



The I G U A N A



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Soto Cano opens gates to community



Photo by Spc. M. William Petersen

Visitors to Soto Cano Air Base's Open Base Sunday get a close up look at Honduran and American aircraft, like this CH-47 Chinook.

By Spc. M. William Petersen
Editor

Soto Cano Air Base opened its gates to the local community Sunday during the annual Open Base.

Hundreds of visitors from the Comayagua area braved the day's heat to get a look at the equipment and operations of the Honduran Air Force and Joint Task Force-Bravo.

Static displays of various aircraft, including U.S. Army helicopters and Honduran Air Force fixed wing aircraft, were available for visitors to not only see, but explore. The Honduran Air Force also provided an airshow. Throughout the day, Honduran aircraft like the F-4 Phantom and the UH-1 Huey flew over the crowd.

Apart from the aircraft demonstrations, the firefighters and Joint Security Forces were on hand to give visitors a look at emergency services at Soto Cano.

The Military Working Dog section of JSF offered demonstrations of their canine comrades' abilities in crime prevention. The dogs displayed their discipline, training and natural ability as their handlers ran them through various tasks.

Overall, the open house gave Hondurans a better understanding of their air force, the U.S. military and the ways the two work together here.

For more photos, turn to page 8



Photo by Tech. Sgt. G.A. Volb

Pfc. Brooks Taylor, a disc jockey at Soto Cano Air Base, Honduras, has a fellow soldier check out his gear before rappelling from a Black Hawk during Search and Rescue training April 2. It was the first time the Search and Rescue Team conducted nighttime training here.

Night training gives SAR team new experience

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

Tooling around an airfield hanging by a rope attached to the underbelly of a Black Hawk roughly 180-feet in the air happens to be fun for some of JTF-Bravo's Army contingent.

But not everyone initially takes to the experience without going through the normal ritual of stomach "butterflies" or a bit of second-guessing.

One such Army specialist however, who confesses he had been a little wet behind the ears until a couple of weeks ago, fought through the initial fear that comes with being of sound mind. He

entered the world of tower and helicopter rappelling, before adding the cherry atop his camouflage cake via SPIES training April 2 here.

It was then that members of the Joint Task Force-Bravo Search and Rescue Team strapped themselves under a helicopter and dangled as the chopper swiftly moved from one end of the flightline, around the perimeter of the base and back.

For Spc. Eugene Burt, an administration specialist from Daly City, Calif., it was a fantastic experience - after he was done with it, that is.

"I was nervous as heck before hand,"

See **NIGHT**, Page 3

Commanders Corner

The Ugly American Syndrome

By 1st Lt. Richard Komurek
Public Affairs Officer

I hate to say it, but JTF-Bravo is afflicted with the Ugly American Syndrome. In a world where many people struggle for daily survival (just look outside the gates of Soto Cano) many JTF-Bravo members waste energy and resources like there is no tomorrow.

For those in denial, I suggest a look at JTF-Bravo's energy consumption and the related costs. What you see should alarm you. Then take a moment to notice your behavior and that of those around you and you just might be surprised at what you find being wasted.

According to Base civil Engineering, Soto Cano uses an average of 275,000 gallons of water per day, with only 10 percent of this being used by the Honduran Air Force. Is this a reasonable amount of water to use? I say not, especially in a region where many people walk for miles to fill water jugs in order to have water in their homes. It is the dry season in Honduras and for the past several weeks there have been water restrictions in Tegucigalpa because of a severe water shortage. So tomorrow morning when you see someone shaving or brushing their teeth with a faucet running full blast (uses an average of 20 gallons of water each time), think about the people in Tegucigalpa who currently have water only two or three days per week for a limited number of hours each day.

What about electricity? JTF-Bravo doesn't fare well in this regard and spends an average of \$2 million per year for its electric bill. That is about 20 percent of the annual budget. So if there's no wood in the wood shop or there's a reduction in MWR activities, you have a

good idea where the money has probably gone. A major source of wasted electricity on base is the overuse of approximately 900 conditioners. Do you know someone who leaves their air conditioner on all day in their hooch while they are at work? If JTF-Bravo only used air conditioners for only 12 hours per day instead of 24 hours a day, it would save nearly \$46,000 each year. If everyone turned off their computer and monitors at night and on weekends when not in use JTF-Bravo would save about \$44,000 per year.

