



The IGUANANA



July 12, 2002 Volume 14, No. 13

Orphans share day of play with ARFOR

By Spc. M. William Petersen
Editor

The orphans of Tierra Santa in Villa San Antonio, La Paz, came to Soto Cano Air Base July 2 as part of ARFOR's summer picnic for the children. The soccer field sprung to life with children playing soccer, attacking piñatas and generally enjoying a day with the soldiers of Joint Task Force-Bravo.

Present at the picnic were 80 children from the orphanage, 25 volunteers and various Army and Air Force personnel who came to join the fun.

The various functions and sections of ARFOR contribute to the orphanage regularly.

"We go on monthly visits with about 15 people to bring the kids lunch, play games and spend time with them, said 1st Lt. Sarah Bateman, Headquarters and Support Company executive officer. "We also make donations from our fundraising efforts like Latino Night. In addition, the water section delivers a water buffalo of fresh water twice a week, which is the only fresh water supply for the kids."

The occasion of the children's visit is special for the



Photos by Spc. M. William Petersen

When piñatas were brought out, the children took their best shots.

sheer fact that they get to meet with the soldiers, according to Bateman.

"The kids get good meals at the orphanage and have all their basic needs taken care of, but it's special for them to have an adult friend who cares about them and chooses to spend time with them," said Bateman. "The soldiers get a chance to play as well and have a positive impact on a young person. The kids are a lot of fun and will keep you on your toes. They can also teach you a little Spanish and a lot of soccer. I think some of the soldiers do it because they miss their own kids and some because they know how happy the kids get when we show up; it's so obvious that they love the visits. Some of them have tears in their eyes when we leave or when they had to leave the picnic."

HSC ARFOR plans one of these visits every six months – a summer picnic and a party in the winter. For Bateman, the experience is one worth repeating.

"It amazes me how trusting these kids are and how anxious they are for some attention and affection," she said. "The whole day was really tiring, but it has easily been my favorite thing I've done here so far."



1st Lt. Brian Burchfield reads a story to one of the visiting orphans.

Two airmen help save life at lake

By Tech. Sgt. G. A. Volb
Joint Task Force-Bravo Public Affairs

The Soto Cano Air Base legal office nearly lost a third of its military manpower recently, when its paralegal almost drowned in Lake Yajoa.

Thanks to some quick thinking by Senior Airman Terrance Ervin and Staff Sgt. Dennis Kraffert, however, the life-threatening event resulted in little more than a bruised ego, exhaustion and a few cuts.

"I was on a pontoon boat sitting up front with my feet in the water when the water sucked me under the boat," said Spc. Jemaine McCreary. "I was calm, but thought immediately about the rotor and where it was headed."

Knowing he wouldn't have much time to clear it — the boat was about 15-20 feet long — he dove further underwater to avoid it.

"I could hear and feel the rotor coming," said the 26-year-old from Pensacola, Fla. "And it still cut my feet up in a couple of places, but it could have been worse."

Once the boat went by, McCreary made his way to the top. He saw the boat had stopped to try and pick him up, but was drifting further away.

"I was really out of breath at that time, having dived quickly to keep away from the rotor, so I felt tired," he said. "As I tried swimming to my boat, another one came by and threw me a life preserver."

McCreary hugged the preserver while Ervin and Kraffert made their way into the water and pulled him back to the boat.

"To me they were lifesavers," said the obviously thankful McCreary. "I'm glad they came and got me, because it made it much easier."

Once in the boat, the rest of the "crew" noticed blood collecting on the floor. "It looked like my whole foot was red," said McCreary. When he dove to avoid the rotor he wasn't 100 percent successful.

They returned to shore where McCreary was "patched up" by lake staff.

"I didn't want to go to sleep that night," he said. "I think I was still in a semi-state of shock. It took about three days for me to get back to normal, but I still think about it all the time."

He said following the incident he took a look at himself and ensures he's more cautious and careful about the things he does.

"I feel blessed that I'm able to work here now and walk," he said, adding that his foot hasn't healed completely yet.

He said the guys in the legal shop have been great, but have, on occasion, took a few jabs at him.

"The following week I went on pass, and they told me to keep away from boats and water," he said with a chuckle. But the office is glad it wasn't worse.

"We're glad he's okay and made it through with only minor injuries," said Army Capt. Cory Young, Soto Cano's Staff Judge Advocate. "The airmen and soldiers would have had a much longer wait for any claims submitted, because he does a majority of the claims investigations."

Now back on the job, the five-year veteran said he hopes "they [Ervin and Kraffert] are rewarded for their actions. What they did helped save my life."

CHANGES OF COMMAND



Medical Element says goodbye to Lt. Col. Barrington Nash, welcomes Lt. Col. Richard B. Hillburn

1-228 Winged Warriors tag-out Lt. Col. Willie Gaddis, tag-in Lt. Col. Peri Anest

See Page 5

Commanders Corner

Leading through a loss

By Lt. Col. Jim Ayers

1st Airlift Squadron Commander

These are the top 10 things I learned when one of my troops committed suicide:

1. There is no checklist. There are checklists for mortuary affairs, casualty notification teams and others but none that I found for commanders. It will seem like you're feeling your way in a pitch-black room searching for a light switch. You were given command because you are a leader. Trust your instincts.

