



The Iguana



Vol. 13, No. 10

May 18, 2001

News

AFFOR gets new commander

Page 3

MGIB benefits expand

Page 3

MEDRETE La Paz checks in on nutrition of area children

Page 4

Features

Mondo Hondo mini-triathlon

Page 5

New MWR horseback riding trip



Page 7

Take a ride with JSF Town Patrol Night Stalkers

Page 6

New Horizon missions close up shops

Page 8



Photo by 1st Lt. Kim Garbett

A CH-47 Chinook from 1st Battalion, 228th Aviation Regiment, Company B creates a blow and drying effect on Lake Yojoa as the aircraft lowers into the lake for water training recently.

Chinooks go fishing with water training

By 1st Lt. Kim Garbett
Public Affairs

Having many different colorful names, it's most commonly known as SOF-DUCK training. Maritime operation special forces' teams use this infiltration/exfiltration system as a means to get troops behind enemy lines when rappelling or parachuting in is a less realistic option. They also use it to get into an area with no landing zones other than water.

The CH-47 Chinook is the only aircraft in the Army's inventory that is designed to float. The Chinook can sit on a body of water for up to 30 minutes without sinking, even at 30,000 pounds or more. They also have the capability to transport Special Forces troops, as well as a Zodiac or an RB-15 boat.

The Chinooks of the 1st Battalion, 228th Aviation Regiment at Soto Cano are one of only two active Army Chinook companies that continually train on this maneuver, typically in conjunction with the Navy SEALs and Special Forces troops. Fort Bragg, N.C., is the only other unit that trains for water landings. The 1-228th CH-47s practice water landings in Honduras at Lake Yojoa, northwest of Soto Cano Air Base.

Water landings incur special considerations, but overall it's a blast, said CW3 Jeff Wells, a pilot with Company B, 1-228th Aviation Regiment.

"The crew chiefs and flight engineers in the back have a blast getting wet (upon recovery of the boats and troops)," he said.

"The incoming boat (Zodiacs) soaks them as it is driven into the cabin. The crew chiefs 'catch it' as it comes into the aircraft, jump in it, then throw the tie-down devices onto the Zo-

diac. Water is flooding the cabin at this point, and the crew chiefs get pretty wet throughout the entire process. Anytime we get to land a Chinook in the water is fun, even for the pilots."

Wells went on to say that water landings are unique to the Chinook community primarily because of the special configuration of the aircraft. Not every Army aviator or aircrew member will have a chance to experience something as cool as this, he said.

CW3 Rodney Swanson, maintenance test pilot with Company B, mentioned that although it's a great time, there are a few special considerations.

"Underwater obstacles are always a concern, because of safety factors and possible damage to the aircraft," Swanson mentioned.

"Also, flying the aircraft takes a little more 'control touch,' because a greater degree of precision is needed with the instruments. We have a lot more water on board that has flooded the cabin, and we need to be careful that it doesn't exceed a certain amount, otherwise it could hinder take-off from the water."

The decision to implement a water landing is often based on a series of factors, including terrain, time and the signature remaining (traces of presence) after mission completion, said 1LT Gary Hawkins, a former Special Forces member, now a physician assistant at Soto Cano's Medical Element. "Coming in by boat ... allows special forces members to get in and recover without being noticed in certain environments. The boat and personnel are basically tossed out of the aircraft at about 10 feet above the water at about 10 miles an hour. It's a pretty good jolt for the guys when they hit the water, that's for sure."

Commanders Corner

Operations keeping busy with JTF-Bravo missions

By LTC Richard Blackwell
Operations

Having just passed the mid-point of my one-year tour at Soto Cano, it's an opportune time to look back on what we've done and to consider what lies ahead.

When I reported to Joint Task Force-Bravo in mid-October, the joint task force had just completed a hurricane relief mission in Belize, planning and coordination for New Horizons 2001 was in full swing, a deployment to El Salvador for a Central Skies mission was only a few weeks away, and the CINC was coming for a visit. Something told me we were going to be busy and, as it turned out, so we were.

Now, after six months of pushing aircraft, shipping supplies, letting contracts, moving people, moving equipment, planning, coordinating, communicating, inspecting, advising, briefing, flying, driving, rigging, fueling, fixing, ordering, storing, supplying, housing and supporting, what have we got to show for our efforts?

For starters, over 22,000 Hondurans have received medical, dental and surgical care from 19 separate medical readiness training exercises (MEDRETEs). Most of these are people that would otherwise not have received treatment of any kind due to poverty or their remote location. That means 22,000 people are living better, and in some cases dramatically better, because of the efforts of the personnel in JTF-Bravo and the 1st Battalion, 228th Aviation Regiment, who supported or conducted each of those 19 MEDRETEs.

Remote communities, in Guatemala and Honduras, now have eight new schools, two new clinics and three new wells, all compliments of the New Horizons task forces and JTF-Bravo.

Throughout the planning, coordination and five-month long execution of the exercise, personnel from JTF-Bravo and 1-228th provided support, direction and

assistance in every aspect of the mission.

From monitoring and advising on construction, to pushing convoys of supplies, to air lifting soldiers and equipment, to processing SITREPs, JTF-Bravo and the 1-228th ensured the successful accomplishment of this exercise, and again, contributed to the improvement of the quality of life for numerous Central American communities.

Three Central Skies counter drug missions took the war on drugs to the traffickers in El Salvador, Costa Rica and Belize, which are major transit countries for cocaine and heroin, and suppliers of marijuana.