What does this have to do with the average Joe/Jane spending their six to 12 months at Soto Cano? It's simple, be energy smart each and every day. It doesn't require much effort, just some attention to detail. If everyone followed these five simple conservation tips, it would make a huge impact on JTF-Bravo and save limited resources and money.

* Report leaking faucets and showers- At one drop per second a leak wastes about 2,700 gallons per year

* Keep showers short- Every five minutes in the shower uses 30 gallons of water

* Don't leave the faucet running while shaving and brushing teeth- Doing so uses 20 gallons of water.

* Turn off air conditioners when not in a building

* Turn off computers and monitors at the end of the duty day

The Ugly American Syndrome is not terminal and it can be treated and overcome with minimal effort. I know because I was a victim of the syndrome when I first arrived in Honduras 10 months ago. Although I may never be 100 percent cured, I no longer take the simple things in life for granted and I am more thankful for the way of life that is afforded to me by being an American.

The Chaplain's Corner

Set Your Sights High

By Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Gary A. Pendrak
JTF-Bravo Chaplain

Here is a story about Thomas Lipton who left home when he was 15 years old. With only \$8 in his pocket, he said goodbye to his native Scotland and headed off to America in search of fame and fortune.

After working at odd jobs for a number of years, he returned to Scotland, and on his twenty-first birthday, he opened the first in a chain of food stores. Later, he began a career as a tea merchant.

Soon he was one of the richest men in the world. But, although Thomas had accomplished his goal of fame and fortune, he still had one nagging ambition - he wanted to become the captain of the fastest racing yacht in the world. He wanted to win the most prized trophy in yacht racing; he wanted to win the America's Cup.

At great expense, he built one of the fastest yachts that ever sailed. Then he brought her, the Shamrock, to America for the race. He lost.

Not one to give in to defeat, he decided to build a brand-new boat - one even better than his first Shamrock. So again he poured his time and money into his second yacht. Again he sailed to America. And

again he lost the race.

Five times, with five different Shamrocks, Thomas Lipton tried to win the America's Cup and lost.

Although Lipton never did win the race, he did win the respect and admiration of the American people, for each time he lost the race, he had nothing but praise for the winners. He never complained or felt sorry for himself. He accepted his losses like a true sportsman.

In his quest to capture the America's Cup trophy, Lipton put his whole heart into his goal. He gave of his time and his money - investing more than five million dollars.

Some people may say he was silly to get so involved in boat racing. But the point is that he set a goal for himself, and he put all his energies into reaching that goal.

Do you have a goal that you are excited about? Is there something that you would like to accomplish before the end of your tour in Honduras?

I hope you have set goals for yourself. People with goals enjoy life more than those who just slide through life without direction.

Remember, those who have a purpose in life; live life - on purpose.

The IGUANA

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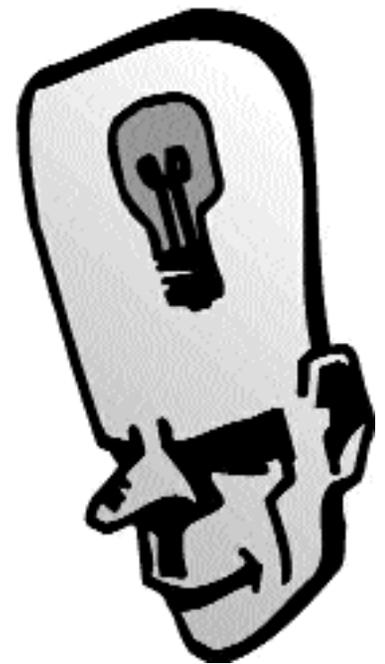
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Something on your mind?



LET US KNOW!

The Iguana is currently accepting story ideas, letters to the editor, and leads on newsworthy people, places and events.

Call ext.4150 or e-mail the editor at michael.petersen@jtfb.southcom.mil.

U.S. Army Safety Center trains JTF-B personnel

By Spc. M. William Petersen
Editor

A team of instructors from the U.S. Army Safety Center visited Soto Cano last week to address safety training and concerns among Joint Task Force-Bravo personnel.