2. Successful suicides are usually those you never see coming. My troop was bright, motivated, gregarious. She had a plan for her future. Some of her closest friends on the planet included people in our squadron. We all had suicide prevention training. None of us foresaw this.

3. This will be a defining moment in your tenure in command. Your squadron, your boss, your boss' boss, your peers, will take their cue from you. "How can we help?" "How is the squadron doing?" People above and below you in the chain of command will want you to lead. Now, more than ever, your squadron will need leadership.

4. Be accessible. Be visible. Be in touch. Forget your e-mail (ok, forget all e-mail except for those from the boss). Spend unannounced quality time in all your work sections. Don't just ask "How ya doin?" in the hallway. They won't tell you. Grab folks by the arm and make them talk, one-on-one. Spend focused time with those three or four folks who were closest to the victim.

5. The events immediately following a suicide will happen at the speed of light. Dealing with the family, working with mortuary affairs, notifying the squadron,

sending personnel to the funeral and planning a memorial service. Dealing with the suicide aftermath became my No. 1 responsibility. Get in front and stay in front of the post suicide events or they will spiral out of your control.

6. There's lots of help out there, use it. Your first sergeant and operations officer should know everything you know. You must all be consistent with the message to the squadron. Squadron chaplains are worth their weight in gold, but you need to give chaplains opportunities to forge relationships with folks long before a crisis. Make sure you're including them in everything.

7. Get the troops involved. I asked the section closest to my troop to plan her memorial service. They threw themselves into it with all their heart and energy. The service was phenomenal, the process was therapeutic.

8. Take care of the troop's family. Pick your best officer to liaison with the family. Anticipate the family's needs and questions. They'll want to travel to your location. They'll want to meet with the police or Air Force Office of Special Investigations. They'll want to meet with their loved ones' closest friends in the squadron.

9. People will want answers (there usually aren't any). People will assess blame (morale can nosedive if you let it.) I personally believe suicide is a completely irrational event. As rational people, the survivors all want rational answers to this irrational event.

There's a fine line and inevitable progression between the search for answers and the search for blame. We knew about the professional issues and before her death we thought them to be minor (aircraft upgrades, new duties within the squadron, a pending leave request, etc.). In the days following the suicide, people began pointing fingers at her supervisors, the operations superintendent, the 1st Sergeant and me, looking to place blame.

I tried to head off the "blame game" by talking about the rational/irrational dichotomy, telling them the squadron wasn't at fault any more than one of them was at fault, and by telling them as much as I could about our troop while protecting her privacy. Honesty works great.

10. You can't help others if you're a wreck. You need someone to talk to. For me, it was my wife. She was a great supporter throughout all this. The week after my troop's death was my hardest in command and close to my hardest ever in the Air Force. You need to stay focused at all times but it's OK for your troops to see you cry without losing your composure. It lets them know you hurt right along with them.

Most of my lessons learned are directed at dealing with the aftermath of a successful suicide. What about preventing one? Well, I'm not going to quote statistical research to you, this is my theory based on a sampling of one event, one horrible event.

The first intercessory step of prevention will happen on a personal level by those friends, squadron mates, and those who know the potential victim best. Do everything you can to encourage abiding friendships within the unit. Let them feel they're a part of something special. Keep them connected to one another. Then meddle, cajole, nit-pick and encourage your supervisors to do the same.

Let your folks know the supervisors want and need to know what's going on in their lives. The troops need to believe they have someplace of authority to turn for answers.

The bottom line is you're going to rely on your troop having a close friend in your unit and hope that close friend will come to your shirt and say, "Do you have a minute? I need to talk to about Staff Sgt. Jonesy." I'm convinced this is how prevention will happen.

The Chaplain's Corner

Get Happy

By Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Gary A. Pendrak

JTF-Bravo Chaplain

Have I got a deal for you. Just remember two things, the word Proverbs and the number 15. Proverbs 15:15 – it can be the key for a happy life for you. Here's what King Solomon said: "All the days of the oppressed are wretched, but the cheerful heart has a continual feast." Translation: a happy heart makes a happy life. Too simple... I don't think so.

Here is a story about a guy named Bill:

Young Billy is in junior high school. Like most teens, he doesn't have a real care in the world. His friend says, "You're a happy guy, aren't you?"

"Well," he replies, "not really, if only I had a girlfriend, then I'd have it made."

Now Billy is in high school and going steady. His friend asks him again, "Are you happy now?"

"No, not really. Having a girlfriend is nice, but it's tough without a car. If only I had some wheels."

Soon, he has a girl and a car. His friend tells him that he has it made.

"Well, not really. I need to go to college and get a degree and get married. Then I'll be happy for sure."

A few years later, his friend sees Bill at graduation. On his arm is his wife. In his hand is his degree. And they are heading towards his BMW. "Happy now?"

"Well," says Bill, "I need a job now, and if I could just make that down payment on our first home, then I'd be happy."