By certifying and providing air transportation to participating nation drug law enforcement agents, Task Force Enabler contributed to the eradication of illegal marijuana fields and the disruption of the smuggling of narcotics to the United States.

Just when everything was starting to slow down a little, a 7.9 magnitude earthquake devastated many areas of El Salvador. Within 12 hours of notification, JTF-Bravo and the 1-228th deployed 45 personnel and five helicopters to the disaster stricken country and immediately began relief operations and assessments of the damage.

During the period Jan. 14 to 24, 2001, task force personnel conducted engineer and medical assessments, providing necessary information to the Office of Foreign Disaster Relief and the country team, and transported more than 600 relief personnel and 190 tons of relief supplies.

Without the forward deployed presence of JTF-Bravo, the U.S. response to this disaster could have taken from three to five days to reach El Salvador.

So, what's in store for the next six months? The short answer is, "More of the same." Two additional Central Skies counter-drug missions are planned for this fiscal year. Meanwhile, the potential for rapid response counter-drug missions is constant and planning for the next fiscal year's missions is underway.

As we closed out New Horizons in Guatemala and Honduras, planning is underway for New Horizons 2002, in Nicaragua and El Salvador, and will continue through December.

Twelve more MEDRETEs are planned between now and September, adding thousands more to the already impressive numbers of patients treated.

Finally, as August and September approach, so does the hurricane season, once again raising the probability of a call for JTF-Bravo to provide a rapid and critical response.

Without the concerted team effort of MEDEL, AFFOR, AFFOR, JSF, 1-228th, and the Joint Task Force Staff, the accomplishments of the past six months could not have been realized.

The missions that lay ahead will require the same teamwork and dedication. Those of you who have been with the Joint Task Force, over the last six months, can look back with pride, knowing you served the interests of the United States well and provided assistance to those most in need.

Those of you just arriving can look forward to a tour rich in the rewards that come from an important mission well executed.

Chaplain's Corner

Take time to reflect on Memorial Day

By Chaplain (CPT) David Phillips
JTF-Bravo Chaplain

*"This day shall be unto you for a memorial."
(Exodus 12:14)*

"The memorial idea has prevailed among all kinds of people from the earliest times. The Old Testament contains the record of many memorials. The greatest of these was the day set apart to commemorate the safety of the people of Israel from the destroying angel and their deliverance from bondage to the oppressor. Year by year, generation by generation, this occasion was ordered set apart as a time of joyous gratitude to God.

We too have a Memorial Day. We as a people are also summoned to remember. Ours is not primarily a religious institution, yet it has for us a profound spiritual significance. While we separate the functions of church and state, we do not separate religion from the total life of the nation. As people, we have reason to be profoundly grateful to the Father of nations be-

cause we have been delivered from fear and oppression and been given opportunity for the freest life any citizens have ever known."

-By William Everett Roberts, theologian

This Memorial Day, why not take a few minutes to at least pause, reflect and remember all the service men and women who have given their lives throughout the years to ensure our freedoms.

The citizens of the United States have the most freedoms of any country in the world. Those freedoms did not come lightly nor without the shedding of blood. We, who are members of the military, understand that selfless service is one of the tenets that we live by and uphold.

But, any way you look at this value requires a deep commitment because we never know when or where we may be called on to likewise defend the values and freedoms we enjoy and hold most dear. Let us not forget those who have fallen, so that we may remain free. They deserve our honor and respect, so pause to give them the tribute they deserve this Memorial Day.

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

Lane takes over reins as new AFFOR commander



Photo by Martin Chahin

Lt. Col. William Lane accepts the AFFOR unit guidon from COL Michael Wood as a time-honored ceremonial gesture that indicates command has been passed.

By Master Sgt. Jeff Bohn
Public Affairs

In a formal ceremony May 11, Lt. Col John Brainerd passed command of the Joint Task Force-Bravo Air Force Forces, and the 612th Air Base Squadron to Lt. Col. William Lane.

Presiding official for the change of command was COL Michael Wood, JTF-Bravo commander. Lane came to Soto Cano following his duty as the assistant operations officer with the 19th Special Operations Squadron at Hurlburt Field, Fla.

He led a team of nearly 230 people and managed more than \$270 million in resources. He served as liaison officer for AFSOC in simulation-based initiatives throughout the Air Force and joint communities.

He also served as unit focal point for executing joint exercises, contingency mission rehearsals, and served in capacity as the acting squadron commander and operations officer.

Lane addressed the AFFOR troops and said: "I dreamed of a squadron command, and this command is a dream come true in this beautiful country. I recognize the sacrifices and the hardships imposed by family separation at a remote tour. I applaud your dedication and your selfless attitude. You have set the highest standard of service that has now become expected.

"I pledge to you my unwavering support to provide you the training and resources you need to do what your nation expects, and what I expect -- excellence in all we do," Lane concluded.

Brainerd closes this chapter of his career with strong memories of his tenure of command at Soto Cano Air Station as he said, "Lt. Col. Lane, I leave you with an outstanding operations officer and assistant operations officer, the best secretary in JTF-Bravo, outstanding flight commanders, an outstanding staff, and the best squadron in the United

States Air Force. Our new Air Force slogan is absolutely perfect for all of you — 'No One Comes Close.' I will miss all of you. Good luck and God speed."

He will now report to MacDill AFB in Tampa, Fla., to become the Chief of Safety and Training for the United States Special Operations Command.

