know about," says Warren.

"No one should feel we aren't interested in hearing from them just because it seems trivial."

Warren cites recent examples of reportable incidents over the last year: An unknown individual videotaping the installation, anti-American graffiti, anti-American statements made to U.S. personnel, as well as suspicious notes handed to U.S. personnel in Comayagua.

"It may turn out to be nothing, but I'd rather have a dozen investigations turn out to be nothing than have one thing we didn't know about turn out to be



Photo courtesy of Joint Security Forces
Graffiti painted on a building in Honduras.

something terrible," he says.

Terrorism prevention involves the same measures as crime prevention. Because the threat of crime is rated high in Honduras, the two should come hand-in-hand.

"I'm not saying don't travel and don't have a good time. Be alert, be smart. Travel with a buddy at all times. Know where you are going and what you are going to do before you leave Soto Cano," Warren says.

"Ninety percent of incidents we investigate involve alcohol, so I also suggest that people drink in moderation."

Warren suggests anyone intending to travel inform themselves about safety, including crime and terrorism countermeasures.

1) Talk to the Morale, Welfare and Recreation office, which can suggest safe hotels, restaurants and other locales.

2) Review the J-2 site on the intranet. It has maps and shows off-limit areas and risk assessments for many popular destinations.

3) Contact J-2 or Joint Security Forces to find out more information on specific areas or businesses.

4) Contact the JTF-B Force Protection Cell at extension 4175 or charles.warren@jtfb.southcom.mil for additional countermeasures against crime and terrorism.



Photos by Spc. Chuck Wagner

Senior Master Sgt. Thomas Lawyer and Tech. Sgt. Michael Flannery, base civil engineers, inspect one of many toilets the team repaired or replaced at the schoolhouse. Below, Airman 1st Class Ronald Lee touches up light fixtures.



Tech. Sgt. Johnny Valentin-Valentin and Master Sgt. Gene Folsom, foreground, paint classroom walls.

Classroom clean-up

AFFOR volunteers scrubbed, painted, patched and repaired at the Santa Ana orphanage elementary schoolhouse Sunday.

"We peeked in the window and saw how bad it was," said Master Sgt. Carlos Marrero. "That's when we decided to fix it up for the students."

The schoolhouse required mends to the roof, toilet repairs and replacements, as well as a fresh coat of paint in the classrooms. The team purchased 18 gallons of paint for the project, as well as various plumbing fixtures. AFFOR also made lunch for Santa Ana residents between projects. On previous twice monthly visits to the orphanage, AFFOR has donated sewing machines, thermoses and fans to Santa Ana, which provides shelter to children and battered or abandoned wives.

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 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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News

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Army Chief of Staff Gen. Eric Shinseki talks to Soto Cano medical element personnel about his military heroes in front of the base clinic April 21. Shinseki toured parts of Soto Cano Air Base during a brief stopover. *Photo by Spc. Chuck Wagner*

Gen. Shinseki visits troops on Soto Cano

By Spc. Chuck Wagner
Editor

Army Chief of Staff Gen. Eric Shinseki visited Soto Cano Air Base April 21 for a Joint Task Force-Bravo mission brief and visit with soldiers and airmen.

Mrs. Shinseki accompanied her husband to Soto Cano, visiting the AFFOR Family Support Center and the medical element.

In just a few afternoon hours, the general toured parts of the base, greeted troops and watched training.

He toured the base headquarters compound, the medical element, the 1-228th Aviation Regiment and watched a search and rescue team training event.

He also viewed a water purification unit set up at the pond near the headquarters compound and visited with soldiers there.

While at the base clinic,

he discussed the importance of professional and competent medical staff for Army morale.

Afterwards, he stood before the staff gathered outside the clinic and talked about historical military figures which have influenced his view of military service.

Throughout his visit, Shinseki stressed that each and every soldier and airman at Soto Cano makes a difference, and that JTF-B has a huge impact on Central America.

Shinseki will retire in June as the 34th Army chief of staff.