Five years later, Bill's friend sees him cutting the lawn in front of a beautiful new home. But he complains that life is such a rat race.

"If I can only survive until retirement. I've been thinking about buying a little place in the country to retire and raise a few chickens. Boy - then I'd have it made."

Would you believe it? The friend is driving down a gravel road in the country – years later – and sees Bill. Bill is sitting in his rocking chair on the porch of a neat little white house. Out back, the yard is full of chickens. The friend gets out of his car, and runs up to Bill, and says with a big smile, "You did it! Wow, here it is. Everything you ever wanted, worked for, struggled for, and paid for. You've got it made now."

"Well, that's true, my friend," replies. "But I've got rheumatism, my wife passed on last month, and even the hens aren't laying any more. One of these days, though, I'm going to be a happy man."

What a sad life. But, with only a few changes, it could be our story – yours or mine. Remember, when you live under the illusion that happiness comes only when circumstance get better, you will find that all the days of the oppressed are wretched. But the cheerful heart has a continual feast.

The

IGUANA

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Content is edited, prepared and provided by the Joint Task Force-Bravo Public Affairs Office, APO AA 34042, in Building D-06. Telephone numbers are 011-504-234-4634, ext. 4150 or 4676. Fax is ext. 4550. or DSN 449-4150/4676. Readers with story ideas should call the Public Affairs office. All photographs are property of JTF-Bravo unless otherwise noted.

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POTABLE WATER ONLY

Story and Photos by Spc. M. William Petersen
Editor

The ARFOR Water Section has plenty to do. Every day of the week, the “Water Dogs” have a mission to take care of. For section NCO in charge Sgt. Erik Rathie, it’s still not enough.

“We don’t get used enough. We’re a ‘break glass in times of war’ kind of unit,” said Rathie. “Not that we don’t have a peacetime mission...”

Their schedule is a demanding one that includes constant maintenance, training of their own and other sol-

diers and delivering water three times a week to the Tierra Santa orphanage in La Paz.

Every week the Water Dogs take 1,200 gallons of potable water to the orphanage in water buffaloes. On days when they’re not working on this mission, they are maintaining the equipment needed to accomplish their mission, including the Reverse Osmosis Water Purification Unit. This is only the tip of the iceberg for the water section, according to Rathie, but the small team still gets the job done.

“They handle the task very well,” said Rathie. “I would rate our crew as one of the top 10 in the Department of Defense. We have a lot of different experience and institutional knowledge to get the job done.”

Rathie and one of his current soldiers, Spc. Hassan Kenyatta, were formerly on the top water purification team in the Army. Fort Lee, Va., annually hosts the ROWPU Rodeo, a water purification contest in which more than 70 teams compete.

As for his two other soldiers in the four-man crew, Spc. Matthew Lee Stears and Spc. Adam Cash, Rathie has the utmost confidence in their abilities.

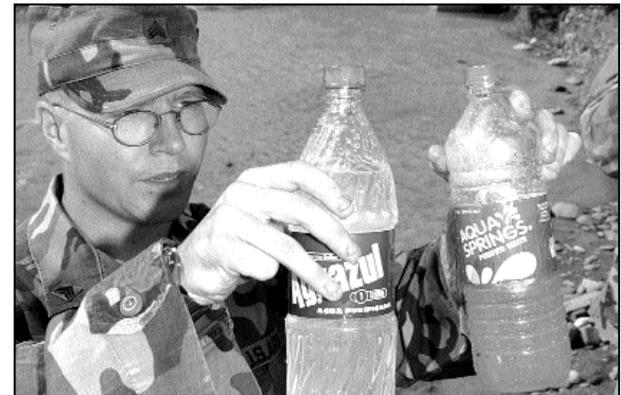
“The other two soldiers are good learners with strong institutional knowledge. We’re good enough to do whatever needs to get done.”

Along with maintaining proficiency among the Water Section, Rathie and his soldiers also train non-water soldiers in the art of purification.

“We’ve been training Support Platoon in the water mission. In case we have to go somewhere, we may have to bring them along,” said Rathie.

So what more would Rathie add to the many tasks of the Water Dogs? A chance to prove themselves to their fellow soldiers and the community.

“Consumer confidence is waning because we don’t get a lot of exposure,” said Rathie. “When you see us, it usually means there’s something wrong.”



Top: Spc. Hassan Kenyatta and Spc. Adam Cash hook up hoses to a pump during Reverse Osmosis Water Purification Unit training on base. Above: Kenyatta backs up a water buffalo during a delivery to the orphanage in La Paz.

Top: Sgt. Erik Rathie teaches Support Platoon personnel how to operate a ROWPU. Middle: Rathie compares water from before (right) and after (left) running it through a ROWPU. Above: Spc. Matthew Stears checks the water after delivering it to the orphanage in La Paz.



ONE -on- ONE

-with-
Robin Gonzalez
CHIEF OF SCAB MWR



(One-on-One is a forum designed to provide members of the Soto Cano Air Base community with insight into military and civilian leaders affecting their way of life. The following interview is with Robin Reid Gonzalez, who heads the Morale, Welfare and Recreation program. With more than 23 years of experience, she may just run the Department of Defense's best MWR program — regardless of branch of service. She says practice makes perfect, having been here two times before. The interview was conducted by Tech. Sgt. G. A. Volb, while photos were shot by Spc. M. William Petersen, both of the Joint Task Force-Bravo Public Affairs Office.)

