



# The IGUANA

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## Jump unites paratroopers, militaries

By Spc. M. William Petersen  
Editor

Through the open cargo door of the CH-47 Chinook, the soldiers could see the mountains of Honduras along the horizon. Nothing could be heard over the noise of the engines and rotors, but there was a strange feeling of calm and quiet among them.

Some spoke no English; some spoke no Spanish. Some were from the United States, others from Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador and beyond.

Their cultures and backgrounds were different, yet they all shared one common bond: when the green light came on and the jumpmaster gave the signal, they were all airborne soldiers.

Paratroopers from seven different countries took to the skies April 17 as part of Iguana Voladora 2002, an event that gathered the Central American military community together at Soto Cano Air Base for two days of activities.

Along with participating in the multinational jump, representatives from the different militaries took time to discuss search and rescue, fire protection and medical capabilities. This sharing of knowledge was part of an effort to unify the militaries in case they ever serve side by side, according to Col. Michael Okita, JTF-B commander.

"The multinational jump was really designed to bring militaries from throughout Central America together in the interest of building friendships so that in the future, in times of crisis, when the militaries are thrust together in the same operational area, they'll be looking at a friendly, familiar face," said Okita.

The jump was led by U.S. Army Airborne jumpmasters. Their job was to give Sustained Airborne training before the jump and serve as jumpmaster on each lift. With many of the paratroopers unable to speak English, certain accommodations had to be made.

"The way we prepare the foreign national paratroopers for an airborne operation is we have a bilingual jumpmaster conduct Sustained Airborne Training for the foreign national paratroopers, and an English-speaking jumpmaster conducts Sustained Airborne Training for the

American paratroopers," said Staff Sgt. William L. Fleming, Army Forces S-3 Air/Commo NCO.

Fleming has been a jumpmaster since 1994, and has 74 static-line jumps with nine of those as jumpmaster. He is also a Military Free-Fall jumpmaster with more than 350 free-fall jumps, 30 of which he served as jumpmaster.

Despite his vast experience, Fleming is always learning with each new jump.

"All airborne operations will be different, because no matter how many airborne operations you've conducted, just when you think you've seen it all, you haven't seen nothing at all," said Fleming. "The thing I took away most from this jump is the camaraderie that bonds all paratroopers together."

For the paracadistas (the Spanish term for paratrooper,) the jump diversified their experience as well.

Capt. Hilarion Patal Coyote of the Guatemalan army has jumped many times in the past, but like Fleming, finds something new every time.

"It's very good to meet officers and soldiers from other countries and interact,"

he said. "In some ways you get to see the types of unity and discipline they have and how they compose themselves. For me, the most important thing is motivation and morale. Some armies have a lot of motivation, others are more relaxed."

JTF-B has been involved with five multinational jumps since 1998. Other long-standing exercises that JTF-B participate in with other nations' militaries include the New Horizons humanitarian aid missions, Central Skies counter-drug operations, and Medical Readiness Training Exercises all over Central America.

"Everyone played a critical role in making this event a success," said Okita. "My hat is off to everyone, especially ARFOR. They did a terrific job coordinating and synchronizing the multinational exercise and jump."

"The airborne community is a very special community, and it has been since the 1940s. There is a common brotherhood among paratroopers; it lies in a certain ability to do something that is inherently dangerous. The airborne are a certain breed that accept the risk and have the [confidence] to get the job done."

**"There is a common brotherhood among paratroopers; it lies in a certain ability to do something that is inherently dangerous."**

**Col. Michael Okita  
JTF-Bravo Commander**



Photo by Spc. M. William Petersen

A paracadista leaps from the back of a CH-47 Chinook during the Iguana Voladora 2002 multinational airborne jump.



Photo by 1st Lt. Richard Komurek

Paratroopers descend on their landing zone during the jump April 17.

**FOR MORE PHOTOS, SEE PAGES 4 & 5**

# Commanders Corner

## What's the future of JTF-B?

By Col. Michael Okita

Joint Task Force-Bravo Commander

When the Bush administration took office 15 months ago, a refreshing review of the nation's global military commitments began. Under scrutiny were forward-based forces including the Joint Task Force assigned at Soto Cano Air Base.