Lt. Col. William Lane

PME and Education

1977 USAF Basic Training
1983 Bachelors Degree, Business Administration and Economics
1984 Officer Training School
1987 MAC Combat Aircrew Training School
1990 Squadron Officer School
1991 USAF Inspection School
1993 Acquisition Management Course, Air Force Requirements Process Course
1999 Air Command and Staff College
2001 Squadron Commanders Course, Air Force On-Scene Commander's Course

Significant Awards and Decorations

Defense Meritorious Service Medal
Meritorious Service Medal
Air Medal 1 Device
Aerial Achievement Medal 2 Devices
Joint Service Commendation Medal
Air Force Commendation Medal 1 Device
Air Force Achievement Medal
Joint Meritorious Unit Award 2 Devices
AF Outstanding Unit with Valor 3 Devices
Combat Readiness Medal 2 Devices
Air Force Recognition Ribbon
National Defense Service Medal
Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal 1 Device
Southwest Asia Service Medal 1 Device
Humanitarian Service Medal

MGIB benefits expand to \$28,800 with 9-1 return on investment

Compiled by SPC Sarah Maxwell
Iguana Editor

WASHINGTON (Army News Service, April 11, 2001) - Participants in the Montgomery GI Bill program are now given the option to increase their monthly stipend up to \$800.

Educational benefits legislation enacted into law in November contained a program that allows MGIB participants the opportunity to make new contributions maximizing the total for soldiers serving on active duty three or more years to \$28,800, an increase of \$5,400.

This amount, combined with annual cost-of-living increases, will definitely help offset education costs for service members, said Lt. Col. George Richon, chief of Recruiting Resources Branch, Enlisted Accessions Division under the Army's Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel.

The payment will be matched by a 9-to-1 return on investment if the complete 36 months of benefit is used, Richon said.

The minimum contribution is \$20, and can be made monthly carried over whatever amount of months enrollees decide, up to a maximum total \$600 contribution toward the existing MGIB benefit.

All contributions are nonrefundable, Richon said.

Army education centers will supply the DD Form 2366 and payment documents to begin the additional contribution. Actual payment arrangements will be made at the local installation's finance office.

Only those personnel who entered active duty on or after Ju-

ly 1, 1985 and enrolled in the MGIB program during the first two weeks of active duty are eligible to participate.

Those "hundreds of thousands" of eligible individuals hoping to participate in the optional benefits program must contribute the additional funds only while serving on active duty, Richon said.

Since the MGIB program began July 1985, 89.7 percent of the soldiers it is offered to have enrolled in it, Richon said.

For 2001, the figure is at 95 percent, he added.

Those soldiers who were on active duty Nov. 1, 2000 but will separate prior to May 1, 2001, have until July 31 to contribute through their servicing VA office. Army education centers will inform eligible members separating prior to May 1 of the option program.

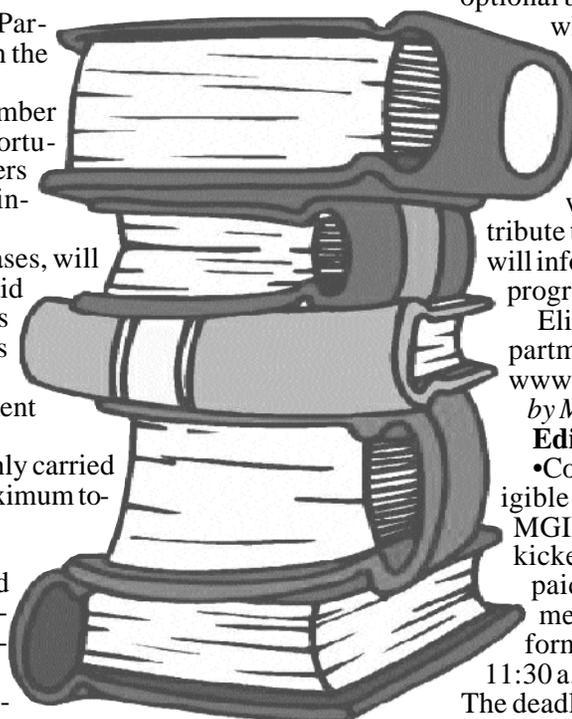
Eligible soldiers separating are encouraged to contact the Department of Veterans Affairs at 1-888-GIBILL1 or www.gibill.va.gov/ for payment procedures.

by Master Sgt. Jon Connor, ARNEWS

Editor's Note:

•Congressional Public Law 106-419, (MGIB) allows for all eligible military personnel to convert from Zero-Balance VEAP to MGIB by paying \$2,700 and receiving \$23,000 with transfer of kickers and Army College Fund bonuses. The \$2,700 may be paid by lump sums and/or 18-months-maximum time allotments starting from the date you sign the DD Fm 2366. The form is at the education center, Building H-56. Stop by 7:30 to 11:30 a.m. and noon to 4 p.m.

The deadline for enrolling is Oct. 31.



May 18, 2001

JTF-Bravo



Photo by SPC Sarah Maxwell

Wet and Wild ...

LTC Wayne Deneff, ARFOR commander, sprays an inflatable pool packed with children from a ARFOR sponsored orphanage during a visit to Soto Cano May 11. Soldiers made the kids' visit memorable by providing two slip and slides, an inflatable pool and sporting activities. They also served the 130 children 500 hotdogs, 75 large bags of chips, 40 gallons of beverages and 10 gallons of ice cream for lunch. This is the second time the orphans were invited to visit Soto Cano. The first time was during the holidays last winter.