The Iguana: Your program here receives a lot of accolades from members of the Soto Cano community; many go as far as saying it's one of the best in the world. Would you agree with that?

Robin Gonzalez: It is in a lot of ways. While we don't have full services like child care or youth center, we offer all the sports and DoD bands any other base does. What separates us from the rest, I think, is that if you go out on a tour with us — unless you're buying airfare or meals, most of it is on us. And as most people know, we offer an impressive lineup of tours.

TI: You realize, of course, that if you were in the civilian sector with the same type of business practices — all the freebies — you'd be looking for a job quicker than you could say Siguatepeque.

RG: [Laughing] Yeah, in fact I just came back off a week's TDY where we found five more giveaways. Each two-night stays for two at five different hotels.

TI: And how do you pull off such deals? You're not telling them "Guido" will be stopping by if they don't come up with a good deal for us do you?

RG: In many cases these are resorts and hotels that have wanted our business for quite a few years. And one of the ways I tell them they can increase their business with us is to offer complimentary nights and such, which will get word of mouth going about their hotel or resort.

TI: Normally speaking, most MWR programs are charged with earning a buck, while providing their

services. This isn't exactly the case here though. Does that make life a little easier for you?

RG: Typically, a program would have to earn money or break even or at least have some programs compensating for others to continue. In this case, since I've been here before, I saw it as coming home.

I know the programs we offer well and what we might want to begin offering down the line. It's something I'm really comfortable doing. As far as the money goes, Dyncorp operates our support services. For MWR this means they pay for labor and sub contracts for things like Yojoa and scuba classes — because they're services. From the JTF-Bravo appropriated side of the house, they handle supplies and equipment like ping-pong paddles, hammocks, and wicker. The \$300 members receive in their MWR "account" when they get here can be used to get scuba certified, buy wood-working material and such.

BIOGRAPHY

Family: Husband, Arthur, of 24 years in Palm Springs, Calif.

Education: Bachelor's Degree in Theater from University of California at Northridge.

Hobbies: Reading and traveling.

Experience: This year will be 25 years in the business, including 20 in the service.

Goals: "To continue working in MWR overseas with my husband."

TI: So what would you be doing right now if you weren't down here giving away all these freebies?

RG: Probably the same thing I was doing before I got here, working as a waitress.

TI: Which profession do you like better?

RG: Well, they're both different. I have a good time with both, but I prefer it here. [With a chuckle] It's warmer.

TI: You could be a waitress again, but would that appease your philanthropic tendencies?

RG: No, but it pays the bills.

TI: Do you find it a little more satisfying being down here and providing such a great service to the troops? Because I have to tell you, most people coming in find your pricing a bit unusual.

RG: I get a lot of job satisfaction. I get a lot of positive feedback from folks on our programs. The great part of it all is we get people taking advantage of the cost-free programs. If they're using our programs and facilities, then we must be doing something right.

TI: What are some of the more popular destinations for the Soto Cano tourist?

RG: First off you'd think Roatan. But in my mind, if you can only go to one place during your time here, I'd suggest you head to Copan and the Mayan ruins. You can see beaches and palm trees at a lot of other places, but you may never have the opportunity to see the Mayan ruins again. As we get further into the rainy season, we're looking at river rafting and camping in the rain forest. There are a lot of things we're always trying to develop.

TI: Who determines which facilities or resorts we go to?

RG: It's a joint effort. We take preventative medicine, fire and security safety for obvious reasons. So we're looking at developing a lot more options around La Ceiba, San Pedro Sula and elsewhere. In many cases, we find out about places from you guys. If you were out on your own and found a place you think others would be interested in, you let us know and we check it out. If it meets our standards we add it to the list.

TI: So, this being your third time here, what keeps you coming back?

RG: I like it. I think, from the feedback I get, that I'm fairly good at what I do. I enjoy it and I like doing good things for the people here.

TI: If you had a blank check to improve MWR here, what would you do with it?

RG: [With a quick smile] Add more boats to lake Yojoa. Actually, I'd go out and ask what everyone is looking for. What we could add on to what we already have to make the experience here even better.

Nash passes MEDEL reigns to Hillburn

Story and Photo by 2nd Lt. Carla Pampe

Public Affairs Director

The responsibility of caring for the health of Joint Task Force Bravo members is a large one. In a ceremony held June 3 in the Soto Cano Fire Station, that responsibility changed hands.

Lt. Col. Richard B. Hillburn took the Medical Element reigns of command from Lt. Col. Barrington Nash, who leaves Soto Cano for a position as commander, Ryder Clinic, Fort Meyer, Va.

Hilburn comes to Soto Cano from a position as the Command Surgeon, Office of Military support in Washington, D.C. He entered the Army in 1969, attended airborne school and was assigned as a medic with the 173rd Airborne Brigade, Republic of Vietnam, from 1970 – 1971.