"Nation building," a term associated with forces serving overseas with the primary duty of providing regional stability, humanitarian assistance, and civic action programs, was largely viewed by the incoming administration as an unnecessary obligation that stretched the Nation's defense department beyond acceptable means. The interest, it seems, is to curtail overseas basing to the most strategically significant locations throughout the world in an effort to preserve U.S. military forces for involvement with the most vital of national security interests.

Today, JTF-Bravo's continued presence in Central America draws interest from experts that believe a military footprint is critical to regional stability and the fostering of democratic ideals on our country's doorstep. But while politicians and military strategists argue the methodology for securing such freedoms, others search for convincing argument to close down JTF-Bravo and realign forces to overburdened commands in each of the military services. Admittedly, the future of Joint Task Force Bravo is as tenuous as it has been during any of the 20 years it has been in existence. What is predictable is that the JTF must modify its current mission profile, and consequently its contribution to the Commander-in-Chief of Southern Command and the Department of Defense, or start dismantling hooches and move back to the United States. Maintaining the status quo is not an option.

Where do we go from here?

In this era of combating global terrorism, it is absolutely critical that operational reach and flexibility be maintained through the overseas basing of forces. The most profound argument includes the need to deter illicit activity at its origin and to rapidly respond to emerging military requirements be they operational or humanitarian. The JTF at Soto Cano gives the CINC and the DoD this geographical flexibility and therefore ought to be maintained on a short list of forward bases deemed essential to theater security.

Unfortunately, until the JTF is granted authorization to reshape its personnel structure, is modernized with the latest equipment and is given permissions for non-temporary construction, the needed capability to transform JTF-Bravo into a responsive, 21st century organization will not be realized.

That's why in recent months the JTF-Bravo leadership has been aggressively designing the "JTF-B Future" — a new perspective of operational capability. The JTF joint staff and MSC leaders are building a comprehensive proposal for the CINC's review in anticipation of gaining an enhanced theater-wide mission and, most significantly, the necessary resources to support the new role.

With more than 50 percent of U.S. imported oil originating in the western hemisphere, 58 percent of U.S. trade occurring with Latin America, problematic narcotics issues troubling the region, and western hemisphere nations aching for U.S. partnerships, the relatively small U.S. military presence in Honduras is well worth the increased investment necessary to create an enhanced capability for theater commanders. With the announcement of the next SOUTHCOM CINC soon to occur, questions surrounding the future of this long-standing task force will quickly be answered. As DoD transforms its military, it is time for JTF-Bravo to be redefined and rebuilt or suffer elimination from the force structure.

### A SAMPLE OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

- **Conduct Search and Rescue, Personnel Recovery, Non-Combatant Evacuation**
- **Provide support to U.S. CT units**
- **Expand airfield operations to 24/7**
- **Add Panama to the JOA**
- **Invest in non-temporary infrastructure**
- **Transfer TDY positions to PCS**
- **Restructure ARFOR to mirror a Forward Support Battalion**
- **Streamline unit C2 relationships**
- **Modernize helicopter fleet and communications architecture**
- **Develop in-country/regional exercise program**
- **Base theater immediate response forces at SCAB**
- **Increase all source intelligence capability**
- **Serve all or in-part as the CINC's standing JTF.**

## The Chaplain's Corner

### How to be Miserable

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

JTF-Bravo Chaplain

Maybe you have heard my saying, (along with apologies to recruiting command,) that goes: "Be all that you can be — cold, wet, hungry, tired, lonely, miserable, and depressed. That's all that I can be today, First Sergeant."

From an unknown source comes an article titled, "How to be Miserable." It says: "Think about yourself. Talk about yourself. Use 'I' as often as possible. Mirror yourself continually in the opinion of others. Listen greedily to what people say about you. Expect to be appreciated. Be suspicious. Be jealous and envious. Be sensitive to slights. Never forgive a criticism. Trust nobody but yourself. Insist on consideration and respect. Demand agreement with your own views on everything. Sulk if people are not grateful to you for favors you've shown them. Never forget a service that you have rendered. Shirk your duties if you can. Do as little as possible for others."

Well, I guess if you did all these things, you would definitely insure your misery.

But we are only as miserable as we want to be. I find it very curious in the military when someone tells me that they are being transferred to where-ever. My first question is usually, "Is that good?" Sometimes

they just stare at me, like I've just asked the most stupid question. But, for every assignment, I've heard some say that it was miserable. It was the pits. It had to be the worst assignment in the whole military system. And, just as I am about to cross that one off my dream sheet, along comes another who says that it was the best-kept secret in the military. It is a great assignment. The people were great, the mission was fantastic, and they would give their eye-teeth to get assigned there again. What makes the difference? The attitude of the people involved.