Local area MEDRETE is keeping children healthy

By 1st Lt. Kim Garbett
Public Affairs

The small makeshift medical room in the small high school in the Honduran mountains of La Paz was filled with more than 200 children and mothers of all ages. Hershey, M&Ms and other candies sat on tables next to boxes of toothbrushes, cough medicines, penicillin, Benadryl, Tylenol and other medications. It looked like Halloween and Christmas revisited. Families had come from far and wide to see the doctors who had traveled from the United States to Honduras.

Eight Army and Air Force medical personnel out of San Antonio divided into three survey teams, had hiked over four mountain peaks in the La Paz Health Care Region in Honduras during late April to early May, all in less than a week.

They visited more than 45 families with children between the ages of 6 months and 5 years. Patient contacts in just a few short days reached almost 250.

This team was the first military team to do a pediatric nutrition medical readiness training exercise (MEDRETE) in Honduras. They worked in conjunction with the Honduran Ministry of Health to target areas in country believed to have the highest malnutrition rates and to do surveys.

Diet and environment play a huge role in children's nutrition. The average Honduran diet is rather simple, especially in areas like this in the mountains far removed from city life, said LTC Julia Lynch, M.D., assistant residency program director and in charge of the military-unique curriculum at the joint residency program in San Antonio.

"(Their diet) typically includes corn tortillas, beans, eggs and rice supplemented by seasonal fruits (like mangos, bananas and plantains)," Lynch said. "It's not very diverse, but it's healthy in general."

The most vulnerable population in a disaster relief area or in a developing country is children under the age of 5, Lynch explained. They have the highest mortality rates due to diseases, infections, dehydration and their vulnerability to malnutrition.

The team based their findings on malnutrition on three parameters: mid upper arm circumferences, weight and height. They also did a physical assessment of children for vitamin deficiencies.

Children, ages 6 months to 5 years, were held by their mothers as the pediatricians took their measurements. Some of the measurements were taken on the random sampling of homes visited early in the week as the team got their physical training in hiking the hills.

"It was very interesting; the people we visited were very receptive to helping us with our surveys," Lynch said. "Talking with them in their homes was quite an eye-opening experience for those who haven't been to a third-world country before. You see what Honduran family life is like, the close ties, the 'making-do with what you have' mentality ..."

The pediatric nutrition team included four pediatric residents, three staff pediatric physicians and one nutritionist.

A handful of Joint Task Force-Bravo personnel from Soto Cano's Medical Element acted as liaisons and provided logistical support where necessary.

"Our ultimate goal is to get in some quality training here while providing the Honduran Ministry of Health with information to develop strategies to help decrease malnutrition rates here," she said.

"These skills our doctors and other medical personnel learn overseas are very important military-unique skills as well; these skills become even more critical when these pediatricians deploy into a population (usually humanitarian or military operations other than war) to assess nutrition status and to provide guidance and support to these people."



Photo by 1st Lt. Kim Garbett

MAJ Jerry Kemmer, a dietician with the MEDRETE, measures a girl as part of a dietary survey.

"The training here has been great," Lynch said. "We see things like malnutrition in children very infrequently in the United States; in developing countries and in areas where natural and often catastrophic disasters have hit is where we begin to learn the greatest hands-on knowledge for our up-and-coming pediatricians." It's basically a win-win situation for both countries.

Endurance, strength tested at Mondo Hondo triathlon

By SPC Sarah Maxwell
Iguana Editor

Determination, strength, endurance, teamwork and good old intestinal fortitude drove the participants at the Mondo Hondo mini-triathlon held on base May 12.

Whether they were competing as an individual or as a team, participants had to conquer 10 laps in the pool, a grueling 12-mile bike ride (which consisted of riding the entire base perimeter twice), and finishing with a three mile run.

The 55 participants, including seven teams, not only had a chance to challenge themselves, but they did it for a good cause by helping raise \$300 for an area orphanage with their admission fees.

Individual participants competed in different categories according to their age: male open, masters, seniors and womens open.

Not expecting to place, and just hoping to finish, MEDEL 1st Sergeant, SFC Paul Eivins, did more than just finish the triathlon. He had the fastest time in the senior category.

"I didn't even know how to competitively swim three weeks ago!" he emphasized.

After training up, and learning how to do swimming competition, Eivins took the challenge head on.

Just moments after he finished the entire course, he promoted teamwork by repeatedly running the last stretch with participants from his unit.

He said he thinks it's important for people to get involved with activities like the triathlon because it fosters the esprit de corps of the units they work in.

"I think (these events) foster the spirit of the family in the unit -- we're the only family we have here," he said.

"It doesn't matter whether they're competing or volunteering, you know that you can rely on the people you work with. You

know you can depend on each other," he added.

Coming first in the masters class and also having the fastest overall individual time MAJ Kenneth Downer, ARFOR operations officer, trained for about a month for the event.

It was the second triathlon he's done.

He said he likes doing triathlons because of the atmosphere of the competitive environment it creates.

"I really enjoy doing hard PT, and I'm always striving to do better," he said. "I try to associate with people who also like to push themselves."

He also mentioned how well organized the event was and how being able to just walk up and compete made the event run smooth for him.

"Hats off to the group who put this thing together," he said.

MAJ Marc Thoreson, logistics officer in charge, was one of the main organizers and also a participant. He placed first in the men's open and had the second highest individual time overall. He said it took about two months to organize.

"I wanted folks to get a taste of doing a triathlon ... Hopefully they caught the bug and they'll go back to the states and do more," he said.

He added that he would like to see Mondo Hondo continue on Soto Cano after he leaves.