After serving in a number of different assignments, Hilburn completed training as an Army Physicians Assistant and was commissioned a warrant officer. He left active duty in 1980 to earn a Bachelor of Science Degree in Chemistry and French from North Georgia College.

He was then accepted to the Medical College of Georgia, where he earned his Doctorate of Medicine in 1990. Hilburn then returned to active duty at Fort Gordon, Ga., where he completed his residency in internal medicine. After attending Command and General Staff

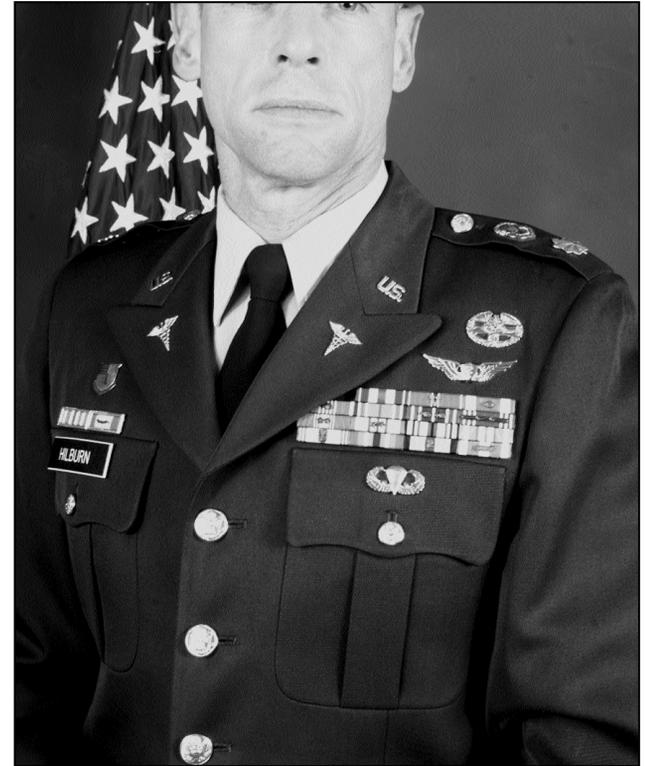
College in 1997, he was assigned as Chief, Medical Training, USASOC, Fort Bragg, N.C. His assignment as Command Surgeon followed.

Hilburn said he is very much looking forward to his tour at Soto Cano and to working together with the people of Honduras.

"I'm extremely happy to have the privilege of serving the Army and JTF-B in this capacity," he said. "In 1979, I was a CW2, P.A. and I decided that I wanted to strive towards commanding in the army medical department. Twenty-three years later, I am a physician and for the first time am taking command of a deployed medical organization. I could not be more enthusiastic about a new job than I am about this one."

Hilburn added that he is looking forward to being a part of the mission the medical element performs.

"MEDEL is engaged every single day, with every service that comprises this task force as well as with the Host Nation. MEDEL coordinated and delivered health care to over 88,000 Central Americans last year, most of them Hondurans. We are the premier diplomatic instrument of American goodwill in this region," he said. "My medics are the best in the Army; they're not here because they're slouches that someone wanted to get shed of. They know their stuff and they love what they do and it shows. Because of them, I confidently, personally guarantee that the health care at the MEDEL will be compassionate, expeditious, professional and of the highest quality. We are here to serve and fit to fight!"



Lt. Col. Richard B. Hillburn
New MEDEL commander

New commander takes reigns for Winged Warriors



Members of the 1st Battalion, 228th Aviation Regiment stand at parade rest during Monday's change of command ceremony.

Story and Photo by

2nd Lt. Carla Pampe

Public Affairs Director

Members of the 1st Battalion, 228th Aviation Regiment here got a new commander Monday as Lt. Col. Peri Anest assumed command from Lt. Col. Willie Gaddis in a ceremony held in hangar 550.

For the ceremony, members of the battalion formed up for a review.

"Monday, I was able to witness a superb performance by the Winged Warriors," said Anest of his troops. "The NCO corps truly epitomized that they are the backbone of our military. I was never prouder to be in the military than I was Monday."

Anest comes to Soto Cano from a NATO position as senior land officer, J3/J7 Regional Headquarters Allied Forces North in the Netherlands. Originally from Sioux City, Iowa, he was commissioned as an infantry officer in

1983, and holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Salisbury University. He has served in a variety of positions during his career, including flight platoon leader and executive officer for B Company, 7th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment; Battalion Executive Officer for 1st Battalion, 58th Aviation Regiment and Company Commander for C/159th Aviation Regiment. The colonel has attended the Infantry Basic Course and Advanced courses, Initial Entry Rotary Wing Course, CH-47D Aircraft Qualification Course, UH-60A/L Aircraft Qualification Course, the Combined Arms and Services Staff School and the Command and General Staff Officer Course.

"I look forward to serving with the Winged Warriors, and I promise to give it all I have," he said of his new command.

"On a personal note to the battalion," he added, "if you haven't done your morning roll-on, then move out and draw fire soldier. It's great to be back. Warriors Rule!"

TEST YOUR SMOKE DETECTOR FOR LIFE!