Seeing ourselves as the center of the universe leads to misery. We weren't made to be the focus of our own attention. According to Scripture, we were made to give our hearts to "the High and Lofty One," who lives with those who have a humble spirit. He brings comfort and peace to those who sense their need of Him.

Lord, help us to turn our thoughts away from ourselves and focus our attention on You, the only source of true and lasting peace.

I read this poem the other day:  
Self-centeredness brings misery,  
A proud heart brings much pain;  
But those with true humility  
A lasting peace will gain.

Remember: A person is never so empty as when he is full of himself.

## The IGUANA

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## GOV abuse takes away from mission, taxpayers

By Tech. Sgt. G.A. Volb  
JTF-Bravo Public Affairs

Recently, there's been a rash of government vehicle misuse that has caught the attention of Joint Task Force-Bravo leadership.

Since the tax payer's dollar is as important today as ever, they want to remind everyone just what the policy is regarding government owned vehicles.

"GOVs are, obviously, for official use only," said 1st Lt. Glidden Torres-Estela, installation transportation officer. "This means they should only be used in support of the mission as determined by individual commanders."

What Torres-Estela has been seeing lately, however, doesn't exactly fit the bill. "We shouldn't be using them to go to Comayagua to eat or Tegucigalpa to buy food at the PriceSmart."

To prevent this from happening, there are several "checks and balances" that are required before members head off base in their GOV.

"Every vehicle must have an updated motor equipment dispatch form signed by the transportation representative and stamped 'off-base approved,'" said Torres-Estela. "They must also have an equipment maintenance and inspection worksheet completed and an approved request for pass and government vehicle off-post authorization."

He said the latter is the most important piece of paper since it lets the unit commander know exactly where their vehicles are going. "Part three of the form must have the correct authorization signatures. Sometimes this isn't happening," he emphasized.

Torres-Estela said that since JTF-Bravo pays a monthly lease for the vehicles, misusing them is considered fraud, waste and abuse, something we should all be on the lookout for.

The bottom line for anyone using GOVs is, should it be determined that they are misusing the vehicles, commanders can take away their driving privileges or even send the vehicle back to transportation, which would hurt the unit as a whole.

Currently, there are 103 vehicles in the JTF-Bravo fleet that fall within these guidelines, including 12 buses, 37 EZ-Gos and eight jeeps.

GOV policy also includes trips around base. Members shouldn't be stopping by the Post Exchange to buy food or drink in their EZ-Go. Should security forces find them, they'll be called to answer for the indiscretion.

In the end, "the more vehicles are used unnecessarily, the more wear and tear that results," said Torres-Estela. "And that leads to higher maintenance costs and, possibly, higher lease payments due to added mileage."

## Task force builds school, friendships

Story and Photo By Tech. Sgt. G. A. Volb  
JTF-Bravo Public Affairs

The school was cramped, dimly lit and the roof leaked. There was no air conditioning and the walls of the two-room structure let wind and rain through like a sieve.

That, however, was before the members of Joint Task Force Oxloflan decided to build a new school as part of its New Horizons program. Today, the 70 students of the small El Salvadoran village of El Congo — who once studied in little more than a doublewide shack — have a real schoolhouse. It was none too soon according to their schoolmaster Anna Vilma Aguilar.

"The old construction was so poor," she said, at the final ceremony April 17, "that all the elements just came right in. The heat was unbearable too. We're very excited to be moving into a new school after so many years suffering in the old one."

New Horizons is a humanitarian civil assistance project working under the auspices of Joint Task Force Bravo, according to Army Maj. Ken Bohon, chief of operations for JTF-Bravo engineering. While it's primarily a training exercise for U.S. forces - the focus being deployment, base camp operations, medical assistance and construction - there's an added benefit for the host nation.

"We provide much-needed infrastructure like schools, clinics, latrines and water wells to local communities," said Bohon. "It's also a great opportunity for cooperation among military forces of other Central American countries."

The El Congo project took three months to complete, something many of the 4- to 12-year-olds who'll be educated there said was "worth the wait."

Aside from the school, teams of servicemembers built six other schools, two medical clinics, six latrines and four wells for local villages.