"I couldn't have done it without the support of Dolores Hall, AAFES manager, Edwardo Castro from MWR, the Power Lizard camera crew, all the race volunteers, and (1LT) Justin Zimmer," Thoreson added.

Soon after the last competitor crossed the finish line, sporting equipment donated by AAFES and vacation packages donated by MWR were raffled.

Trophies for the different categories were presented by COL Michael Wood, Joint Task Force-Bravo commander, after the raffle.

Top three in each category

Male Open

1st Place - MAJ Marc Thoreson	1:19:23	J-Staff
2nd Place - CPT Brian Warfel	1:27:33	1-228th
3rd Place - 1LT Roderick Stout	1:28:45	1-228th

Female Open

1st Place - Capt. Celiann M. Gonzalez	1:39:03	AFFOR
2nd Place - 2LT Winona Wilson	2:00:35	MEDEL

Masters

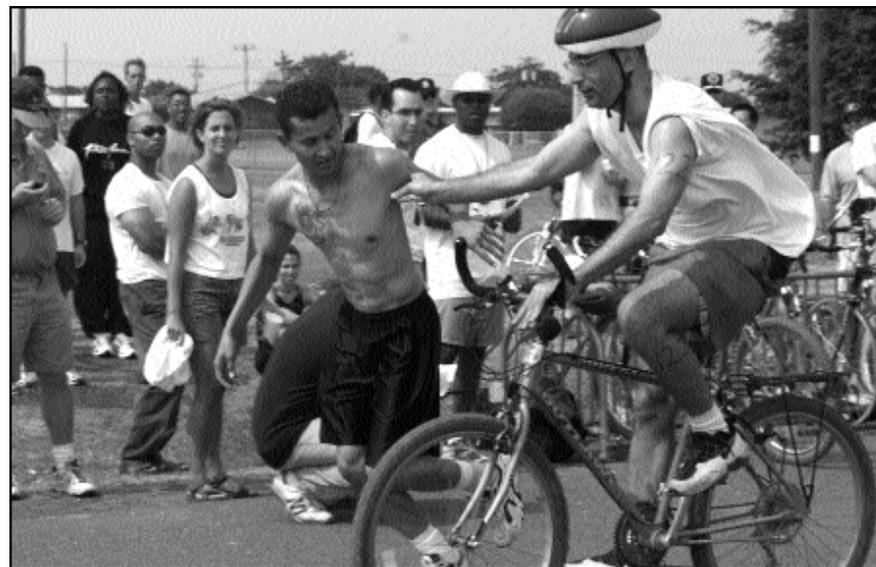
1st Place - MAJ Kenneth Downer	1:17:31	J-Staff
2nd Place - CIV Richard Lainez	1:22:09	AFFOR
3rd Place - MAJ Steven Durrant	1:33:45	J-Staff

Seniors

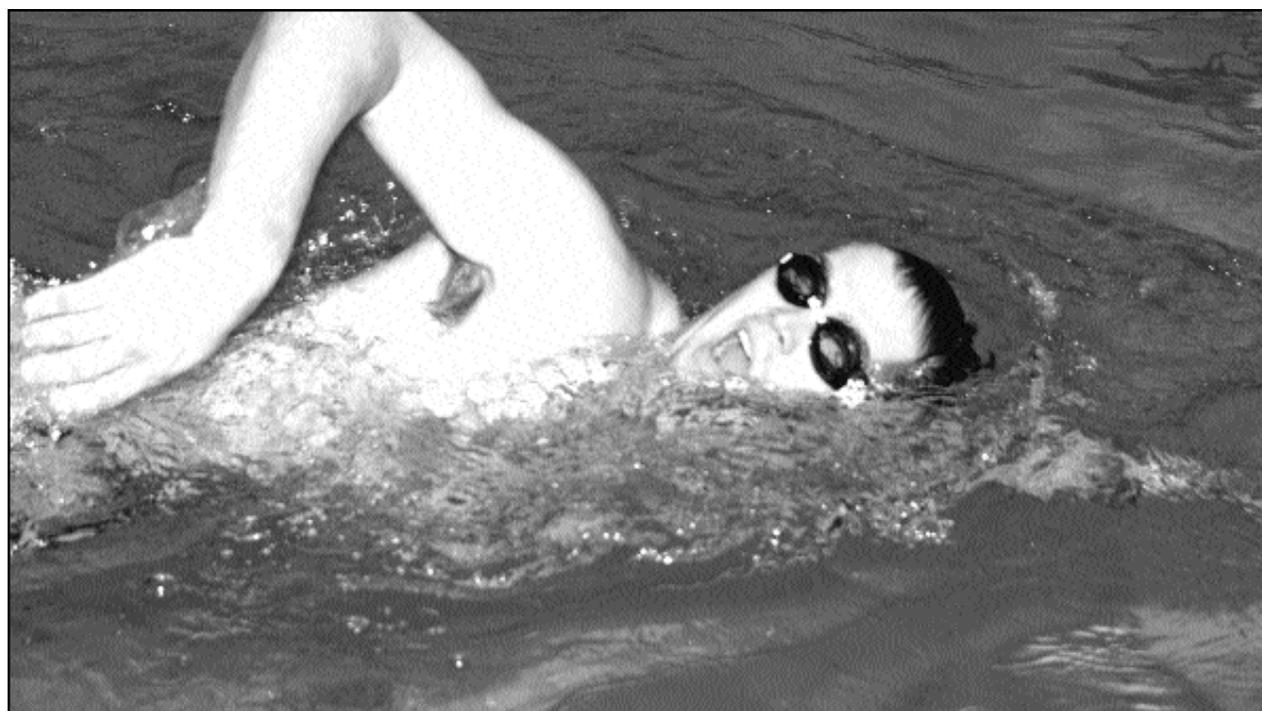
1st Place - SFC Paul Eivins	1:31:20	MEDEL
2nd Place - LTC Richard Blackwell	1:32:44	J-Staff
3rd Place - LTC Steven Harvey	1:32:54	J-Staff