Your smoke detector has the power to save your life. Or does it? If you haven't tested your smoke detector lately, it may not be working and that's a risk you can't afford to take.

Working smoke detectors give us early warning of a fire, providing extra time to escape safely. But they can't do their job if we haven't done ours: monthly testing to make sure they're working. Test all the smoke detectors in your living area as well as work center. For the life of the detector and for the lives of you and your coworkers.

When was the last time you tested your smoke detector?

Last month? Last year? Can't remember? If you not sure your smoke detectors are working, then how can you be sure you'll be protected if a fire breaks out? Don't gamble with your life and assume your smoke detectors are working. Test each one, every month, so you'll know they'll be ready to protect you if there's a fire.

Test your alarm for life. You can't afford not to.

Birds of a feather

F-16 Fighting Falcons from the U.S. Air Force's 21st Fighter Squadron fly over southern Arizona. Military jets patrolled the United States on July 4 as part of unprecedented se-

curity to protect Americans as they celebrated Independence Day nervous about fresh attacks after Sept. 11, the White House said on Wednesday. Photo by Reuters (Handout)

Afghanistan: arms cache found; civilian deaths investigated

By Linda D. Kozaryn

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — U.S. and coalition forces unearthed another arms cache in Afghanistan while investigators wrapped up a preliminary probe into the alleged July 1 friendly fire accident in Oruzgan Province.

"This weekend, in a small town north of Kandahar, our forces found a cache that included 29 of the shoulder-fired anti-air missiles of various makes," said Marine Lt. Gen. Gregory Newbold, operations director for the Joint Staff. Several arms caches of "significant size" were found last week, he added.

Pentagon spokeswoman Victoria Clarke said a joint U.S.- Afghan team has completed the preliminary investigation into the July 1 raid in southern Afghanistan that allegedly struck an Afghan wedding party in Oruzgan Province. She said a second team is slated to be in Bagram within 24 to 48 hours to conduct a full investigation.

Headed by an Air Force brigadier general, the team will include Army, Navy and Air Force members as well as AC-130 gunship and forward air control experts. U.S. officials have asked President Hamid Karzai to appoint an Afghan to the investigation board and to oversee Afghan participation, she said.

"The team will tour as long as they need to tour the sites, interview villagers, pilots, forward air controllers and Special Forces and to do as thorough as possible a job on the investigation," Clarke said. "There is a lot of ground to cover, but we will work hard to get as many answers as possible."

U.S. officials have said coalition forces were operating in the Oruzgan area that day, looking for suspected Taliban members believed to be hiding there.

U.S. Air Force B-52 bombers and AC-130 gunships struck several ground targets, including anti-aircraft artillery sites that were engaging the aircraft.

Media reports say the air strikes killed more than 40 civilians and injured more than 100. Clarke said the number of civilians killed or injured remains unclear. "We know they occurred, and we regret every one of them," she said, "but we do not have hard and fast numbers from what we have seen thus far."

Clarke said there are no plans to cut back on using air power in light of the friendly fire incident. Depending on the circumstances, she said, "We will use the means, the tools and tactics that we think are appropriate."

Newbold said military officials conduct air strikes in response to enemy action. "We also use them to protect our troops," he said. "We have to strike a balance between accomplishing the mission and taking prudent steps to ensure that we minimize any unintended effects."

"Although civilian casualties have occurred, as they always do in military conflicts, they have been quite low," Clarke said. "Every one of those casualties is a tragedy — every single one of them. We regret the loss of every life. We regret the injury of every innocent civilian. But overall, the results have been pretty extraordinary."

The United States goes to extraordinary lengths to avoid civilian casualties and will continue to do while prosecuting the war on terrorism, she stressed. When accidents occur, she said, U.S. officials immediately get together with the Afghan government "to figure out what's the right approach going forward."

"We're working closely in a joint effort to rid the country of the remaining pockets of al Qaeda and Taliban, and we will continue that close cooperation until the job is done," Clarke said.

NCOs get new career guidance

By Joe Burlas

Army News Service

WASHINGTON — An updated Department of the Army pamphlet will soon provide noncommissioned officers more robust career development guidance on the path to sergeant major.

Replacing a 15-year-old generic DA PAM 600-25, Non-commissioned Officer Professional Development Guide, the new guide will offer structured institutional and self-development career advice tailored to each military occupational specialty and skill level via the Web later this month.

"The Army has been in need of this publication for some time," said retired Sgt. Maj. Carl Armentrout, chief of Army Development Systems XXI Enlisted Component. "The field asked for better NCO professional development guidance and it is being delivered. It's very extensive."

Updating the NCO guide was one of the recommendations the Army Development Systems XXI task force made to Army Chief of Staff Gen. Eric K. Shinseki last year. According to its charter, the task force was formed in October 1999 to "chart a course for enlisted and warrant officer development and management required in the next century."

Making the pamphlet an e-book allows it to be updated quickly by MOS proponents and other Army officials when changes occur or more current information is available, Armentrout said.

