



The Iguana



Vol. 13, No. 7

April 6, 2001

News

1-228th visits with orphaned children

Page 4

New off-limit area list for JTF-Bravo

Page 5

Orthopedic surgeons fix fractures in Tegucigalpa children

Page 7

Features

Neither rain, nor hail, nor ... see how post office keeps your box stuffed

Page 6

Honor, tradition come together with dining-in

Page 8

Views

What awards mean to one servicemember

Page 2

Fierce conditions for helocast training

By 1st Lt. Kim Garbett
Public Affairs

"Don't forget the sunscreen" were the famous last words uttered before the team departed for Lake Yojoa March 20 for a day of fun in the sun and surf ... or, maybe not. As the rain started to pour cats and dogs the closer the convoy got to the lake, the more everyone wondered if the mission would materialize. Would the helicopters be able to make it through the mountain passes with low ceilings? Would they be able to fly the missions over the lake with the pelting rain decreasing visibility and chilling folks to the bone?

The water sprayed around the UH-60 Blackhawk from Soto Cano as it traced a 10 x 10 course (10 feet above the water at 10 knots an hour) over the simulated crash site in the lake, creating a blow-dryer-on-water effect and what resembled a miniature water funnel. Eight search and rescue team members cast themselves from the helicopter into the warm waters of the lake as the rain threatened and as the cloud ceilings lowered. The mission: to save the survivors of the simulated wreckage in the lake.

One of U.S. Southern Command's directed capabilities to have at Joint Task Force-Bravo, Honduras, is search and rescue. The SAR team realized their limiting factors recently when called upon to assist with a Honduran over-water search and rescue mission. While land insertions/extractions had been practiced regularly, maritime search and rescue missions were an added training element yet to be conquered by Soto Cano's SAR team.

Helocasting, or inserting personnel into a body of water for tactical infiltration or search and rescue reasons, is a specialized training, primarily used by Special Forces. In the event that a tactical entry has to be made in enemy territory and the best place to insert troops in is a body of water, this type of technique must sometimes be utilized, explained CPT Gus Perez, one of the primary players in the helocast operation here as well as Headquarters and Support company commander.

Search and rescue teams also need this training. According to one of the helocast operation's cast masters, SFC Art Lilley, who is also a Special Forces' green beret and who was recently a part

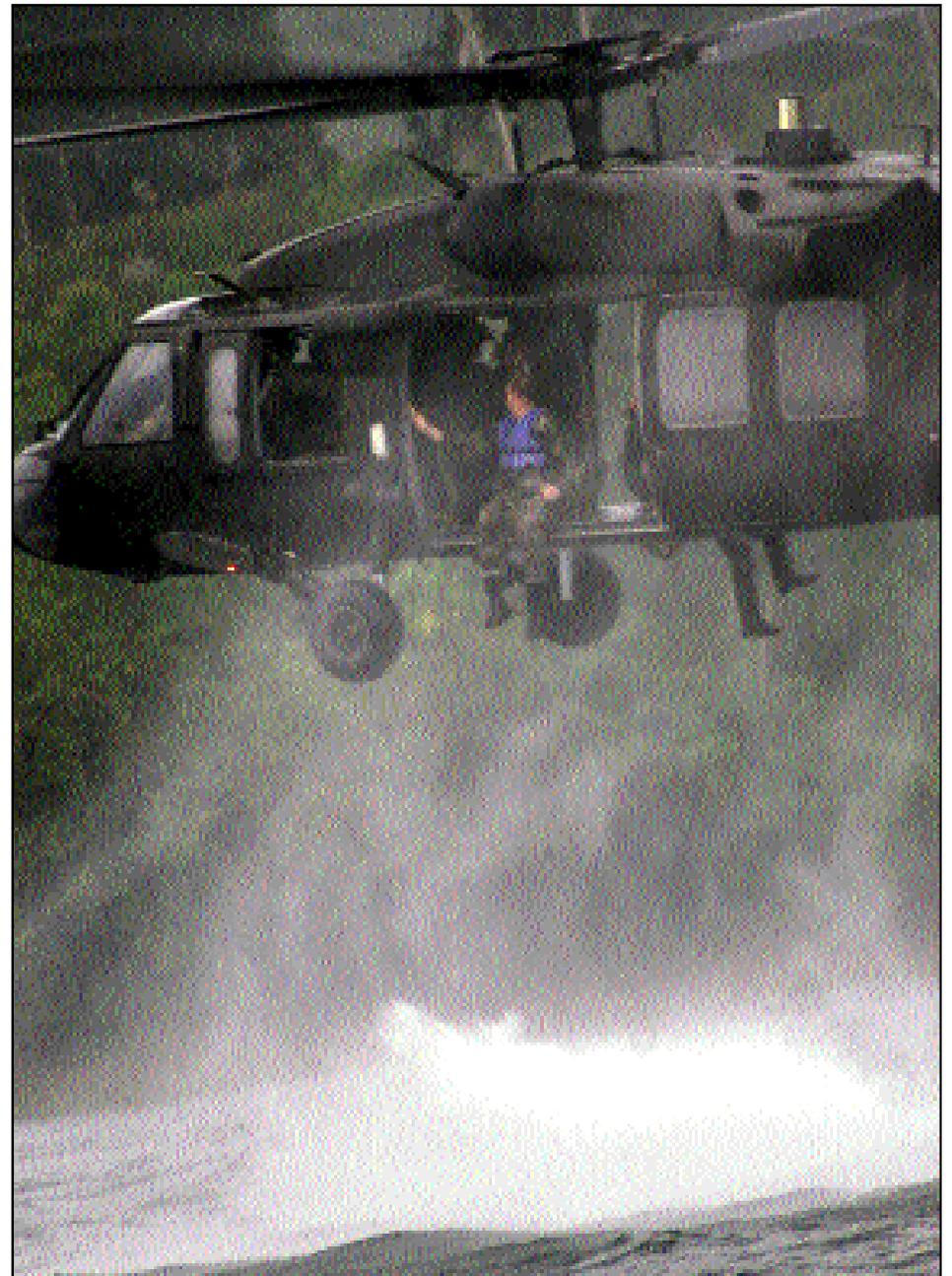


Photo by Martin Chahin

A SAR team member prepares to cast from a UH-60 Blackhawk into Lake Yojoa as part of the helocast training held March 20.

of JTF-Bravo's Civil Affairs Office, the SAR team here is an all-volunteer team. However, he mentioned, there are certain qualifications one needs in order to be a team member. There are also qualifications to participate in helocast operations.