ARFOR Sgt. Jeffrey Marshall explains the purpose of Search and Rescue team equipment to Shinseki. The general stopped to watch the team train in front of the Headquarters and Support Company building.



Photo by 1st Lt. Carla Pampe

U.S. Gulf presence reviewed

By Jim Garamone
Editor

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates – The footprint of U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf region will change in the coming months, but it is too soon to say how, defense leaders said following meetings with leaders of the United Arab Emirates Tuesday.

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld and Army Gen. Tommy Franks met with Shaykh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the crown prince of Abu Dhabi, and Lt. Gen. Muhammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the chief of staff of the armed forces of the United Arab Emirates, on the first day of the secretary's visit to the region. Franks heads U.S. Central Command and has led Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Franks said that in each place the secretary and he visit, there is an understanding that with the regime of Saddam Hussein gone, "that in the days and months ahead there will likely be a rearrangement of the footprint in the region."

Forces, for example, are no longer needed for Operations Northern Watch and Southern Watch. But Franks said this does not necessarily mean U.S. forces will be reduced.

He would not speculate on the footprint but did indicate the matter needs review.

"We're going to be working in Iraq and we're going to be continuing in Afghanistan for some time," he said. "The way I would characterize it is we need to study it. We need to see exactly what footprint will have the highest payoff for us in the future."

Rumsfeld thanked the crown prince and chief of staff for their country's help in the global war on terrorism and its assistance to liberate Iraq.

The secretary stressed the United Arab Emirates' contribution to humanitarian relief in Iraq, noting it was the first country to ship relief supplies - including 700 tons of food, water and medical supplies.

The United Arab Emirates is also sponsoring six hospitals in Iraq and will refurbish and help supply them. The oil-rich country is also building a desalination plant that will provide 250,000 gallons of water a day when finished.

"These humanitarian contributions are important," Rumsfeld said. "They are important to the people of Iraq, they are also important to the future of Iraq and the future of the region, because it is enormously important that the people there see the progress that can be made in a liberated Iraq."





With safety chute on back, Capt. Thomas Clark takes to the air during the Crazy Dive competition. Right, Tech. Sgt. Robert Meza earns a run in the softball tournament.

Photo by Martin Chahin



Honduran Air Force Academy cadets compete with Soto Cano Fire Department personnel in the basketball tournament.

Iron From Front Page

The Dining Facility barbequed under tents on the base soccer fields, central to all the sporting events. PAE counted 321 diners versus just 180 for the first Iron Iguana. Pepsi and Gatorade representatives were on-hand with free refreshments and prizes.

There was plenty of stinging red skin after judges rated eight fearless jumpers during the "Crazy Dive" competition, which included belly flops and a costumed jumper.

The "Baddest Lizard Bash," the final event of the day, was a spectator favorite.

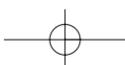
Contestants beat each other with pugil sticks within a ring of sandbags. Wearing helmets and pads, pugilists earned points for striking their opponent's head or chest with padded batons.

At day's end, Iguana organizers awarded prizes to the event winners.

"It went well. No one was majorly injured. Everybody who participated had fun, which is the intent," said Maj. M. Shannon Averill, who directed the day's events as "Queen Iguana."

A handful of event organizers assured the day proceeded without serious hang-ups, she said.

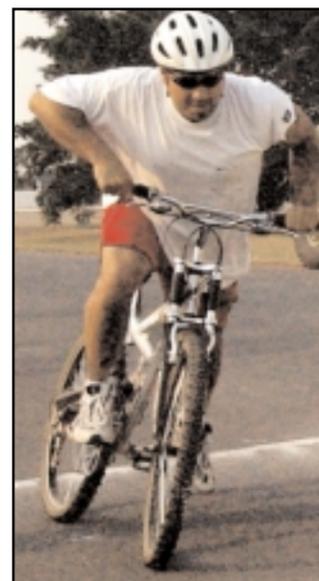
When asked about an Iron Iguana III, Averill, who is soon leaving Soto Cano said, "I sure hope so."