The effort included a multi-service contingent of Army, Navy and Air Force specialists who also offered medical and veterinary services during similar training exercises. But 29 members of the Navy's 7th Construction Battalion, 2nd Construction Brigade, did much of the hard-core building. Heavily cross-trained, the Seabees used their considerably diverse skills for well drilling, vertical construction, and metalwork.

"This is an enormous benefit to the local communities here, and a wonderful representation of the American military," said American Ambassador to El Salvador Rose Likins. "The mayor of every village and town here wants these projects done in their back yard."

At El Congo, students also benefited from humanitarian organizations stateside.

Donations from American students included school kits complete with pens, pencils, notebooks and rulers, plus the desks that will eventually fill each schoolroom.

Likins said such projects were so important to El Salvador that President Francisco Guillermo Flores Pérez expressed his personal gratitude. "He's absolutely thrilled by the support of the American people," she said.

Symbolic of the growing friendship between the two nations and the personal touch afforded by members of the U.S. armed services, a leftover

quote on the blackboard of the old schoolhouse read: "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it if a man would give all he owns to provide it."

Next year, New Horizons projects are tentatively scheduled for Panama and Belize.



E03 Matt Pence works a drill into 600-feet of soil in El Delirio, El Salvador.

### POWER OUTAGES

Power outages have been scheduled for maintenance and repairs.

(P) denotes a partial area power outage

(\*) denotes a holiday or DONSA.

#### AFFECTED AREA

K(P), H, E

Z, X, W, V, U, T, POL, GCA, PS, DYNCORP

A, B, D, Honduran area, Old Fire Station, Flt. Line, R(P), GCA

0800-1500

0800-1400

0800-1500

0800-1600

0800-1300

0800-1500

0800-1200

0800-1300

0800-1600

0800-1600

0800-1400

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#### DATE

MAY 4

MAY 8

MAY 11

MAY 15

MAY 18

MAY 22

MAY 24(\*)

MAY 27(\*)

MAY 29

JUNE 5

JUNE 8

JUNE 12

JUNE 17

JUNE 18

JUNE 19

JUNE 20

JUNE 21

JUNE 25-27

JUNE 25-27

JUNE 25-27

JULY 3

### Dress Blues

The Original Dirty South



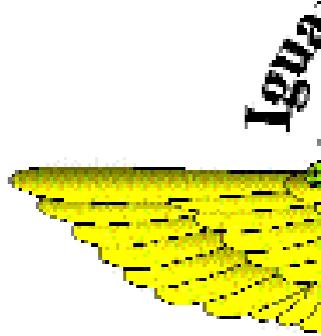
TUESDAYS &  
FRIDAYS  
5 - 6 p.m.  
on  
Power Lizard  
AFN



Photo by Spc. M. William Petersen

Without a moment of hesitation, an American Airborne soldier steps into the wind as the canopies of the soldiers in front of him open up in the wind. "The airborne are a cer-

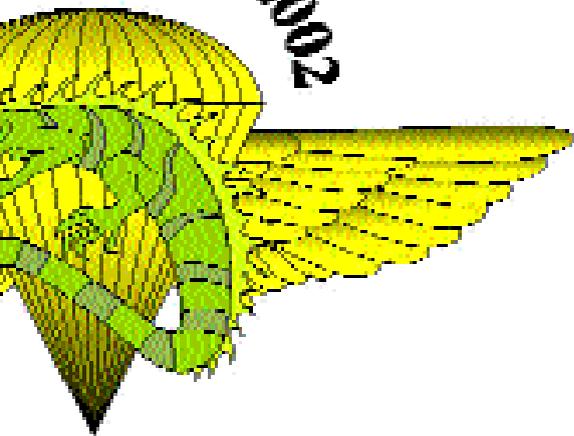
tain breed that accept the risk and have the [confidence] to get the job done," said Col. Michael Okita, JTF-Bravo commander.



Phot



Voladora 2002



Design by Capt. David Sanchez



Photo by 1st Lt. Richard Komurek

Paratroopers drop from the back of a 1st Battalion, 228th Aviation Regiment CH-47 Chinook.



William Petersen



Photo by 1st Lt. Richard Komurek

Above: Paracadistas help each other prepare for the jump. Left: Jumpmaster Staff Sgt. William L. Fleming keeps a close eye over the drop zone.