Safety is paramount in helocast operations, explained Lilley. "For this type of training, you have to start out slow, building one block at a time to the actual scenario," he said.

Lilley said each SAR team member was tested the week before the exercise

at the Soto Cano swimming pool in a combat water swim test.

"Everyone had to do a 50-meter swim test with their boots and BDUs on and had to tread water for five minutes. Then, each person was required to enter the water in full combat equipment and had to jettison their equipment while they were in the water," he mentioned.

Lilley said the next few phases include practicing water entry techniques, such as how to exit the aircraft safely

See Helocast, Page 3

Commanders' Corner

Servicemembers should wear ribbons, awards with honor

By Maj. Marbel Castro-Roy
Personnel

One reason that motivated me to join the military was its sense of tradition. The tradition of saluting that symbolizes honor. The wearing of uniforms that spells duty and commitment. And finally the giving of awards that equates to sacrifice to country. Whenever I look at a soldier's awards and decorations worn proudly on his or her chest, it's like looking into a piece of military history and career. A young airman or soldier with less than two years in the military will only have one, maybe two ribbons. However, a colonel or chief master sergeant could have five or more rows of ribbons and medals adorning his or her military mess dress.

The longer we stay in the military, the more ribbons and medals we earn. That

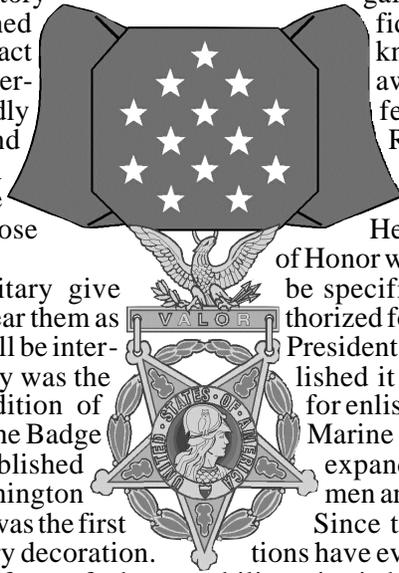
is one reason why retirement ceremonies make me nostalgic and a little sad. Nostalgic because of the history behind the awards earned and sad because of the fact it's the last time those servicemembers will proudly wear their ribbons and awards on active duty. A lot of work and sacrifice went into earning those awards.

Why does the military give awards? Why do we wear them as a badge of honor? You'll be interested to know the Army was the first to begin the tradition of awards. In fact, it was the Badge of Military Merit, established by GEN George Washington on August 7, 1782 that was the first authorized U.S. military decoration. A piece of cloth in the form of a heart,

this decoration was intended to recognize servicemen who displayed unusual gallantry or extraordinary fidelity. Only three are known to have been awarded, and the award fell into disuse after the Revolutionary War. GEN Douglas MacArthur received it as the Purple Heart in 1932. The Medal of Honor was the next decoration to be specifically designed and authorized for U.S. servicemembers. President Abraham Lincoln established it on December 21, 1861 for enlisted men of the Navy and Marine Corps. Its use was later expanded to include enlisted men and officers of all services. Since that time, many decorations have evolved. Changes in eligibility criteria have been made over the

years, and in some cases, decorations have fallen into disuse. However, the basic hierarchy remains unchanged. The Medal of Honor remains the highest military decoration this nation can bestow upon a servicemember, and lesser degrees of recognition are acknowledged by other decorations in descending order.

Not all military members will get awarded the Medal of Honor, but any awards and decorations earned while serving your country should be considered medals of honor. Earned for putting yourself in harms way, for spending time away from your family, and most importantly for helping keep the freedoms America enjoys today. So next time you are in your blues or greens, remember that decorations are not just part of the uniform but a part of military history and tradition that should always be worn proudly.



"Honor means special esteem or respect, reverence; glory or recognition; honesty and integrity in one's belief and actions. None of these words alone truly reflect or define honor for me. Honor is an emotion of the heart and soul; an inherent quality one feels. Honor is embedded in the service we as soldiers provide to our country and how well we provide that service. Truly the sergeant who lost his life gave it in honor to our nation. Honor does not boast! Little is known of the true sacrifices and commitment soldiers perform to advance the goals of our nation: democracy and peace. How many really consider the source of freedoms we enjoy?"

Excerpted from a commentary
by MAJ Robin Smith, Fort Belvoir, Va.

Chaplain's Corner

Palm Sunday brings time for spiritual reflection

By Chaplain (CPT) David Phillips
JTF-Bravo Chaplain

We celebrate Palm Sunday this weekend, the beginning of what is known in Christian circles as Holy Week. My question for all of us is how will we celebrate this special day in all of Christendom?

We often think of it as a day of celebration when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, and the masses greeted him with honor by laying palm branches in the road for him and his donkey to ride over.

But what kind of celebration was it in reality?

In a theological article, Douglas Horton describes it so well that I will share his description with you.

"In the days of ancient Rome, the highest military honor that could be obtained by a general was the triumph by which he celebrated the victory he had won and the power he had achieved over his eminencies. He entered the city in a chariot drawn by four horses, preceded by his captives and spoils and followed by his army. With this escort, he passed through the streets leading to the Capitol where he sacrificed a beast to the god of victory.

"The pathos of Jesus' triumphal ride into the city of Jerusalem lies in its one vivid contrast to the Roman scene. There were many contrasts, it is true: Jesus was celebrating no victory past, but a victory to come; he was preceded by no slaves or spoils, followed by no army; he rode not on a horse-drawn chariot, but on the humblest burden-bearing animal of the farm. But, the one overwhelming tragic contrast was the Roman general knew he was entering a career of high privileges, the Jewish carpenter knew he was riding to his death ... It was no dumb beast that was to be sacrificed. Jesus knew that (there was a) death that was in store for him and no other. Here was a new way to face an evil day--to ride in triumph toward it!"

So, how are you going to approach Palm Sunday? Will you celebrate Jesus' triumphal journey into Jerusalem, or will you reflect with humility in view of what Jesus was about to do for each of us: die. He died for us all. All he asks of us is our hearts!