The team, made up of warrant officers and civilians, conducted training classes and consultation for the whole spectrum of personnel, from teaching ground safety to privates to reviewing operational-level safety with JTF-B's command group.

The USASC is a Department of the Army-level function located at Fort Rucker, Ala., as a tenant activity.

As part of its mission, the USASC provides risk management assistance to units in the field around the world.

"The basis for achieving safety is risk management," said George K. Greenauer, safety and occupational health manager for the USASC. "We apply risk management to vehicle operations, aviation operations, ground systems operations and personal safety."

The visit is a first for the 3-year-old USASC team, and was long overdue, said Mike A. Morales, occupational safety and health specialist for JTF-B.

"When I arrived, we had gone 18

months without a safety officer," said Morales. "I looked around and thought we needed assistance."

Morales discovered the safety team on the Internet, and found out that the team would visit Soto Cano for free.

While here, the team spent two days in classrooms teaching risk management, POV and GOV safety training, and air and ground safety on duty and off.

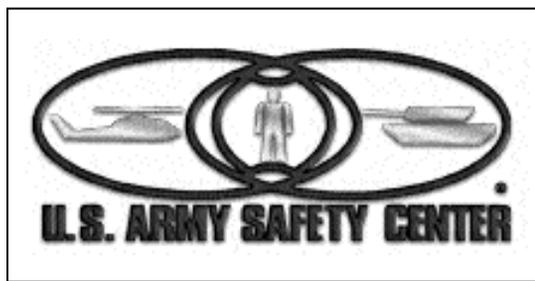
Besides training, the team looked at maintenance, operations, the dining facility, MWR and the ammunition supply point to give JTF-B's command group an idea of what is being done well and what could be done better, according to Morales.

The overall assessment was a positive one.

"Safety is alive and well here at Soto Cano because there is good command support," said Greenauer. "The personnel are aware of hazards, and that should continue to be nurtured and built upon."

Morales is hoping to accommodate the rotating personnel of JTF-B by making the Safety Center team's visit an annual occurrence.

Safety concerns can be brought to Morales at the JTF-B Safety Office. The office is located in building J-80. Personnel can also call the safety hotline at ext. 4840.



MOSQUITO SURVEILLANCE



Gravid Trap



Mosquito Light Trap

With the arrival of the wet season soon, the Preventive Medicine Section of MEDEL will be conducting Mosquito Surveillance throughout the JTF-Bravo area.

MEDEL asks for your cooperation in their efforts by refraining from touching or removing any of the mosquito traps. The purpose of the traps is to collect specific types of mosquitoes that are known to transmit malaria and other vector-borne diseases.

If you have any questions please call Preventive Medicine at ext. 4500/4200.

NIGHT

Continued from Page 1

he admitted. And who could blame him, he spends much of his normal duty day filing, typing and keeping records straight. "I'd go as far as saying I was scared, but not terrified - a controlled fear."

Having been through the tower version of rappelling, he had some idea of what he was in for. "With rappelling, at least I have control over the speed at which I head toward the ground. You do all your checks prior to doing it, so you're confident everything will work out. It's not like jumping out of an airplane where you might find yourself hoping the chute actually opens."

Burt even backed out earlier in the day instead, opting to do a little more work behind the cozy confines of his four-legged aircraft. It's much safer flying a desk around, he agreed.

Eventually though, he ran out of things he could use to rationalize putting the training off. "I kept telling myself I have too much to do," he said. "Once I was all caught up though, I had no more excuses. I knew I'd have to go that night."

So Burt, along with more than a dozen participants during the training, took his

turn rappelling out of a helicopter 70-feet off the tarmac and zipping around the flightline, a la soldier-on-a-rope.

SPIES training, or the Special Patrol Infiltration Ex-filtration System, and the rappelling is a regular requirement for members of the SAR team according to Army 2nd Lt. Joseph Ayoub, officer in charge of the SAR Team. Those who've done it return with that look of adrenaline rush on their face, looking forward to the next go around. Burt was no different.

"I really felt good," said Burt. "I felt more comfortable going through it then thinking about it before hand. I'm looking forward to doing it again." It was a success across the board.

"Our SAR members were qualified, rappel masters utilized their skills, and it gave the (1st Battalion) 228th Aviation Regiment pilots an opportunity to become certified on rappelling and SPIES procedures," said Ayoub, adding that this training was the first at night for the SAR team here.