Below: The paratroopers of Iguana Voladora 2002 gather before the first lift.



Photo by 1st Lt. Richard Komurek



Photo by Spc. M. William Petersen

Through the heat from the Chinook's engines, canopies can be seen stretching over the drop zone.

# Army gives Marines the boot

By Curt Biberdorf

American Forces Press Service

NATICK, Mass. — Whether Marines are wading through desert sands or jungle rivers, the Improved Jungle-Desert Boot will keep their feet better protected and more comfortable than ever. Taxpayers will like the money saved, and supply sergeants will like not having to store two kinds of boots.

The Marines' new jungle-desert boot was developed at the Army Soldier Systems Center here. In time, it will replace current black jungle boots and tan desert boots. The Marine Corps plans to begin fielding the footwear at recruit depots in May.

"Marine Corps leadership wondered why they should have two separate boots. They wanted to have one improved design," Natick project officer Michael Holthe said. Ultimately, he noted, the Marines have a universal boot of-

fering improved safety and comfort.

Jungle boots have gone through minor design changes since they were introduced in the 1960s and issued to troops in Vietnam. They have smooth black leather bottoms joined to thin, unlined green or black nylon uppers reinforced at the ankles. Screened steel eyelets on the arches help drain water from inevitable pond or river crossings and downpours.

The distinctive black sole uses a self-cleaning tread with sharp outer edges leading to a smoother center portion. To prevent foot injury from bamboo traps in Southeast Asia, a thin steel plate was embedded in the sole for puncture protection.

Desert boots were first introduced to troops nearly a dozen years ago during Operation Desert Shield in the Persian Gulf. Tan suede bottoms join to tan nylon uppers reinforced at the ankle. A synthetic woven liner helps wick moisture away

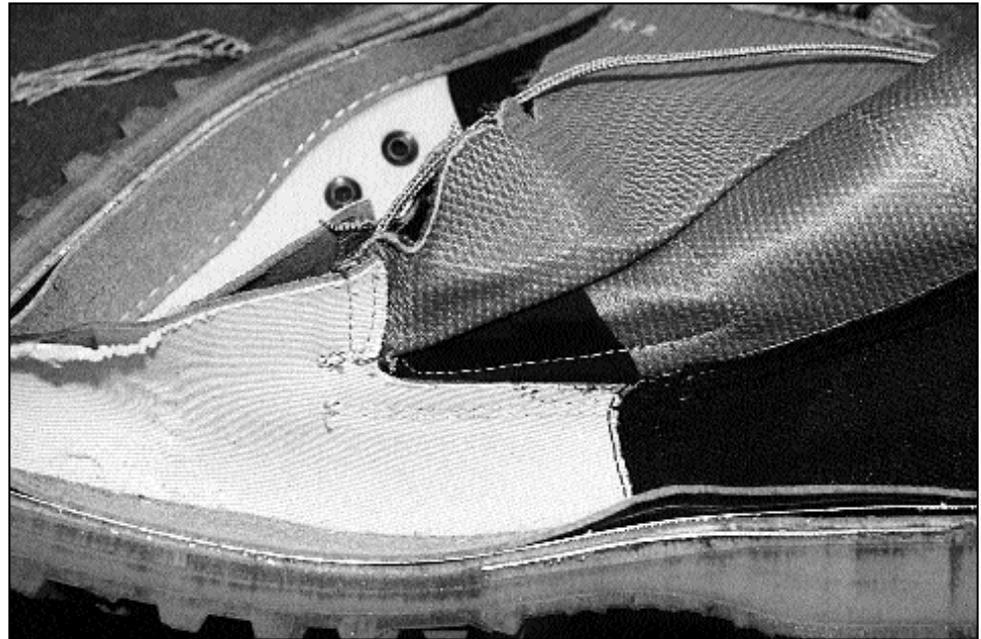


Photo by Curt Biberdorf

A boot cleaved lengthwise shows the construction, moisture-wicking liner, and the protective steel plate sandwiched in the midsole between pieces of fiberboard. The boots also bear the Marine Corps logo on the ankle.

See **BOOT**, Page 7

# U.S. aircraft arrive at coalition base

By Master Sgt. Tim Helton

376th Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM — Four months after Air Force and coalition forces constructed an air base in the middle of Kyrgyzstan, the first American fighter aircraft to be assigned here arrived.