So, how will you honor this special day in Christendom? Needless to say, the answer lies with each of us as to whether or not we realize the great sacrifice Jesus gave -- himself for each of us! So, why not honor him in a like manner?

The Iguana



EDITORIAL STAFF
JTF-Bravo Commander
COL Michael Wood

Public Affairs Director
1st Lt. Kim Garbett

Superintendent
Master Sgt. Jeff Bohn

Editor
SPC Sarah Maxwell

Photo technician
Martin Chahin

E-mail: pao@jtfb-emh1.army.mil

Website: <http://www.southcom.mil/home/jtfbravo>

This funded, joint U.S. Air Force/Army newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. military overseas. Contents of The Iguana do not necessarily reflect the official view of, and are not endorsed by, the U.S. government, Department of Defense or the departments of the Air Force or Army.

Content is edited, prepared and provided by the Joint Task Force-Bravo Public Affairs Office, 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.

PRINTED BY PUBLYNESA

That's your opinion**What is the strangest thing you've received in a care package?**

"My little girl is always sending me jelly beans."

SGT Mark Garcia
1-228th Aviation Regiment

"My wife wrecked my Firebird and sent me a videotape of it."

Staff Sgt. Jerry Boothe
AFFOR



"I got the new cereal bars. It's all in one. The milk, cereal ... everything's together."

MSG Bruce Veals
JTF-Bravo Operations NCO



"I got water filters for my (water) cooler."

CPT Brendan Bowman
ARFOR

**Helocast**

(Continued from Page 1)

while it was in motion and how to hit the water. "You don't want to hit your face on the water," he said. "That hurts! You want to land on your rear end if possible. Any landing which you don't get hurt in is a good landing." Then, he said, once that training was complete, SAR team members learned team assembly in the water for accountability of personnel.

Once all personnel who casted in the water are accounted for, if there are any casualties, the two medics that are members of a helocast SAR team, determine if there are any medical needs. There is also a communications SAR team member who is in charge of communications between the crash site and the helicopter. The helicopter is MEDEVAC aircraft configured with a hoist, in this case, a jungle penetrator to assist with the extraction of personnel.

Once any medical needs are determined and communication has been made with the helicopter, extraction of the casualty takes place.

Team extraction is the final phase of training and the final phase in a SAR helocast operation.

Extraction can take place by a number of different methods, such as SPIES, Jacob's ladder, hoist or by boat.

Lilley said he felt the helocast training went well, considering the weather and the limited operations they faced as a result.

"You can't control Mother Nature, certainly, but under those circumstances, the training went extremely well," he said.

"And quite honestly, the bad weather afforded the SAR team an even better training opportunity; they trained in an environment they wouldn't normally train in here in Honduras. The weather that day would probably be considered the worst possible conditions, both training and real-world scenarios," he said.

"You also need to be a strong swimmer and to be able to expect the unexpected as a member of the SAR team.

You have to be able to adapt to and overcome any situation you come into contact with," he added. Lilley also said that after the training was complete and the primary SAR team members trained up, he felt like a proud dad.

"It was great to see the expressions on their faces after they accomplished what they'd been training for and to know that I was part of all of that," he said.

"My role is what I call a force multiplying function. I teach it to a group so they can have the necessary skills to teach it to others. It's a great feeling."

SFC Jon Martinez, SAR team leader, said that here the focus for SAR missions is emergency scenarios. He said SAR team members need to be mentally alert and physically strong.

"Most team members are highly motivated soldiers," Martinez said. "It was pretty intense training for this helocast operation. It was my first helocast operation. I give great credit to the two SF guys and senior leadership above us planning all this and making it happen so we could be trained up.

"It was just an awesome feeling putting all the hard work and training into effect. All in all, it was pretty dog-gone 'Hooah!' It's what being a soldier is all about!"

SSG Cary Ashburn, the SAR team's communications member, has participated in helocast operations at his home unit at Fort Bragg, N.C. "This training here was good; everyone had fun and for many, it was their first time, so they were highly motivated to conduct the training," he said.

Ashburn said one of the greatest things about this operation is the adrenaline rush you receive. "If you ever lose the adrenaline rush from doing this, there is perhaps something wrong with you ... I always get one, no matter how many times I've done this. And the training is important, because you're in the job of rescuing people in the water. It's more than just your life at stake in these kinds of missions. That's what being part of the SAR team is all about, though!"

For more information about Soto Cano's all-volunteer SAR team, contact 1SG Sam Coston, at ext. 4381.



Photos by Martin Chahin

Search and rescue team members are pulled out of Lake Yojoa in full BDUs after casting off a UH-60 as part of a water insertion/extraction training exercise.

April 6, 2001

JTF-Bravo

Winged Warriors veil umbrella of care over orphans

By Master Sgt. Jeff Bohn
Public Affairs

Swinging a dirt-busting pick nearly his own size, a young boy looks across a muddy pond he is digging in and down the dusty road toward approaching vans and trucks.

From memory, the boy conjures up a smile, for he knows the visitors are a welcomed respite to the day's events and signify a break from his manual labor. Dozens of other boys come to the same conclusion simultaneously and materialize from concrete-block structures, muddy water holes and other places around the compound.

Their happiness stems from a monthly gathering of mutual affection by 1st Battalion, 228 Aviation Regiment volunteers and the 65 members of a boy's orphanage located ten minutes south of Soto Cano Air Base.

As 1-228th Aviation Regiment members arrive, boys group around the volunteers and react as if it was a down-home family reunion of sorts.

The atmosphere is electric as people mingle and Spanish and English words intermix.

For CW3 Jeff Wells of the 1-228th Aviation Regiment, Company B, it was his first visit to the orphanage and said his first impression was they were a little better off than he first expected, but they could use a lot more.

As the newcomers settled in, it didn't take long for activities to start and the smiles to grow larger for the children as games of soccer, marbles, and even being pushed on a swing-set made the bond between adult and child grow.

According to SGT Luis Quinones, of the 1-228th Aviation Regiment and NCOIC for the orphanage visits, the best part of going to the orphanage is, "Seeing the faces on the kids. You can see the difference when they are happy. You can tell when they are playing soccer — they always beat us. We try our best and just enjoy the kids."

Other volunteers, like 1LT Emmett Shead of 1-228th Aviation Regiment, have similar reasons for going.



SGT Robert McDaniel, 1-228th, shoots marbles with a very competitive group of young orphans.