Luckily, for anyone feeling the urge to try the same thing, Ayoub said he'd gladly accept anyone, as long as they're not on a profile.

Parting gift



Photo by Spc. M. William Petersen

Tech. Sgt. Richard Jamison, noncommissioned officer in charge of Air Traffic Control and Landing Systems maintenance control, puts the finishing touches on a unit sign. Jamison, a member of AFFOR 612th Air Base Squadron, took up the one-man project prior to his departure from Joint Task Force-Bravo to Ramstein Air Base, Germany, in hopes that his section would get pride and recognition from it.

Mountain of donations arrives for area orphans

By Tech. Sgt. G.A. Volb
Public Affairs Superintendent

One of the most gratifying moments a member of Joint Task Force-Bravo will experience is when they hand over clothing and toys to children at a local orphanage.

The resulting smiles make the assignment at Soto Cano Air Base, Honduras, uniquely memorable, many even deciding to continue the effort once they've rotated stateside again.

Due to Soto Cano's small size, however, much of what is distributed to social programs off base comes from stateside organizations. Such was the case April 1 when two pallets of donations arrived from the Air Commando Association at Hurlburt Field, Fla.

A C-130 aircraft, already scheduled for training here and on its way regardless of what was aboard, used the extra space aboard to bring the goodies. And the base population involved in humanitarian gestures throughout the local area was thrilled.

"It's always nice to be able to share our success with others less fortunate," said Air Force Capt. Randy Whitecotton, chief of engineering and one of many involved in the program. "The possibility of humanitarian efforts like this is one of the main reasons I volunteered for this assignment, instead of other remote tours. Being a father of two myself, it also helps me when missing my own children." Much of what was received this time around apparently had children in mind.

There was enough youth clothing, toys, and shoes to keep several base programs well supplied. It was a welcome addition since each of the major organizations on base has their hands in some charitable pursuit.

As a bonus with the delivery, there were several appliances hard to come by here like refrigerators, and infant necessities such as strollers.

"I'm sure they'll be hot items," said Whitecotton, adding that the shipment was divided into several groups of 16-boxes each so all the major units got a fair share.



Photos by Spc. M. William Petersen

Air Force personnel unload a pile of boxes received for donations to local orphanages. Once the shipment arrived, the airmen worked to divide it equally for distribution among the local orphanages.

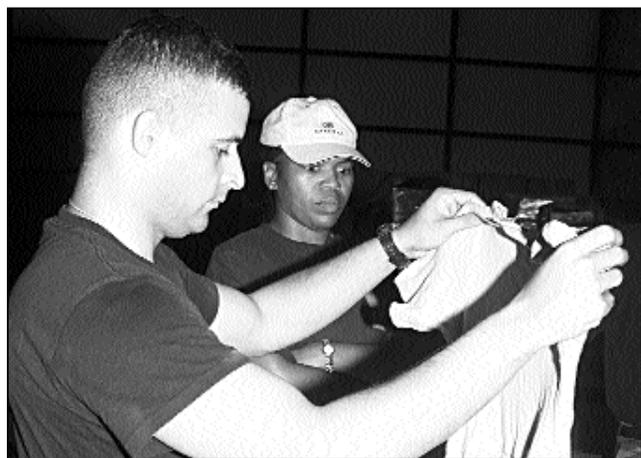
The beneficiaries of Joint Task Force Bravo's endeavors are places like the Santa Ana Orphanage for teenage girls, Clementina's Children's Kitchen, and the San Antonio de Padua home for young boys and girls. In the case of Clementina's Children's Kitchen, he said, it's always a treat to visit.

"She's a sweet old lady who has devoted her life to improving the lives of children from the town," he said. "She's always hugging and praying for us and our families."

"It just leaves you with a good feeling inside," said

Air Force Master Sgt. James Clark, assigned to the civil engineering element here. "Orphanage visits and projects associated with New Horizons, like building schools and roads, are great." New Horizons is an annual exercise involving civil engineers and medical personnel who travel to impoverished areas of Latin America to work on their skills, while providing real-world humanitarian assistance as a collateral benefit.