Teams

1st Place - H&S	1:21:27
2nd Place - Wannabee Singers	1:28:08
3rd Place - Warrior Assault	1:29:21

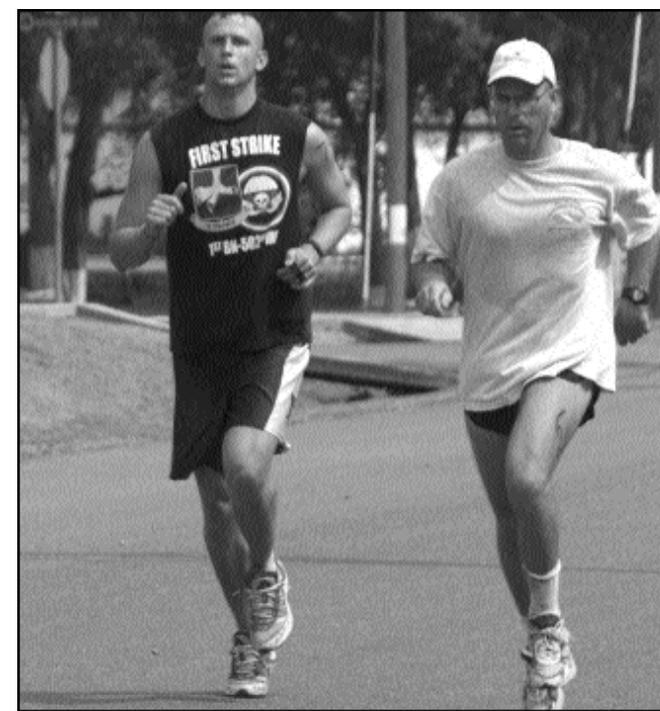


Team members tag each other to start the beginning of their event.



Photos by SPC Sarah Maxwell

Participants had to complete a 10-lap swim before beginning their 12-mile bike ride and three-mile run.



Team spirit prevailed as SFC Paul Eivins ran beside another MEDEL member finishing the race.

Moving with stealth and veiled by a shadow of darkness, emerging through the streets and amongst a pandemonious crowd: surveying, evaluating, anticipating, calculating -- the force of

Night Stalkers make the Comayagua nightlife safe

By Master Sgt. Jeff Bohn
Public Affairs Superintendent

Night Stalkers, Midnight Rangers, or Jedi Warriors could be titles for two men who put their lives on the line in arguably one of the most hazardous duties here at Soto Cano — all for the sake of preserving a safe environment for servicemembers' entertainment.

Several undisclosed times each week, this cohesive team of Night Stalkers from Joint Task Force Bravo's Joint Security Forces leaves the protective confines of Soto Cano and ventures into the potentially hazardous streets, alleys and barrios of Comayagua. Their objectives are to keep fun-timing servicemembers safe, enforce the military directives, protect the interests of the United States, and build positive relations with local Comayagua establishments.

"It's to ensure force protection, safety and security of military personnel, and enforce good order and discipline," said SSG Edwin Ramos, who plans and organizes the JSF town patrols as the operations NCO.

"Basically we are a force protection tool for the Soto Cano chain of command. We are typically the eyes and ears, along with J2 Intelligence, for protection and assessment of problem areas in Comayagua," said Staff Sgt. Vernon Frazier, JSF town patrol team member.

While some servicemembers may perceive this team as an ice-bath to their party, there are compelling reasons for this team's purpose. With the high potential for crime identified in the local area, the team is the law enforcement tool of choice to keep soldiers and airmen safe.

"We look for any JTF-Bravo personnel who are causing problems or are in a location that has been deemed off limits. We also take a look at the overall atmosphere of Comayagua and how that affects the military personnel going downtown," said Frazier, who has eight years of Army and two years of Air Force law enforcement experience.

The Night Stalkers are an incredibly focused team. Visiting random areas that have been identified as on

and off-limit areas is a primary venue of the program.

While they aren't a Nazi squad, their purpose is to keep us safe.

"We facilitate solutions. We handle things at the lowest level before they become problems. Most military members go downtown to have a good time," said Frazier.

"Sometimes they can go overboard, and we're there to make sure everything gets resolved before it escalates. There may be a dispute between one of ours and a local," he said.

"When alcohol is involved, problems can arise because no one is acting with their best judgment. We try and mediate so both parties get a desirable outcome. In a way we make sure the fun keeps going for everyone. When someone gets out of control, we handle that so others can still have a good time," Frazier explained.

Although they have the best intentions, there may come a time when action needs to be taken to control or correct a situation. That is where the expertise of the Night Stalkers comes in, such as an incident where a member is found in an off-limit area.

"I am supposed to use the appropriated level of force and follow the rules of engagement based on the situation," said Ramos, who's bilingual ability and more than eight-years experience comes in handy when mitigating problems.

"We're going to apprehend them and take them to base. Then an investigation is begun to find out why that person was in the area," Frazier added.

The military police are not alone in this endeavor. They are escorted on all town patrols by a local Honduran police officer who is the enforcement official who actually conducts the initial apprehension of a violating military member.