"I have kids of my own—three sons. I hope that if something happened to me they would be taken care of," said Shead who has four visits to the orphanage.

He said he was adopted by a nine-year-old whose name is Victor. As Victor came close and reached out to Shead, you could see the child bust out into a big grin and act like a child who has been reunited with a great friend.

Shead said he enjoys being around the children, and it is good to take the time to let the kids know someone cares about them.

But the gift doesn't end with what is given to the children; volunteers receive something from the children as well.

"I think it will make me a better parent," Shead said. "I see how these kids work. They have more responsibility. It gives me a better appreciation for life."

Shead relayed an event that happened after the lunchtime meal was served. Apparently a child saw Shead didn't have a cookie, and without being prompted, came over and offered one of the two cookies he had.

"Even if they don't have much, they are willing to give. He didn't have to do that," Shead concluded.

Wells recommended to others if they would try it, they would definitely have a good time. The satisfaction gained from helping others is something that can't be obtained anywhere else. Wells also said this opportunity was unique from other humanitarian involvement in that this is totally voluntary and performed on off-duty time.

"This is you giving, not the Army giving," Wells concluded.

"The interaction with the children is a good thing," said LTC Scott Ciluffo, 1-228th Aviation Regiment commander.

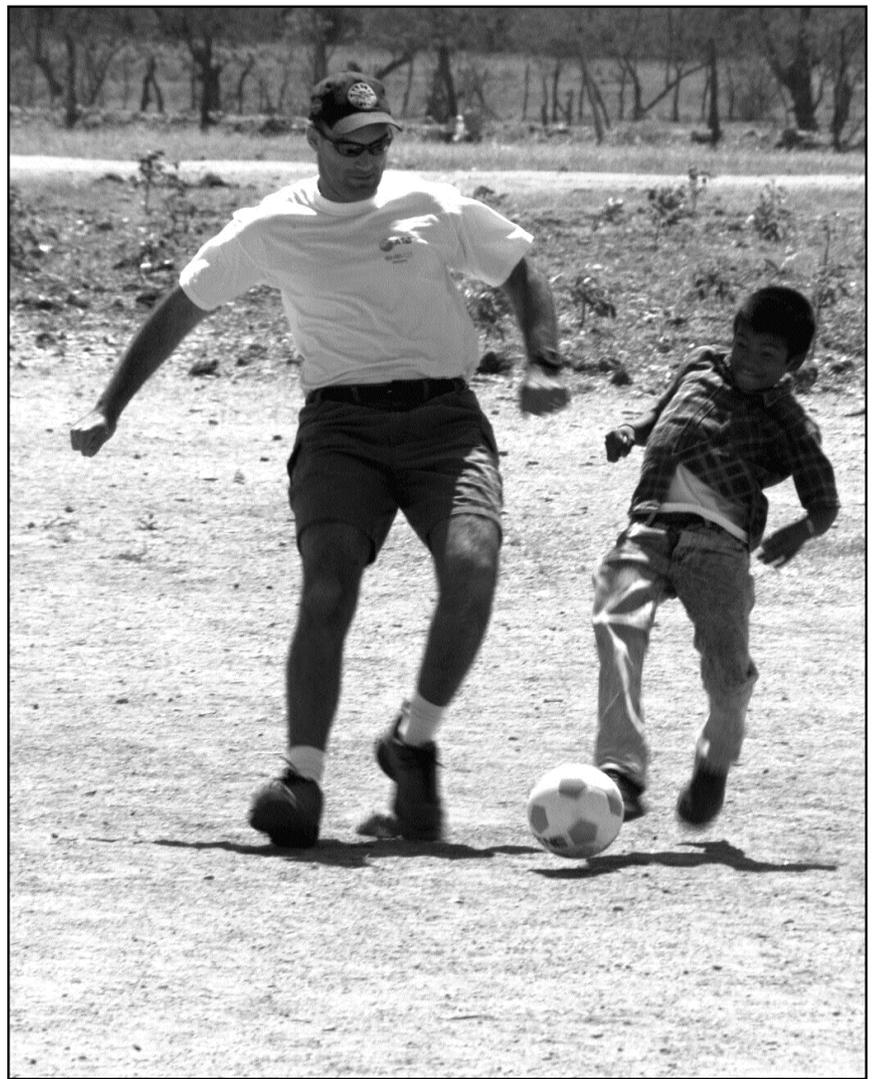
"We've got a lot of soldiers that are married and have kids back home that they haven't seen in a long time ... It gives some of my soldiers an opportunity to interact with kids much like their own that they would be interacting with on a Saturday back in the states."

One boy was particularly touched by the monthly visits, and it will surely be something he will remember all his life. "When I was out here the last time, we brought our flight surgeon with us and we evaluated all the kids out here, and there was one little boy that had a cleft palette," said Ciluffo.

"We were able to have that little boy undergo a plastic surgery operation on Monday [March 19], and they corrected his cleft palette, which I think is a great thing," he said. "It's going to make a huge impact on the long-term improvement of this young man's life, and it's kind of gratifying to know that we were able to interact with both MEDEL and the orphanage here to maybe improve the quality of life for that little boy."

The boy, who was still in some pain from the recent surgery, appeared to be doing fine and was recovering. His diet remains mostly liquids due to the surgical procedure that repaired the roof of his mouth.

While not every visit produces a medical miracle, to some of these children, the few hours that the 1-228th



Photos by Master Sgt. Jeff Bohn

1LT Thomas Lark gets beat by a youthful soccer pro of the orphanage.

Aviation Regiment donates each month are worth a great deal.

The tangible rewards aren't there — folks aren't inundated with cards, letters and gifts from the children; but the intangible rewards are evident with hugs, smiles and laughter that otherwise falls silent on bare concrete walls and overcrowded rooms that lack an abundance of adult companionship.

So, whether it is sharing time playing, or donating toward basic-need items such as shoes, clothes, hygiene items or food, there is plenty of room for more assistance.

There are several orphanages sponsored by the major units on base. For information as to time and availability of volunteer slots all soldiers and airmen should contact their command element.



A full-service meal was brought and served by 1-228th volunteers after a morning of play in the sun.

Volunteers feed, support orphans

Compiled by MAJ Jose Torrens and Martin Chahin
Civil Affairs and Public Affairs

In our continued humanitarian spirit, members from Joint Task Force-Bravo's logistics, civil affairs, MEDEL and DynCorp joined efforts to donate a total of 4,530 pounds of food to several local orphanages.

The Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe orphanage and Tierra Santa Orphanage, both of the Department of Comayagua, and Jose Orellana Soap Kitchen of Cane, Department of La Paz, received a donation of excess food products from JTF-Bravo's Troop Issue Subsistence Activity (TISA).

These organizations feed 55 to 120 children three times a day, which is a tall task considering the organizations operate only on donations and volunteer work.

The donations included 300 pounds of fish, 730 pounds of hashed brown potatoes, 140 pounds of dry and hot cereals and 3,360 pounds of canned goods including fruits, vegetables, ravioli and sauces.

The directors, staff and children of the receiving organizations were extremely happy and appreciative of the nice gesture.

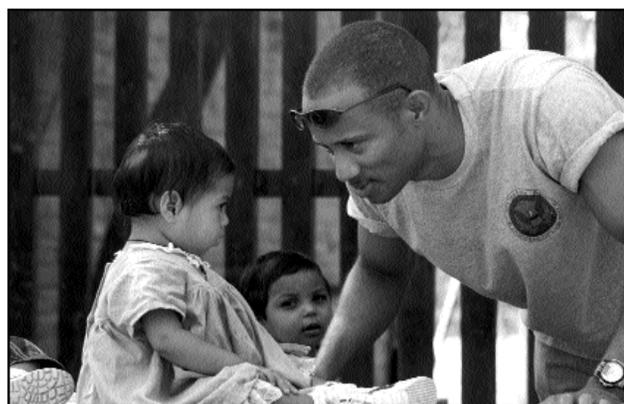


Photo by Martin Chahin

A servicemember interacts with an orphan while volunteers deliver food to her orphanage.

SGT Jermichael Hale, MEDEL food inspector, played a significant role ensuring the freshness and quality of the food products. But his efforts went beyond that; he also took care of the refrigeration on the vehicles while the food was being transported and inspected the organizations' refrigeration capacity to ensure the products would stay fresh after the donation.

Commenting about the donations, Chuck Relyea, DynCorp's Class I-TISA manager said, "Having lived in Honduras for close to 17 years, it was especially gratifying to see donated food received directly by those needy organizations."

"It was obvious that both the people running the orphanages and the orphans themselves were sincerely grateful for the donation," he added.

Workers awarded...

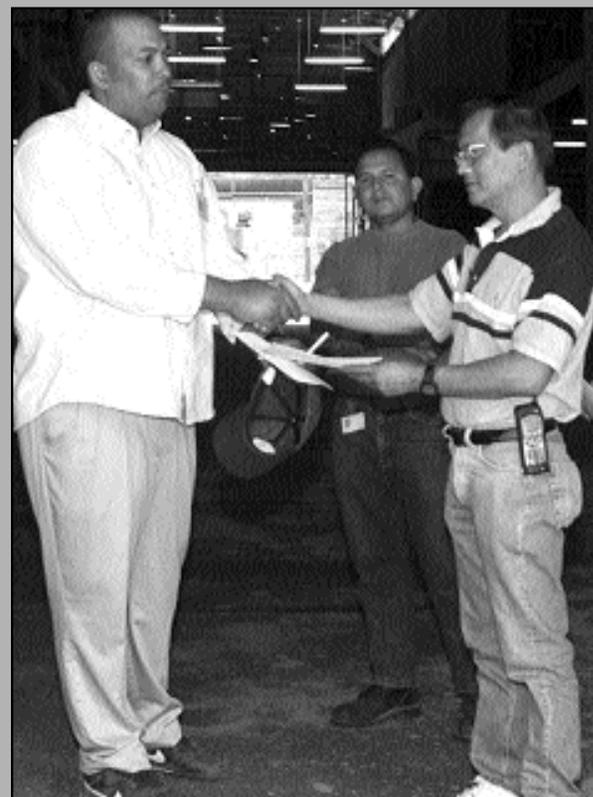


Photo by Martin Chahin

Enrique Woods, DynCorp employee, accepts a cash award from Eddie Javier, DynCorp supervisor for reporting and then extinguishing a fire along with Rommel Walter, also a DynCorp employee, possibly saving other DynCorp buildings.

Off-limit establishments

Below is the most recent recommended off-limits areas in Comayagua as of March 20:

- Celio's Discotec
- La Pacaya Strip Club
- Bella Amanecer (formerly Los Bordellos Discotec)
- Texaco Gas Station
- Motel Segunda Ilusion
- Motel Ilusion
- Motel Luxemburgo
- Motel El Puma
- Hotel Emperador
- Motel Moderno
- Barrio Independencia (the entire neighborhood)
- Barrio Cabanas (the entire neighborhood)
- Barrio Liros (the entire neighborhood)
- Barrio San Francisco (the entire neighborhood)
- Barrio La Caridad (the entire neighborhood)

The following is a list of authorized establishments for use by servicemembers.

However, after 6 p.m., movement on foot is discouraged for safety reasons:

- Restaurant La Estancia Colonial
- Restaurant Palmeras
- Restaurant Pajaro Rojo
- Restaurant Los Jarros
- Restaurant El Torito
- Restaurant Villa Real
- Restaurant Venecia
- Hannemans Bar and Grill
- Restaurant La Torre Latina
- Restaurant Mang Ying
- Restaurant Alessandro's
- Dave's Hamburgers
- Esso Gas Station and Food Court
- Dipsa Gas Station
- Shell Gas Station
- Hotel Morales
- Hotel Norimax
- Hotel Santa Maria
- Hotel Quan
- El Ranchon Restaurant/Discotec
- La Merced Church
- San Sebastian Church
- La Caridad Illescas Church
- San Francisco Church

- La Catedral Church
- Arqueologico Museum
- Colonial Museum
- Reggae's Discotec (formerly Paso Real)
- Titanium Restaurant/Discotec (formerly Fati's)
- Vaquero's Social Club (formerly Henry's Discotheque)

Off-limit areas in the city of San Pedro Sula:

- Scandro's Strip Club
- Cherry's Strip Club
- Casa Verde (Green House)

Off-limit areas in the city of Tela:

- The entire city of Tela is off limits.