"I don't think many Americans realize how good we have it," said Air Force Capt. Celiann Gonzalez, now stationed stateside, but a long-time enthusiast regarding humanitarian programs here. "The most important thing I learned from my tour at Soto Cano was to live life to its fullest, and I learned that from the young boys and girls at the orphanages."



Above: One of the Air Force volunteers takes a look at the donations.

Right: The boxes and their contents, including strollers and toys for children, were accounted for for equal distribution.



Goods donated included clothes, shoes and toys.

All together now...

Photo by Spc. M. William Petersen

The members of Joint Task Force-Bravo's Army Forces set off on a morning run April 5. Leading the way was Maj. Mario D. Matos, ARFOR executive officer, and Sgt. Robert Hutchinson, chaplain's assistant, carrying the col-

ors. The run of roughly three miles kicked off a day of "pay day activities," including awards presentations, quarterly training requirements and JTF-Bravo commander Col. Michael Okita's call-in radio show.

Comayagua: discover former capital's living history

By Robin Gonzalez
MWR Manager

Churches, market places, plazas, museums, Honduran cooking, "sawdust carpets" during Semana Santa, and centuries of history are just part of what makes up Comayagua.

Rich with Lenca Indian and Spanish tradition, Comayagua is located just about the center of Honduras in a rich, agricultural valley.

Archaeologists have found evidence of civilizations as old as 8,000 years in the valley, but the town of Comayagua was not permanently settled until 1537 by the Spanish Conquistadors.

After quelling a national uprising led by the famous Lenca Indian Chief Lempira, the Spanish ruled Honduras until 1821 when the country gained its independence and Comayagua became the official capitol.

In the late 1800's the capitol was moved from Comayagua to its current location in Tegucigalpa. One explanation for this move was that the then President's wife did not believe Comayagua society was treating her to the social standards she set, so she convinced her husband to relocate.

Another explanation is that the President's girlfriend lived in Tegucigalpa so he relocated leaving his wife in Comayagua. As interesting as these explanations are, the real reason was based on politics and the fact that the silver mining companies (and money) were in Tegucigalpa.

Today Comayagua is a thriving Honduran town of 60,000 inhabitants and is fa-

mous for a couple of things; the centuries old church with the oldest continuously working clock in the world and the "sawdust carpets" created for the annual Good Friday procession.

The cathedral was built in the 1100's and in the 1600's Spain presented a clock for the tower as a token of their esteem. At the time of presentation, the clock was already several hundred years old. It is not a spectacularly decorated clock, but it has, and continues to keep, accurate time.

A legend surrounding the cathedral is that the Spanish priests supposedly removed all the gold artifacts and statues from the altar for safekeeping during the fight for Honduran independence.

In order to prevent the rebels from taking the gold, the Spanish constructed wooden altarpieces and painted them with a thin veneer of gold. Unfortunately, no one has ever found the hidden gold artifacts.

The tradition of the "sawdust carpets" was brought to Comayagua from Guatemala in the early 1900s by the grandmother of the owner of the Villa Real restaurant (the restaurant is part of the family home that has been in this family since 1750).

On Good Friday, hundreds of people start to create elaborate carpets made of colored sawdust and salt. By 9 a.m., 24 different and unique "sawdust carpets" have been created and ready for the Via Crucis (way of the cross) procession. This Good Friday event has grown over the years so that today thousands of Hondurans observe and/or participate.

Fact or fiction, old or new, Comayagua has something for everyone. Stop by MWR Travel and Tours, H-401, and let us help you discover Comayagua.

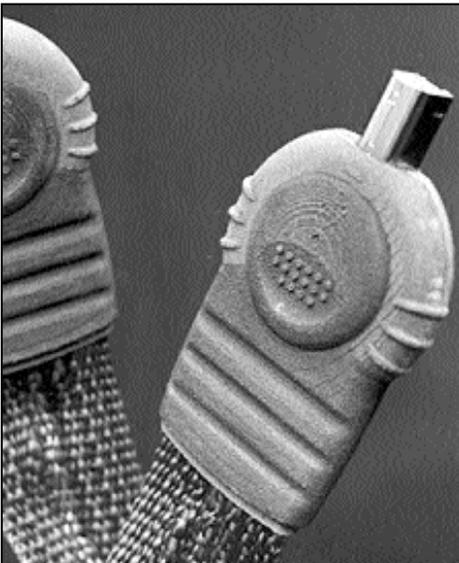


Electrified BDUs definitely aren't your father's fatigues

By Curt Biberdorf
Armed Forces Press Service

NATICK, Mass. — Using a finger of his glove, a soldier determines if water is safe to drink. He takes a rolled-up cloth keyboard from his pocket, plugs it in and starts typing a message. Calling for support, his radio sends and receives signals using an antenna blended into his uniform.