Chaplain (Capt.) Matthew Hall snatches air while swimming laps during the final leg of the triathlon team event in the base pool.

Photos by Spc. Chuck Wagner



After being tagged by a teammate, Tech. Sgt. Rogelio Figueroa takes off on his bicycle during the triathlon event.



Staff Sgt. Curnes Williams, left, battles Spc. Shane Mauck in the pugil ring.



Above, race contestants scurry for position at the starting line. Below, Dining Facility employee Angelica Andino dishes out food under the lunch tent set up on the base soccer field.





Belizian Prime Minister Said Musa addresses the crowd at closing ceremonies for New Horizons Belize.

Photo by 1st Lt. Carla Pampe

New Horizons finishes work in Panama, Belize



New Horizons personnel in Panama hand out refreshments to the students during closing ceremonies at Quebrada Guabo.

Photo by Tech. Sgt. Tom Mullican



During closing ceremonies in Panama, Col. Raymond Thomas, Joint Task Force-Bravo commander, hands out school supplies to children at Quebrada Guabo.

Photo by Tech. Sgt. Tom Mullican



This two-room schoolhouse is one of six buildings constructed for the Dalille Academy in Dangriga, Belize.

Photo by 1st Lt. Carla Pampe



Spc. Keith Mays of the Missouri National Guard, finishes installing a clinic window at Cerro Iglesia, Panama.

Photo by Tech. Sgt. Tom Mullican





Photo by Spc. Chuck Wagner

Ruck and rifle

Staff Sgt. Gina Johnson and Spc. Shane Bethune slog around Soto Cano Air Base's perimeter road during an ARFOR road march April 23. The five-mile ruck was the unit's morning physical training.

Army: War validates changes

By Joe Burlas
Army News Service

WASHINGTON – While “Operation Iraqi Freedom” shouldn’t be considered a model for future warfare, it has validated several Transformation concepts, an Army official said. That Army official gave journalists a Transformation update in the form of a background briefing April 24 at the Pentagon.

If you look at the way wars have been fought during the past century, most have followed the World War II model where you build up massive military might, invade at a single location and then clear the area of enemy forces in a linear fashion, the official said. While Iraqi Freedom did include a time-consuming military buildup, those forces invaded in two widely separated locations and attacked key objectives rather than clearing the country on line of enemy forces.

Multiple entry points and focusing on key objectives are among several Transformation concepts used effectively during recent combat operations in Iraq, the official said. Others include: closer working relationships between special and conventional forces; true joint and combined operations at lower levels; and conducting operations across the full spectrum of conflict.

Iraqi Freedom is the first time the Army has ever conducted combat, peace-keeping, humanitarian relief and ecological cleanup operations all at the same time, the official said.

Latch on!

Soldiers practice hooking up equipment to a Chinook helicopter's underbelly during sling-load training in a clearing west of Soto Cano's airfield April 24. ARFOR conducted the training with the help of flight crews from the 1-228th Aviation Regiment. Far right, Staff Sgt. Norval Taliaferro and Spcs. Lizette Salas and David Hinson move away from the helicopter after a successful hook-up. The strong rotorwash, flying dust and grass, as well as the swaying helicopter make the training challenging.



Photos by Spc. Chuck Wagner

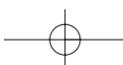




Photo courtesy of Spc. Delicia Lewis

Walk softly, carry a big cross

Comayagua residents created sawdust carpets on the town's streets April 18 to mark the annual Easter procession for which it has become famous. Above, Sgt. First Class Rafael Castro-Soto and Chief Warrant Officer Sammie Jordan create a sawdust carpet. Below, the brightly colored and intricately patterned designs symbolically soften Jesus Christ's walk to be crucified. Town reenactors portrayed Biblical figures in the story of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, center and far left. Many Soto Cano personnel visited Comayagua to see the sawdust carpets which are trampled by the procession during the culmination of Santa Semana, or Holy Week, bottom left. A restaurant owner introduced the carpet tradition to Comayagua from Guatemala. Comayagua's display is now the largest known in Honduras.



Photos by Martin Chahin