Off-limits areas in the city of Tegucigalpa:

- Arenas.com Discotec
- Coconut Grove Discotec
- Tobacco y Ron Discotec
- El Barco Discotec

- Palmeras Discotec
- Patro's Discotec
- Colinas 2000 Discotec
- Villa Flor Discotec
- Billboard Discotec
- Gemelas Discotec
- Kinder Grove
- El Cocodrilo
- Villa Hermosa
- Chicas Jovenes
- Ilusion (Solo Para Tus Ojos) Strip Club
- B'Seven Strip Club
- Las Vegas Strip Club
- Balboa Strip Club
- Samoray Strip Club
- Dante Strip Club
- Noa Noa Strip Club
- Titanic Strip Club
- Diplomático Strip Club

Off-limits establishments in Roatan:

- Coxen Hole (entire city) from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. daily
- French Harbor (entire city) from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. daily

Your Honduran Pony Express ala Soto Cano style



Photo by SPC Sarah Maxwell

Postal volunteer and Fire Dawg Senior Airman Josh Hanson helps with the daily shipment of parcels.

By Master Sgt. Rick Langstraat
Postmaster

Have you ever sat back and wondered why your mail seems to be slow? Why the package your loved ones say they mailed hasn't arrived yet? Or you pass the post office and see the sign that states "No Mail Today," and wonder how much the postal clerks actually work? Well, hopefully, by the end of this article, you will have a better understanding and appreciation for what your local postal clerks do for you.

A typical day in the post office (Monday through Saturday) begins at 6 a.m. One of your postal clerks begins checking all the mail drop boxes around the base. The clerk then returns to the post office, processes the received mail and prepares the manifest to send out all mail that was received the previous day. At approximately 7 a.m., the contract driver arrives and loads all mail on the manifest and proceeds to deliver it to a U.S.

aircraft. They will send all our mail on the flight that departs for Miami at 1:30 p.m.

Once the contract driver dispatches the outbound mail to the airlines, he starts picking up the mail destined for Soto Cano Air Base. Once loaded, he begins the trip back to base where he arrives between 2 and 3 p.m. This is the stated time in the contract, but during the latter part of rainy season, road conditions and rockslides often prevent timely arrival of your mail. Once the mail is received, the postal clerks begin breaking apart the bags and sorting the letters for delivery to your personal receptacle.

Depending on the volume of mail received, this can often keep us beyond our posted hours. As long as we are working to put your mail in your box, we will keep the parcel pick-up window open.

Now many of you are probably wondering, well that covers your morning and afternoon, but what about the rest of the day? Our customer service hours begin at 9 a.m. for all postal business. Between the hours of 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., we handle all in-processing and out-process-

ing, plus this is the time for unit mail clerks to come and receive mail. We must stick to these times so that all personnel are available to work the mail when it arrives. The postal finance window remains open until 4 p.m.

This service must terminate early for the clerks to prepare the daily report that goes to the Military Postal Service Agency and ultimately the United States Postal Service.

For everyone who departs Soto Cano, there is a mail forwarding service. All first class mail gets forwarded for one year after departure. Magazines and second-class mail are forwarded for 60 days. Your bulk mail is destroyed, as per DOD Postal Manual 4525.6M. Forwarding mail keeps one of my clerks busy almost all day. Every letter that needs forwarding must have a label printed and placed over the old address, then placed in the letter tray for the next day's manifest.

For those whose families write Honduras, Soto Cano, Comayagua or Central America on their correspondence, we must make weekly trips to the local post office in Comayagua. This box fills up fast and requires a clerk to check the box, return to Soto Cano and dispatch the mail properly.

Remember, your address here at Soto Cano is a U.S. address, so inform those who correspond with you the correct information.

Most folks at the post office work Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. We hope that our Customer Service hours are properly fitted to meet your needs.

We strive to provide you the best quality customer service and support possible. All clerks are knowledgeable on U.S. Postal Service and DOD Regulations concerning the mail and do their best to answer your questions.

Our services operate six days a week, often including extended hours and some holidays. For example, most people were off Christmas and New Year's Eves, we were here at work, proudly providing you service.

Thank you for being great customers, and we hope now you have a better understanding of what your post office does for you.

Customer Service Hours:

Monday through Friday

9 a.m. - 1 p.m. In-processing/Out-processing/Unit Mail Pick-up

9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Money Orders/Parcel Pick-up/Other Postal Finance Transactions

Saturday

*2 p.m. - 4 p.m. Parcel Pick-up**

** If posting of Priority Mail and First Class exceeds posted time, the post office will remain open for parcel pick-up until this mail is posted.*

Prayer Breakfast brings values, faith to forefront

By Chaplain (CPT) David Phillips
JTF-Bravo Chaplain



Soto Cano Air Base held what served as the local National Prayer Breakfast March 22. Situated in the annex of the dining facility with its own serving line, participants were able to come together in fellowship as well as dine in a tranquil situation. The welcoming comments were by COL Michael Wood, Joint Task Force-Bravo commander, and many participants led us in the "word" as well as music.

A message brought by CSM James Marshall, command sergeant major 1st Battalion, 228 Aviation Regiment, was inspiring and practical. His testimony centered on his personal faith in growing up, and how it has served him

while in the Army. He showed how faith impacted his life and helped set the standard of the values he holds dear.

Marshall made it clear anyone can have faith, but until you integrate your beliefs with your life style, your beliefs are in word only. He challenged us to live our values, and to let them speak for themselves as to who we are.

As we left the dining facility annex that morning, I believe everyone was touched. We were challenged to make our life count by integrating our values we hold dear 0 into our everyday life style.

We owe a debt of gratitude to Marshall for sharing some of his life experiences and values with us. This prayer breakfast will likely stick in our minds and hearts for years to come.

Without the command's support, and others behind the scenes, the prayer breakfast would not have been the success it was. I want to thank all who took their time to attend and to be a part of JTF-Bravo's National Prayer Breakfast.

MEDRETE has no bones about coarse conditions

By Master Sgt. Jeff Bohn
Public Affairs

In a poorly lit corridor, a small Honduran boy stoically sits in a wheelchair while hospital staff clad in blue medical scrubs shuffle past. His left arm is notably deformed looking as though the bones of his forearm were a wire hanger bent at 15 degrees.

After nearly an hour, Fernando is wheeled into an operating room. His 11-year-old body hops up on the operating table where he lies down in preparation for surgery to correct his malformed arm.