Through a 1998 Small Business Innovative Research program known as Electro-Optic Fabric Concepts for Combat



A universal serial bus cable was manufactured into a thin, flexible and wearable cable with flat, low-profile connectors that can be integrated into clothing.



Graphic Art by Steve Smith

The battle dress uniform may become a wearable electronic network that transports data to and from a troop's wearable computer. A modular load-bearing vest with a built-in radio antenna will be evaluated this year.

Clothing, researchers at the Army Soldier Systems Center here are developing textiles that can transport power and data safely and efficiently.

"After looking into state-of-the-art materials for a variety of protective clothing applications, it became clear that there was potential to achieve a revolutionary improvement in performance if electronics- and optics-related technologies could be successfully integrated into textiles," said textile technologist Carole Winterhalter.

Although the battle dress uniform provides camouflage and environmental protection, it may also become a wearable electronic network that transports data to and from a soldier's wearable computer.

Like a local area network, soldiers' personal area network would open new opportunities for battlefield lethality and survivability. The network could be made to detect chemicals, prevent friendly fire casualties by providing positive identification, and monitor a soldier's physiological condition.

The first step in developing the PAN was also the program's first success. Natick and small business partner Foster-Miller Inc. of Waltham, Mass., developed a textile-based version of a universal serial bus cable.

Researchers picked the USB because it is a commonly used item, for instance, in desktop and laptop computers. The relatively stiff and heavy USB cable — often the size of a computer mouse cord — was manufactured into a thin, flexible and wearable cable with flat, low-profile

connectors. It can be integrated into clothing and is currently under consideration in an advanced combat uniform program.

"After testing and evaluation, it actually functioned like a normal USB," Winterhalter said. Learning that power and data can be sent through textiles, the next step is to determine how and where to place the sensors that will transmit information to the soldier's computer. She said sensors could be attached or embedded into the material or be the fabric itself, and could be located on the inside, middle or outside layer of the clothing system.

"Integration of both the electronic network and sensors also presents new design issues and human factors issues of safety, comfort, performance and durability," she said.

The success of the wearable cable led to other applications, such as a wearable, flexible and textile-based squad-level antenna for a tactical communications radio. The antenna was integrated into the Modular Lightweight Load-carrying Equipment vest. Its advantages over standard 30-inch-long whip antennas are they conform to wearers' bodies and don't compromise their silhouettes.

The antenna vest is a joint development effort with the U.S. Communications and Electronics Command, and it supports their advanced antenna science and technology objective. Natick developed the antenna and led the integration efforts while CECOM developed the electronic switching devices. A performance evaluation of the vest will be conducted this spring with a follow-on safety effort in the fall.

The technology developed under the SBIR program that supports both the cabling and antenna efforts was patented and licensed to Malden Mills in Lawrence, Mass. The company wanted to make an unusual fleece heat blanket and succeeded by folding ribbon-like Natick power buses under the fabric bindings at each end and connecting them to heating elements made of superfine conductive fibers knit right into the fleece material.

She said Malden Mills wanted an electric blanket without the stiff, bulky wires traditionally used. The new blanket is lighter, more flexible and can be machine-washed and dried. Plugged in, it warms evenly using the same amount of power as a 100-watt light bulb.

"It's a successful example of military research in electro-textiles that's been applied to the commercial market," Winterhalter said. "We were amazed and pleased with how quickly the technology was transferred and used."

(Curt Biberdorf is the editor of "The Warrior," magazine published by the Army Soldier Systems Center, Natick, Mass.)

Soldiers bring relief after Afghan earthquake

By Cpl. Holly Plata
314th Press Camp Headquarters

KABUL, Afghanistan — Three Chinook helicopters swooped into Nahrin, a small town of adobe buildings in northern Afghanistan, after an earthquake there March 25 killed at least 700 local residents.