Six Marine FA-18D Hornet fighter aircraft and their crews arrived to attack and destroy targets remaining in Afghanistan and support ground forces as part of Operation Enduring Freedom.

"This is a great day for the coalition forces," said Brig. Gen. Wayne Lloyd, 376th Air Expeditionary Wing commander. "The addition of the Hornets, together with the other coalition aircraft, increases our capability of putting 'bombs on target' in Afghanistan."

Before the FA-18s' arrival, Air Force and coalition forces had to turn more than 200 acres of bare land into a compound of nearly 220 tents and an airfield able to accommodate air operations.

Once the base was established, the 376th AEW and U.S. Marines faced the challenge of getting U.S. military aircraft and more than 160 Marines into a former Soviet Union country.

"There were several challenges," said Marine Corps Capt. William Gray, All-Weather Fighter Attack Squadron 121 spokesman and aviation logistics officer. "In planning, it was waiting for the airfield to be complete enough to support operations. Logistically, we had to move, literally, to the other side of the world. It took three intermediate stops along the way



Photo by Master Sgt. Jerry King

An FA-18D Hornet, from Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., taxis by French Mirage 2000 aircraft after arriving at deployed site in Kyrgyzstan. The FA-18 became the first American aircraft to be assigned to the coalition base. (Photo by Master Sgt. Jerry King)

and only one had hornet parts support. Then in the end, the aircraft had to hold in Afghanistan for the resolution of diplomatic clearance issues."

Now that they are here, the Marines understand their job and are determined to use the Hornets as long as it takes to complete the mission.

"The Hornets have been tasked to support the war on terrorism by taking the fight to those enemy forces that remain in Afghanistan," said Gray. "We are prepared to support Operation Enduring Freedom and

conduct operations from here as long as our capabilities are needed in this fight."

Although the Marines have arrived, it is not only their fight — rather a team effort and they look forward to working with the Air Force and the other coalition partners, Gray said.

"We are expeditionary in nature and well suited to combat in all types of environments," Gray said. "Our ability to operate in all kinds of weather and during hours of darkness takes away some of the enemy's options when it comes to hiding. The capabilities we and other coalition forces bring to the fight will mesh together to form a well-integrated, highly effective team."

The Marines from the VMFA (AW)-121, Green Knights, from Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., have been training and anticipating their opportunity to participate in this war. Gray said they are happy to finally be involved.

"Marines are proud to be part of the coalition forces in support of Operation Enduring Freedom," said Gray. "The aircrews have performed numerous training sorties in preparation for this deployment and our maintenance personnel have been working hard to make sure the aircraft are in the best possible material condition.

"It feels great to be here and be a part of the coalition force that is battling terrorism," said Gray. "It is both an honor and a privilege to serve our country and this noble cause."

## BRIEFS

### May Day demonstrations

May Day demonstrations are scheduled for San Pedro Sula and Tegucigalpa this year. While these events are not planned to be violent, it is advised to avoid the immediate vicinity while they are being held. For more information as to where the demonstrations will take place, see the JTF-Bravo webserver.

### Sports Day Triathlon

The Iron Iguana Sports Day will take place May 23 at 2 p.m. with the start of the triathlon — 500m swim, perimeter-lap bike ride, 3.5mile run. The event is open to relay teams, individuals, and/or teams. There will also be a 10K run (teams or individuals, male and female divisions).

At 3 p.m. there will be a 3-on-3 basketball tournament (3-person teams can be coed) and 1-pitch softball tournament (7-11 person teams, can be coed).

At 5 p.m. is the Crazy Lizard Splash dive competition for individuals. At 5:30 p.m. the BBQ dinner by DFAC (dining facility not open) and 6:30 p.m. is the Baddest Iguana Bash (individual or tag-team pugilstick fights, male and female divisions.)

Iron Iguana T-shirts will be available for all participants and workers. Prizes to be announced, but weekend get-aways, passes, and AAFES contributions will be included.

Teams and individuals should register by May 10. For more information on events or to sign up, go to the JTF-Bravo webserver.

### Safety hotline

The Safety Hotline at Extension 4840 has been activated and is operational 24 hours a day. All JTF-Bravo personnel are encouraged to report any condition that is considered unsafe or unhealthful to their supervisor.