After some rudimentary Spanish words were exchanged of how Fernando is going to “go to sleep,” Capt. Dan Roke, anesthesia resident at Wilford Hall Medical Center in San Antonio, administered the gas that prepared the young boy for the procedure.

Fernando was one of 109 patients screened and 57 patients treated in the latest medical readiness training exercise (MEDRETE) that took place in

“It is a joint effort between the American team and the Honduran physicians.”

Lt. Col. Raymond Stefker
Pediatric orthopedic surgeon
Wilford Hall Medical Center
Lackland AFB, Texas

Tegucigalpa, Honduras, March 18 to 31.

The pediatric orthopedic MEDRETE was a cooperative effort that included an 11-person team from Wilford Hall, local Honduran medical personnel from Hospital Esquela and Soto Cano Air Base MEDEL personnel.

According to MAJ Earl Davis, MEDEL’s head nurse and officer in charge of the MEDRETE, their mission was to treat different fractures, severe bone/joint infections, correct disorders such as club feet and dysplastic hips, and exchange training techniques between American and Honduran medical personnel.

“We bring in surgical expertise, specialized orthopedic equipment and implants to help solve different surgical problems that might otherwise go untreated,” said Lt. Col. Raymond Stefko,

a Wilford Hall pediatric orthopedic surgeon and the deployment team’s leader.

The exchange of information is very beneficial to the military.

“It helps us train our medical personnel in learning how to successfully organize and deploy surgical assets in austere settings,” Stefko said.

“We learn surgical techniques from the Hondurans that help us deal with surgical problems in an austere setting,” he said.

Stefko explained there was a great amount of information exchanged between the Honduran and U.S. medical staff.

Working in an environment that doesn’t have the specialized equipment necessary is a challenge the Honduran surgeons perform on a daily basis. They have created unique approaches to solving problems with minimal means that U.S. surgeons take for granted, as they have much more specialized tools at their disposal.

“I think a lot of the techniques we learn here will make us more efficient surgeons back in the United States,” said Stefko. “They don’t have the same high-tech equipment we have in San Antonio. It gives our medical personnel a familiarization with our area of responsibility in a deployment setting.”

“It also enhances the image of the United States by helping out the Central American nations,” he said. “There is a Honduran staff or resident with every procedure. It is a joint effort between the American team and the Honduran physicians.”

This joint effort is what makes the learning process so effective as everyone has some things to learn. Besides learning, there is some emotion that comes into play here that can’t be measured in conventional terms.

R. Sann Gossum is a general orthopedics surgeon who was an Air Force active-duty major, but is now a civilian surgeon in Santa Fe, N.M.

His first experience with a MEDRETE was three years ago while on active duty. “When I came here on active duty, I saw there were lots of folks that need help,” said Gossum.

Without being on active duty, he wasn’t funded to travel with the Air Force, but his commitment was so strong he came down on his own accord and funded the trip out of his own pocket.

When asked of his motivation for self-funding the trip, he replied, “This community is tremendously underserved. They lack equipment and bodies. It was such a rewarding experience last time, it seemed like the thing to do.”

Gossum found out about the MEDRETE through his personal friendship and professional ties with active duty physicians at Wilford Hall. He explained he feels the procedures are important to the children. He hopes the



Photo by Master Sgt. Jeff Bohn

Capt. Dan Roke and 1st Lt. Brent Campbell administer anesthesia to Fernando, an 11-year-old boy being prepared for orthopedic surgery in Tegucigalpa.

work the physicians do will keep the children walking and become a productive member of society as they get older, without the social stigmata associated with deformities and the crippling that can result from improper orthopedics.

Personal satisfaction is a result of “being able to be here, knowing that in some way I would be able to help,” Gossum concluded.

Stefko echoed a similar message of hope for the children, and added, “I have been very fortunate to be here for the past four tours.”

Stefko noted they average one mission each year, but there is enough pediatric orthopedic cases to support two MEDRETEs a year in Tegucigalpa.

In addition to the Air Force medical staff learning new techniques and procedures, they got an opportunity to impart some education on the Honduran physicians as well. “We also provide continuing medical education for Honduran orthopedic staff and residents by providing 35mm slide presentations on various orthopedic topics,” Stefko said.

One of this year’s topics was the biomechanics of Ilazarou frame construction. Stefko explained the Ilazarou frame construction in laymen terms as a brace that holds two cut bones together in

alignment. Each day, they are incrementally drawn apart so as they heal, they lengthen the bone at the same time.

The education and training, along with the hands-on experience, is a lot to do in less than two weeks.

On the first day of the MEDRETE, an eight-person screening team evaluated 15 to 20 of the patients recommended for evaluation by the Honduran Ministry of Health.

According to Gosser, the screening team jointly consisted of four Air Force and four Honduran physicians who decided the capabilities and prognosis of each candidate. The first surgical procedure was on day two, which treated eight children with 19 procedures ranging from bone graphs, clubfeet, amputations and cleaning up open bone fractures.

Fernando, who emerged from his operation a success, was healing in the recovery ward after doctors realigned his two forearm bones and set them straight with screws and pins.

While he may not be able to give immediate feedback as to how much this will impact his life for years to come, perhaps he will someday be pitching for a major-league ball club and have some good Air Force folks from San Antonio to give thanks for it.

BRIEFS

Power Outages

The base civil engineer is scheduling a power outage from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. April 9 and 10 and 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. April 11. The outages are required to allow DynCorp personnel to perform transformer and primary line maintenance.

The base civil engineers looked for different options in minimizing impact to missions and personnel. See list of affected areas in the JTF-Bravo News. For any concerns, call SSG Joseph Florence at ext. 4143.

UMUC classes

The University of Maryland University College has pushed back classes until April 9. Registration for BMGT 364, MATH 101 and IFSM 201 will continue until today. For any question, call UMUC's field representative Luis Ortiz at ext. 4557 or stop by building H-70.

SGLI coverage

A new Servicemember's Group Life Insurance program got underway April 1. Maximum coverage increases to \$250,000 for all currently enrolled members. Soldiers who do not want maximum coverage may elect to reduce or decline insurance by completing form SGLV-8286. Premium costs remain the same as before at \$4 per \$50,000 coverage. Questions regarding SGLI changes should be directed toward SFC Steven Johnson, ARFOR personnel NCOIC, at ext. 4280. Air Force members who want to reduce or decline coverage should contact Staff Sgts. Scott Forsmann or Steven Leduc at ext. 4314. While new forms are not yet available, the old forms can be used now, with new forms being completed retroactively once they arrive.