As people ran from the dust clouds that billowed up when the helicopters were landing, infantry soldiers from the 101st Airborne Division immediately jumped out of the Chinooks and formed a perimeter around the aircraft to secure the landing zone. They were ready for action.

So were the civil affairs soldiers standing by with a team of 30 Afghan workers ready to unload much-needed supplies to the earthquake-stricken village.

When Brig. Gen. David Kratzer, commander of the Coalition Joint Civil-Military Operations Task Force, heard of the disaster in Nahrin, he quickly sent his soldiers to help.

"The CJCMOTF is well-suited for this sort of mission because we bridge the gap between war and peace. In this case, we are bridging the gap between disaster and normal life," said Kratzer, who is also the deputy commanding general of the 377th Theater Support Command, an Army Reserve unit out of New Orleans, La.

The CJCMOTF, based in Kabul, sent out its immediate reaction force and four of its medical staff to conduct an initial assessment to see what was needed.

"We set up ground coordination with the United Nations to let them know we were coming in to hand over goods to be distributed," said Sgt. 1st Class Michael France, with the 489th Civil Affairs Battalion, an Army Reserve unit based in Knoxville, Tenn.

The 489th soldiers proved that flexibility and creativity are the keys to humanitarian missions.

"As the needs of the people on the ground changed, we called back and changed the shipments mid-route," said France, who is from Strawberry Plains, Tenn.

Part of the task force's mission was to layout the landing zone for

See **QUAKE**, Page 7

BRIEFS

Directive 1 changes

As of April 16, changes have been made to sections of JTF-Bravo Directive 1. To see the latest policy changes, go to the JTF-B intranet (<http://jtfb-webserv-er/>) and click on the latest E-News at the top of the page.

Airport Shuttle

The Soto Cano airport shuttle bus will begin leaving the base at 8 a.m., starting April 13. This is due to the change in flight times to the United States from Tegucigalpa.

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 JTF-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.

Calibration Team

For all organizations requiring calibrations, the TMDE calibration team is on base for the next month to calibrate equipment. They need some time to prepare their tools and equipment but should be ready to support within the week.

For more information, call ext. 4370.

Mandatory G6PD testing

MEDEL has resumed G6PD testing for all Army and Marine personnel. This testing will be done twice a month on the first and third Thursdays of each month from 8:30-11:30 a.m.

Testing is required before troops finish their tour of duty at Soto Cano because people who are deficient in the G6PD enzyme should not take the malaria medication. Air Force personnel do not need to take this test. For questions call MEDEL at ext 4183.

Cellular phones may pose threat on future battlefields

By Staff Sgt. A.J. Bosker

Air Force Print News

WASHINGTON — On the battlefield of the near future, the biggest threat to military communications and satellite operations may not come from the enemy. It may be the “bandwidth encroachment” caused by the dramatic increase in the use of consumer cellular phones and other wireless hand-held devices.

“This threat is the result of the explosive growth we have witnessed in the civilian demand and competition for use of the radio frequency spectrum,” said Brig. Gen. Michael A. Hamel, director of Air Force space operations and integration at the Pentagon. “As we move further into the information age, that commercial demand for bandwidth only increases.”

Encroachment in the radio frequency spectrum is similar to the gradual loss of access to test-range land the Air Force experienced as private housing and business developments sprouted up in what was once wide-open spaces, said Nelson Pollack, technical director at the Air Force Frequency Management Agency.

The radio frequency spectrum, like land, is finite, so this presents a serious concern for Air Force operations.

The competition for bandwidth between the military and commercial sector has already affected certain Air Force missions, Pollack said.

“We have lost access to 75 percent of the frequency bands used for flight-testing new aircraft,” he said. “We will now have to spend scarce resources to move more test requirements into our single remaining frequency band.”

Over time this will result in increased delays in test programs based solely on the lack of sufficient spectrum to conduct simultaneous testing, said Pollack.

Another area of great concern to Hamel is in space operations, where unimpeded access to use of the spectrum is vital.

Space systems, especially satellites, are operated exclusively through use of the RF spectrum and many of the systems orbiting Earth, and still in use by the military today, were launched before the rapid growth in civilian demand for bandwidth, he said.