As an e-book, the guide also has hundreds of hyperlinks for more detailed coverage of specific Army subjects and programs. Users can checkout the Army's Credentialing Opportunities Online Web site to see how a MOS compares to a similar civilian profession and what is required to qualify for jobs in that career field.

Another link takes users to the Army Education Web site which details information on a myriad of academic degree-building programs and available tuition assistance.

Specifically, the guide lays out the duties, prerequisites, required institutional training and recommended self-development of each MOS by career management field and skill level, Armentrout said.

Career field proponents have made significant progress on the requirement to reduce MOSs to a more manageable level, he said. When the ADS XXI task force formed, the Army had 241 MOSs. The number today is less than 200.

The next step is for the Training and Doctrine Command to look across proponents to see what other MOSs might be consolidated for further reductions, Armentrout said. Low-density MOSs that are not inherently military are also being examined for possible outsourcing, he said.

On the need to staff Sergeant Major Academy instructor positions with seasoned senior NCOs, the first batch of 15 report in this summer, with 15 more following in 2003 and another 15 in 2004.

The recent practice had been to staff the academy's 48 instructor positions with sergeants major who had just graduated from the academy's training, Armentrout said. Another fix in the works is lifting a regulatory ban that prohibits command sergeants major who leave command positions for other non-command assignments from returning to command slots, he said.

A similar initiative is under review to field experienced senior NCOs in observer/controller positions at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, Calif., and the Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk, La.

"Obviously, a command sergeant major who has taken a battalion through the National Training Center a time or two is better qualified to mentor NCOs coming through NTC than someone who has never been there before," Armentrout said.

BRIEFS

What's for lunch?

DFAC information is available 24-7 on the JTF-B intranet. For the latest menu information, operating hours and special meals, click on the dining facility link.

Smart Team to inspect Kilo area

The DynCorp Smart Team will be working in the "K" Area this month, and the billeting office needs to set appointments to check rooms. Teams will be checking electrical system, roof leaks, floor, windows, paint and stairs. If you live in Kilo area, please contact the billeting office at 4450/4858 or e-mail Lourdes Padilla, Housing Administrator, at padillal@jtfb-emh1.army.mil, to set up an appointment.

Fire prevention training

Attention, MSC Commanders and Unit Safety Officers/NCOs. The Fire Prevention office will be conducting annual Fire Safety training, I.E., fire safety briefings, hands-on fire extinguisher training the week of July 22 - 26. If you would like your personnel to receive this training please contact Tech Sgt. Troy Wright at ext. 6050.

Travel warning

A travel warning is being issued to alert American citizens to the possibility of civil disturbances and blockades in the Peten region of Guatemala. This Announcement expires Oct. 1. For more information, visit the JTF-B webserver.

Traffic regulation out

The new Soto Cano AB Traffic Regulation is on the H: Drive under JSF. Take a look and become familiar with the rules of the road.

Flightline Badges

Flightline badges are controlled items and all personnel must turn in their flightline badges prior to departing Soto Cano. The only agency authorized to receive flightline badges is Base Operations, Bldg D-61, DSN 449-4499. If you are in possession of any returned flightline badges, please return them to Base Ops as soon as possible.

Thrift Savings Plan

The Thrift Savings Plan is a retirement savings and investment plan that allows service members to save a portion of their pre-tax pay in a special retirement account. Service members may sign up to participate in the TSP program during the open season from May 15 - July 31. Current TSP participants may also change their contribution types and amounts. For more information contact the Finance Office at ext. 4282.

Stryker IAVs fielded



The new Stryker Interim Armored Vehicle rolls out to be fielded by A Company, 520th Infantry at Fort Irwin, Calif., during the worldwide transformation exercise, Millenium Challenge.

FORTLEWIS, Wash. — Fifty of the new Stryker interim armored vehicles have arrived at Fort Lewis so far and the first company to train with them is preparing to deploy their IAVs this month to the National Training Center.

The 14 IAVs of A Company, 520th Infantry will be airlifted to Fort Irwin, Calif., July 25-26 for the worldwide Transformation exercise, Millenium Challenge 2002. One of the IAVs from Fort Lewis was airlifted June 21 to NTC as a test.

The second unit to be issued the Strykers, the 1st Battalion of the 23rd Infantry, is scheduled to begin training on the IAVs at Fort Lewis this week.

"We welcome the arrival of the Stryker - the Army's newest combat vehicle - not only for its capability, but most importantly, because of the precious soldiers it was designed to support," said I Corps and Fort Lewis Commander Lt. Gen. James T. Hill, during a welcome ceremony there June 6 for the new vehicles.

At the ceremony, two Strykers arrived at Fort Lewis aboard a U.S. Air Force C-17 Globemaster III, and Hill said the interim armored vehicle and the C-17 have a bright future together. Army Chief of Staff Gen. Eric Shinseki's vision is that the Stryker can be airlifted anywhere in the world in a

matter of hours.

By 2004, more than 600 Stryker vehicles are expected to pass through the gates of Fort Lewis, officials said.

When the vehicles arrive at Lewis, more than 100 contractors are there from General Dynamics to inprocess the IAVs and finish their final assembly. Technicians go through the vehicles bumper to bumper making sure everything works, said Maj. Brian Raftery, project manager for the Brigade Coordination Cell, 3rd Brigade of the 2nd Infantry Division, the first Interim Brigade Combat Team.