"The local police enjoy working with us and understand the benefit of us policing our people," Ramos said.

Officer Carlos Garcia is a Honduran police officer who was the escort on town patrol one night last month.

Packing a Galil, which is an Israeli-made sub-machinegun that looks like a cut down assault version of the M-16, Carlos was a silent escort that assisted the team in making entry to facilities and providing an additional umbrella of protection for the Night Stalkers.

"We make their job a little easier. They don't get paid very much at all, and they put their life on the line every night. We are a solution to any problems with military members. Every little bit helps when it relieves some of their workload. Also, they get to see how we do things and we see how they operate. It's a learning environment for both sides if taken advantage of," Frazier said.

While three armed offi-

cers of the law pack a pair of 9 mm pistols and a single rifle, they may seem like a formidable adversary, but there is a lot at stake in the course of a patrol.

"Some of these people are armed to the teeth," said Ramos as he drove along the streets in a marked police vehicle. With many gang members and opportunistic people in the Comayagua area, the officers may be outmatched by several highly outfitted gang members — or one member "armed to the teeth."

"We're down there in an enforcement activity for the benefit of our own personnel. If we don't do our job right, we lose credibility with the locals and the U.S. military."

Staff Sgt. Vernon Frazier
Joint Security Forces

No situations presented are simply regarded as routine.

Despite the risks, town patrols are extremely effective as they serve as both a deterrent and a relations builder.

"After almost 18 years of American presence in Honduras, the town people have become attached to us. Everyone is friendly and makes everyone feel welcome," said Ramos.

"We are viewed in great regard. We ensure our folks are respecting the locals, and we make sure the locals don't walk over our personnel. We ensure the proper amount of give and take is going on in the overall community and ensure safety for everyone involved," Frazier said.

There is a significant importance to the town patrol. Without it, the consequences could be dire. To protect and serve the servicemember, there are two distinct advantages for the program.

"First, it could put our troops in a dangerous situation either by their own actions or their surroundings. Secondly, poor behavior makes the military community as a whole look bad," Frazier explained.

"We're down there in an enforcement activity for the benefit of our own personnel. If we don't do our job right, we lose credibility with the locals and the U.S. military," he added.

The town patrol is an effective part of force protection that is also an effective tool for the servicemember and local community's safety. "No one knows where we're going to be any given night. So everyone is on his or her best behavior. If there is a problem then we'll find out, either by our radios or the local police radio, and we'll get involved. No one wants the cops to ruin their good time," Frazier said.

So on someone's next visit to Comayagua, whether it be an evening of dining, dancing or shopping, rest assured the efforts of the Night Stalkers are hard at work to ensure that experience is a safe one.

If inclined, it might even be appropriate to give a hearty greeting and a word of thanks for the sacrifice and risk made for the benefit of the servicemember's enjoyment.

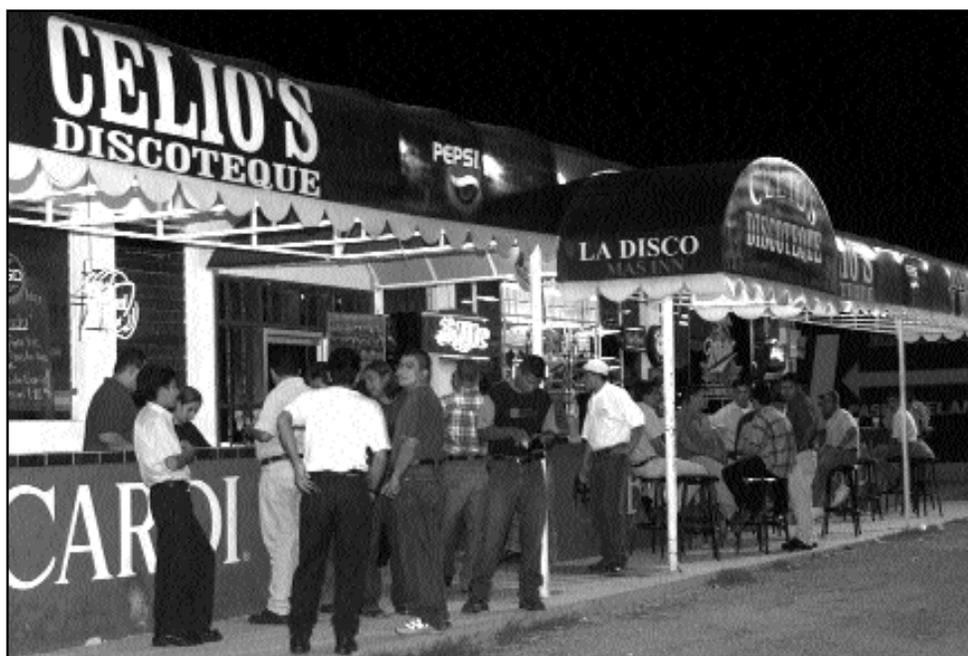


Photo by Master Sgt. Jeff Bohn

Inspecting off-limit areas is a force protection measure that ensures servicemembers' lives are not jeopardized and security directives are adhered to.

MWR trip explores history, nature with horseback riding

By 1st Lt. Kim Garbett
Public Affairs

Hand over hand and step-by-step, each person in the small group of adventurers lugged their bodies up a long rope into a huge cave scooped into the side of the mountain. The small and sturdy native mountain horses they were riding were tethered a little ways back along the trail. The morning air was still crisp and softly scented with pine. It was a day of new discoveries and cultural experiences.