“Restrictions that limit certain frequency bands can be detrimental to the command and control of these space assets,” he said. “We need to have a clear, long-range approach to ensuring access to the RF spectrum given our growing dependence on space.”

QUAKE

Continued from Page 1

several helicopters in a nearby field. After the Chinooks landed, the task force was in charge of off-loading and sorting the supplies.

“I was in charge of a team of Afghans hired to help off-load the CH-47s,” said Spc. Larry Sellers, a 489th soldier from Somerset, Ky.

The 489th soldiers and Afghan workers had some difficulties with language barriers at first, but they quickly developed basic hand signals. Soon they were all working together without any trouble, Sellers said.

The operation lasted for three days in which thousands of supplies were unloaded. The group unloaded a total of 380 duffle bags full of cold-weather clothing, 125 cases of dates, 154 five-

gallon containers of water, 1,238 cases of bottled water, 261 bags of wheat, 420 cases of MREs (Meals-Ready-to-Eat), and 95 boxes of blankets. Tents for temporary shelter were also delivered.

They delivered 1,980 pounds of basic medical supplies, as well as 792 pounds of infusions, 528 pounds of drugs, 242 pounds of reusable medical supplies and 202 pounds of health equipment.

The CJCMOTF Public Health Team saw 400 patients their first day on the ground and 120 on the second day. The health team also met with the minister of public health, Dr. Sohila Sedqui, and her team, to assist them with whatever they needed.

Some of the urgent needs were food, water, clothing and blankets for the patients, especially because some of them were on the bare ground in the harsh cold of the mountains.

“It was a lot of hard work, but we did a good thing. I believe it will help the people of Afghanistan. It was a good effort to get supplies to an area that might not have gotten them if there hadn’t been an earthquake,” said Maj. David Floyd, a medical service officer with 3rd Medical Command, from Bluff Park, Ala.

When the soldiers left they turned all of the supplies over to international organizations and non-governmental organizations to complete the disaster relief.

Paving the way



Photo by Sr. Airman Danielle Upton

Staff Sgt. Chuck Risinger, from the 823rd Expeditionary Red Horse Squadron at Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar, operates a slip-form paver. Squadron people are responsible for building a new ramp at Al Udeid; the project is the largest ever undertaken by the squadron.

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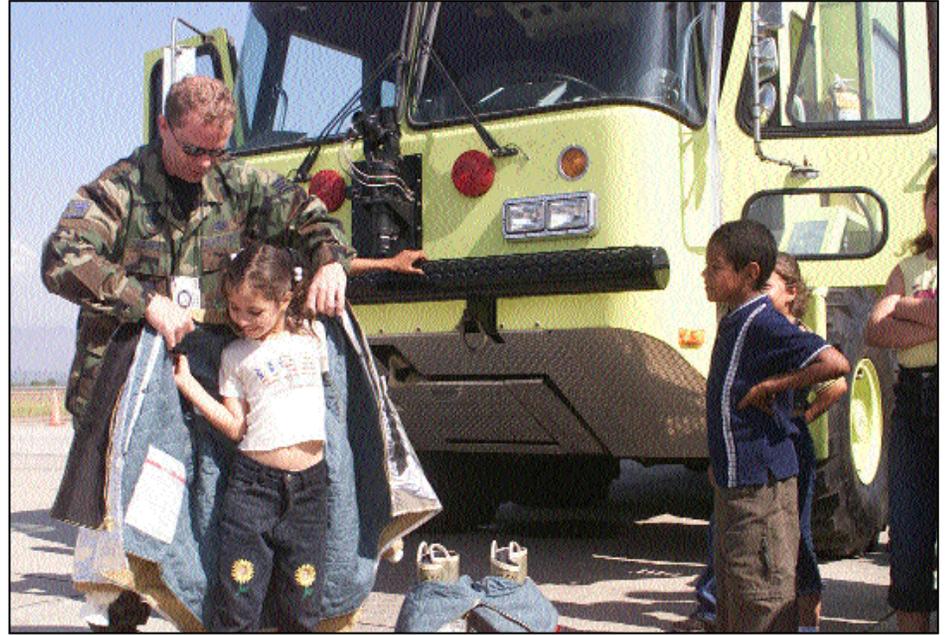
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