"Since we started receiving the vehicles, we have been getting between one and three a day," Raftery said "As long as we have vehicles, we work seven days a week - holidays included."

The processing of the vehicles, which is basically the "dealer preparation" of the vehicle, must be done before the communications systems and the other "bolt-on" communications attachments can be added, Raftery said.

"What we do here is put the vehicle in a 'ready for training' condition," Raftery said. "Once a unit comes in and signs for it, all they have to do is mount their weapons."

A small team of soldiers and civilians from the Defense Contract Man-

agement Agency spend their time doing quality control checks on the vehicles as they move through the different stations ensuring that the Army is getting what they pay for.

"The contractor doesn't get paid until they deliver a complete vehicle," said Raftery.

As the Strykers are finished and approved by the DCMA technicians, they are put into a holding area until an entire unit's vehicles are ready to be signed for.

"We issue vehicles in unit sets," Raftery said.

"We want to minimize the number of times that a company commander and a supply sergeant have to come down here and sign for stuff. It just makes it easier from an accountability standpoint."

"These new Strykers will help arm and train the soldier who will undoubtedly make history with them," Hill said. "These Interim Brigades are the bridge to the future. The lessons we learn from training with these vehicles and other transformation systems today will be essential as we close in on the Army Objective Force of the future."

(Editor's note: Ann Zetterstrom of the Transformation Public Affairs Office and Joe Barrentine of Fort Lewis' Northwest Guardian, are significant contributors to this article.)

Where there's smoke, there's a Fire Dawg

Story and Photos by 2nd Lt. Carla Pampe

Public Affairs Director

For the Soto Cano Fire Department, there is no better way to be prepared for any situation than to do rigorous and regular training.

Recently, the "Fire Dawgs" put some of their skills to the test during a training exercise at The Zone.

"The purpose for the training was to keep the guys fresh with what they are supposed to do when a real fire happens," said Staff Sgt. Kevin Walker, assistant chief of training. "The reason The Zone was the perfect place to have a drill like that was because the area is so congested and so much traffic travels through there at any given time, there is no definite setup for the vehicles."

Walker said this location provided an opportunity for drivers to really think about vehicle positioning, and for assistant chiefs to adjust the situation around them and keep safety in mind for the crews.

For this exercise, the scenario involved two people missing inside a building engulfed in heavy smoke and flames.

"Most of the time when the department has drills, the scenarios will usually be the same, just different configurations on the inside. Sometimes the victims will be easy to find, and sometimes rather difficult to find — at least I try my best to hide the victims," Walker said. "This lets me know that the crews are thinking."

Training regularly is extremely important for a number of reasons, said Soto Cano Fire Chief Senior Master Sgt. Terry Baker.

"Firefighters must not only become proficient, but maintain their certification levels," he said. "This train-

ing keeps firefighters proficient in areas such as ventilation procedures, engineer/pump operations, search and rescue techniques, first aid, fire attack and fire ground command and control.

"We can't play cards or be on PlayStation II all day and expect to get the job done. Firefighting is a complex business and requires a lot of training and certification levels," Baker added. "In fact, the average firefighter doing 20 years will have taken 16.5 years of college level course to become certified for a fire chief/E-9 position. Training is the key to successfully fighting a fire and dealing with outcome."

Walker said the Fire Dawgs drill about once a week, and spend the rest of the time doing crew chief proficiency training. Once he evaluates what type of proficiency training the crews have done, that training is incorporated into the following week's drill. Walker said keeping firefighters well trained and current is especially important because of the unique challenges they could face at Soto Cano.

"I believe the biggest challenge is the building construction of the hootches here. If one of the hootches does catch fire, God forbid, we are going to have a hard time on our hands," he said. "Not because they are so small, but because of the wood construction."

In addition to how quickly the hootches can burn, there is always the possibility that nearby hootches could catch fire in a domino effect, he added.

"This is why obeying the fire safety rules is so important," Walker said. "For example — don't burn candles and incense."

Baker said in addition to the challenge of wooden hootches, water supply is another concern on Soto Cano.

"However, with the water tower construction proj-



Airman 1st Class Steven Harwell establishes a triage area to treat victims pulled from a fire during a recent drill.



Senior Airman Terrence Ervin discharges water to protect exposures near the Zone. Realistic training is key to keeping the Fire Dawgs prepared for any situation.

ect we'll see a vast improvement in the current system," he said.

In addition to providing fire protection for base facilities, the Fire Dawgs also protect the flightline and train for fire scenarios there as well.

"We do not get that many planes here, but the possibility [of an incident] is always there," Walker said. "That is why training is so important — simply put, we have to be ready for the real thing no matter the time of day or night," he said.



Left: As part of a training exercise, Senior Airman Chris Gordon extends a large-diameter exposure line to protect nearby structures from flamespread as a group of Fire Dawgs prepare to enter the smoke-filled building. The Fire Dawgs participate in training exercises such as this on a regular basis to keep up their skills.