Reports can be made verbally or in writing on DA Form 4755. Reports can also be made to anyone in the chain of command or submitted anonymously to the JTB-B Command Safety Office located in building A-80. All reports will be investigated and the individual advised of the action taken.

### New car sales

Exchange New Car Sales is currently available for soldiers wishing to purchase a privately owned vehicle, including motorcycles, while stationed at Soto Cano Air Base.

The sales office is located near the Base Exchange and Joint Security Forces building, and is open Mondays-Fridays from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturdays from 8 a.m. to noon. For more information, call ext. 4886 or 4883.

## Name new 'Beetle Bailey' character, win free travel

WASHINGTON — Mort Walker is adding a new character to his famous comic strip "Beetle Bailey," and you can win a pair of airline tickets by coming up with a name for the new character.

The new character is an "always prepared, gadget-loving and quirky information technology officer." Entries for the "Name the Tech Officer" contest must be received by 4 p.m. on May 20, 2002.

Judges will select 12 winners. The winning entrant will receive a pair of Northwest Airlines tickets, good for any destination in the company's continental U.S. system. Second and third place winners will receive one Northwest Airlines ticket. All top 12 entrants will receive original "Beetle Bailey" artwork.

For contest information, rules and a peek at the new comic character, visit [www.beetlebailey.com](http://www.beetlebailey.com). The "Beetle Bailey" distributor, King Features Syndicate, and Dell Computer Corp. are the contest sponsors and will make a donation to the Fisher House Foundation. No purchases or donations are necessary to enter, however, readers may make donations to Fisher House.

Fisher House Foundation is a national not-for-profit organization that has built 29 homes near major military and Veterans Affairs medical centers for use by families of patients receiving care. Fisher Houses have



*Drawing by Mort Walker*

**Cartoonist Mort Walker is adding a new character to his comic strip "Beetle Bailey," and a nationwide contest is on to find a name for the "always prepared, gadget-loving and quirky information technology officer."**

provided temporary lodging for more than 50,000 families since its inception in 1990.

*(Editor's Note: This article appears courtesy of the American Forces Press Service.)*

## COOL Web site helps soldiers get certified for jobs

By Joe Burlas

Army News Service

WASHINGTON — Soldiers who want to develop professional civilian skills while serving in the Army now have a COOL way to see what can be required for the career field they are interested in.

The Army Continuing Education System launched a Credentialing Opportunities On-Line, or COOL, Web site April 15 that identifies the education, experience and testing requirements to earn certification or licenses for for hundreds of civilian jobs.

COOL is located on the Web at [www.armyeducation.army.mil/coool](http://www.armyeducation.army.mil/coool).

"We do not credential soldiers for civilian jobs," said Louie Chartier, post secondary education program manger, Army Education Division. "What this program does is educate soldiers about what is needed in order to get credentials for the job they want to pursue following the Army. The COOL Web site provides analysis information that links military occupational specialties with similar civilian equivalent jobs.

For more information, visit [www.armyeducation.army.mil](http://www.armyeducation.army.mil).

## BOOT

*Continued from Page 6*

from the skin. Eyelets are excluded to keep sand out. The steel plates were removed because troops complained they conducted heat. The boots have tan rubber soles with the same tread pattern as the jungle types.

Holthe said the improved boot was a part of overall changes the Marine Corps made to its desert and woodland camouflage uniforms. The boot is made with nylon uppers and leather bottoms, although the leather is rough-side-out and can't be shined. The most obvious change, however, is the color, dubbed "Olive Mojave."

"The Marine Corps wanted to get away from black because it's an unnatural color," Holthe said. "The (new) shade fits in with the new uniform. It's green enough that it doesn't stick out in a jungle environment." Olive Mojave increases wearers' concealment — it's virtually invisible when viewed through night-vision goggles, while black boots glow, he noted.

Jungle drainage eyelets remain, but have finer screens that block sand yet allow outgoing water to pass. Ankles are reinforced with leather instead of nylon. The synthetic moisture-wicking liner from the old desert boots is included.

The boots' rubber sole has an aggressive tread design and is attached to a new shock-absorbing, cushioning plastic midsole used in the Marine infantry combat boot.

"It's a lot more comfortable to walk and run in, but it's

not designed to just be comfy. Studies have shown that boots with this midsole reduce the incidence of lower-extremity injuries," Holthe said. "We're seeing an 80, 85 percent approval rating from user evaluations, so we're happy about it."