Free Spanish Classes

Be sure to walk into the education center, Building H-56 between 8 a.m. to noon and 1 to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday for free classes.

Headstart Basic Spanish Classes: April 9 to May 23 or June 20 to July 20 from 6 to 8 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

Intermediate Conversational Spanish Classes: April 10 to June 5, June 12 to Aug. 2, and Aug. 7 to Sept. 27 from 5:30 to 8 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Chapel Trip

An Ecumical chapel trip to view the Comayagua floor carpets of the Holy Week is scheduled for Good Friday, April 13. Following this exposition visitors will have the opportunity to see the live procession of the "Way of the Cross" and a special service of the Lord's Crucifixion. For more information, contact the chapel at ext. 4351/4606.

History, tradition, humor merge during dining-in

Military tradition, community and good old-fashioned fun were part of the evening festivities at the first-ever 1st Battalion, 228 Aviation Regiment dining-in held in Honduras at Nugel's Restaurant here March 30. Silverware clanged on the tables, and toasts were galore.

There was mess fines and grog bowl victims. There was good food and good company. The Army and Air Force's finest uniforms gleamed and medals sparkled in the lights as mess dresses, service dresses, dress

blues and dress greens were dusted off and put to the fashion test.

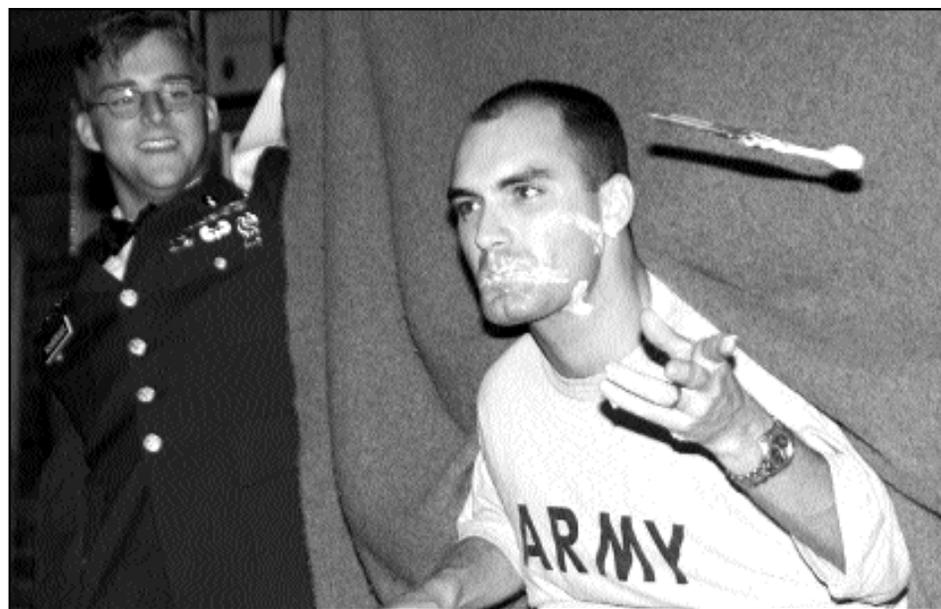
Skits and laughter was aplenty as each of the four 1-228th Aviation Regiment companies treated the audience to humorous and very exaggerated renditions of battalion life.

Men did their best to shave their legs, brush their teeth for professional development, play with dancing tennis shoes, and try their hand as stand-up comedians ... all for evening entertainment.

(Compiled by 1st Lt. Kim Garbett, Public Affairs)



Photos by 1st Lt. Kim Garbett



Alaska ARNG warms up to Soto Cano's heated missions

By SPC Jeremy Heckler
Public Affairs

Teamwork is the hallmark of any successful organization. No matter what the mission is or the obstacles provided, they band together and accomplish the task.

Members of the 1st Battalion, 207th Aviation Regiment of the Alaska Army National Guard, deployed to Honduras in support of New Horizons missions in Guatemala and Honduras. They worked together not only in Central America, but in their native Alaska getting the mission accomplished.

Groups of 30 soldiers, made of aircrews and support personnel, make a 20-day rotation down to Joint Task Force-Bravo supporting New Horizons-Aurora and Lempira missions by providing them with aircraft, supplies and occasional MEDEVAC assistance in their UH-60 Blackhawks and C-23 Sherpa aircraft.

The team's mission changed slightly from their search and rescue mission in Alaska. Instead of lifting people out of the Alaskan wilderness, they are ferrying men and equipment from both New Horizons' base camps. The

battalion's mission here mirrors the one they face in Alaska according to CW3 Chester Troxel, aviator with the 207th Aviation Regiment.

"It's amazing the kind of similarities between Honduras and Alaska," said SPC Rob Rurka. "The contrast between the cities and the villages is the same as it is in Alaska, and it's hard to find a difference."

Some of the soldiers are adapting not only to the environment, but the challenge of a new job.

"I was a medic when I was on active duty. In the Guard, I've switched over to flight operations," said Rurka. He added that he is slowly learning what his job entails before going off to training.

On a previous rotation, one soldier contributed to the safety of the aircraft by spotting a cracked windshield while cleaning the windows, said SFC Michael Lundvall, duration NCOIC.

Lundvall and a group of duration personnel help acclimate the 20-day personnel and get them on the ground running. Lundvall said communication is the key to keeping things running smoothly.

"Communication is important because the more the guys in Alaska

know before they leave, the less questions they ask when they come down here," said Lundvall. He and the rest of the team make sure all of the lodging arrangements are taken care of as well as coordinating MWR activities, such as the recent trip to San Pedro Sula for the World Cup qualifying soccer match between the United States and Honduras.

The unit has also started a support group and website to keep friends and family informed about their time in Honduras.

"We encourage troops to call home as soon as they get here and tell their family that they made it here safely," said Lundvall.

"It can be hard on families who are used to their significant other being gone for a weekend and have to (get) used to them being gone for 19 days."

The Arctic Eagles' time down here has also allowed them to bond more than they have during their normal training cycle.

"I like being down here," said Rurka. "When you are drilling with guys for one weekend a month people only get to know each other superficially; being down here for three months, you get to know them a whole lot better."