He said puncture protection is still considered important, so a steel plate is sandwiched between pieces of fiberboard in the midsole. The plate is kept far enough away from the feet to avoid heat build-up. Inside the boot, black padded removable insoles are standard.

Four prototypes were evaluated by Marines at Camp Lejeune, N.C., and Twentynine Palms, Calif., and in locations such as Japan, Peru and the Saudi Peninsula before the final design was selected, Holthe said. Further evaluation Lejeune and Twentynine Palms took place before the decision was made to start fielding.

Another reason the hybrid boot works well is that most of the user population doesn't need a specific boot, he said. The Army will continue to issue and authorize separate desert and jungle boots.

Hoelthe noted a final touch that leaves no doubt about the intended customer. Branded into the leather near the outer heel is the Marine Corps logo — an eagle, globe and anchor.

(Curt Biberdorf works for the Army Soldier Systems Center Public Affairs Office, Natick, Mass.)

# 'Nix' victorious in JTF-B tennis tournament

**By Spc. Pete M. Williamsen**  
*Armed Forces Information Service*

Allen Niksich fought back from a first-round loss to take the Soto Cano Air Base Tennis Championship, April 25, from Chazz Pope 6-4, 3-6, 6-2, and 6-4.

Following a five-man round-robin seeding tourney, Pope, Niksich and Toby Pete moved on to a double-elimination round to decide the championship.

Niksich, who has been the protégé of Pope for the last few months, took it on the chin in his first match vs. "the master" Pope. Then, following the dispatching of Pete by both Niksich and Pope, the final two faced off once again.

Having dropped match one to Pope, Niksich was forced to win twice to take the title. In the first match out of the loser's bracket, Niksich took Pope 6-2 and 6-3. The final match guaranteed, the championship went to a best of five sets.

"I was playing well above my normal game," said Niksich. "I think it's pretty obvious that I don't have all the style or form he does, but I play to win."

In fact, in Hewitt-esque fashion, Niksich felt obliged to play the baseline, returning Pope's hard shots with lobs and



*Photos by Tech. Sgt. G.A. Volb*

**Above and Right: Allen Niksich, known to many as simply "Nix," maintains a solid and steady defense to win the tennis tournament.**

unspectacular backhands until his opponent slipped. In the end, Niksich won the war of nerves as Pope pressed time and time again for the winner.

"It was an exciting finish to my tour here," said Niksich, who only recently took up tennis again after more than 20

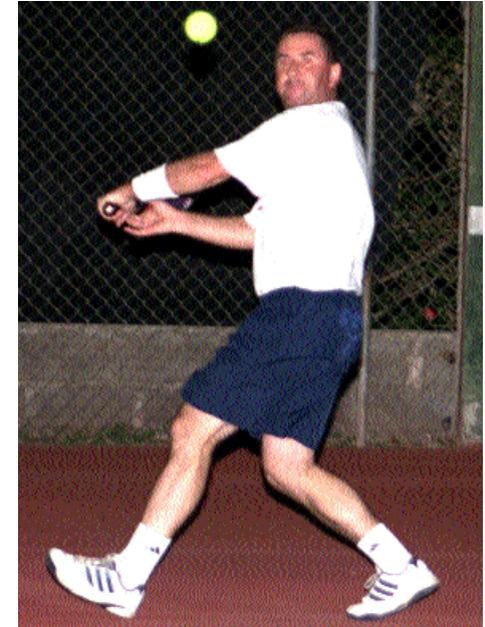
years. "One of my goals was to better myself physically. Beating Chazz, who was my tennis instructor, is a true testament of his ability to teach the sport."

Niksich added that anyone looking for a little self-improvement, as far as tennis is concerned, shouldn't hesitate to take

lessons.

"Everyone should have a goal to better themselves in one way or another," said Niksich, "either mentally, physically or spiritually while they're here."

The win earned Nix, as he's known around Soto Cano, a foot-high trophy. Not bad for a guy who only recently returned to tennis.



## Sweet revenge...

AFFOR Center Doug Howe posts up low in the key during the Soto Cano Air Base Basketball Championship April 25. In a vindication of sorts, AFFOR drubbed the 228 contingent that only a year ago sent them packing. The final 43-16 earned Air Force the title, even with many of the starters sitting out much of the second half.



*Photos by Tech. Sgt. G.A. Volb*