The group had risen with the sun to set out for a day of horseback riding in the Honduran mountainside, exploring and rappelling from ancient Lenca Indian caves and hanging out by delicately hidden waterfalls.

An ethnic breakfast of eggs, beans,



1LT Gary Hawkins and MAJ John Greenmyer cross a mountain stream.

cheese, cream, tortillas, orange juice and coffee was enjoyed at a picturesque little restaurant at about 4,500 feet in the mountains. The road wound up to a native ranch in Marcala, passing a number of coffee plantations on the way.

Upon arrival, a Honduran guide greeted the group. First stop: waterfalls draping a small pool a short hike away, a great way to work off some breakfast calories. After enjoying the delicate beauty of the falls, the group hiked back to mount their rides for the day.

CPT Susan Hocker, a nurse with the Soto Cano Medical Element, used to ride side-saddle a lot back at Fort Huachuca, Ariz., and had missed riding horses. Riding western saddle is quite another experience entirely, but that wasn't what surprised Hocker the most.

"It's really quite odd for me to be taller than the horses!" she said. "But these were sturdy mountain horses well suited for their environment."

Galloping across mountain fields, picking their way up rocky paths and crossing streams invigorated everyone. Next stop: ancient Lenca Indian site for history lesson of the day.

The Lencas were Indians of the northern highlands of Honduras, a group separate from the more commonly known Mayan Indians that once populated the area.

The adventurous group pulled their way up to the cave, where gray dust fine with the age of time and use, lined the cave floor. The guide explained that this was a recently discovered burial ground of one of the Lenca chiefs as well as a site where the Lencas had held some of their more sacred rituals. Most of the cave's artifacts had been excavated and taken to the Museum of Man in Tegucigalpa.

The only way into and out of the cave



Photos by 1st Lt. Kim Garbett

COL James Martin, MEDEL commander, and 1LT Gary Hawkins rappel down from an ancient Lenca cave during the MWR horseback riding tour.

was by that one rope tied to a rock that the guide had somehow managed to get to the top. Lencas still have small villages in parts of Honduras even today, although their culture has been modernized with the passage of time and contact with different cultures.

1LT Gary Hawkins, a physician assistant at MEDEL, said he was really impressed with the caves. "I thought the cave visit was the best part of the trip; the historical and cultural experience was once-in-a-lifetime," he said.

Hawkins, who grew up riding horses in Oklahoma and Texas, is an experienced rider. But, he said, "More than anything, I just really enjoyed being outdoors, learning a little about the culture here, and enjoying some excellent ethnic food for breakfast and lunch."

MAJ John Greenmyer, Intelligence director at Joint Task Force-Bravo and another Oklahoma-grown horseback

rider, agreed with Hawkins' outdoor theme.

"I really enjoyed the scenery, especially the flamboyant trees that have begun to bloom after the recent rains," he said.

This horseback riding trip was a prototype for future horseback riding trips that will be offered by Soto Cano's Morale, Welfare and Recreation shop, said Scott Brennan, MWR manager.

"We're looking at offering this horseback riding trip once or twice a month, depending on demand," he said.

"We have high hopes that it may become one of the 'better selling' trips. It seems like everyone who went on this trip had a good time!"

For horse-lovers, avid riders and explorers, this trip is a must-do before leaving Honduras. Check with MWR for more details and when the next trip is being offered.

Combat weather team keeps servicemembers safe, informed

By Capt. Clint McCommon and Tech Sgt. Theodore Prichard
Combat Weather Team

The Joint Task Force-Bravo Combat Weather Team is an elite cadre of five forecasters. They were the first CWT organized under the Air Force Re-Engineering program and are now a benchmark for other units across Air Force and Army installations.

Under the leadership of Tech Sgt. Theodore Prichard, they are a central figure in just about every JTF-Bravo activity. As any platoon leader, jump coordinator, aircrew member or exercise planner knows, an accurate weather forecast is essential to the success and safety of any mission.

They also provide vital weather data for the 25th Operational Weather Squadron at Davis Monthan AFB, Ariz. This information is used to provide weather-planning data for all of Central America. In addition, they provide weather support for the JTF-Bravo commander, 1st Battalion, 228th Aviation Regiment, U.S. Southern Command, Honduran Air Force, as well as in-theater TDY customers. They can also be deployed to the drop-zone for all airborne jump missions.

The CWT is always poised to deploy at a moment's notice to support the 1-228th. Recent deployments to Belize as well as long-range support to counter-drug training missions and earthquake-relief missions proved the CWT is always ready to exploit the latest technology in deployable weather systems to aid the mission.

Wherever our customer goes, the CWT is ready to follow and provide on-site support to keep the missions safe and on-target.

The mission of the CWT is going to increase in scope in the very near future.

With the closure of Howard AFB in Panama, Central America lost the only source of on-site weather data on the joint operating area.

The team worked on bringing the first Tactical Weather Radar to Honduras.

The TWR, when fielded, could give the team a 300 mile circle of observation that will increase their capability ten-fold. In the future, this TWR will also be shared with the Honduran Air Force to provide real time weather data.

The Soto Cano CWT is proud to have the first operational fielding of the tactical automated weather system. This automated weather system utilizing solar backup power transmits weather observations out to the world every 15 minutes to be used in briefing aircrews and watching the skies for severe weather even when the Soto Cano airfield is closed.

Deployable out to 5 miles away from communications lines, the system is currently completing field testing at Soto Cano in preparation for use in rugged locations and climates.



Photo by Capt. Clint McCommon

Staff Sgt. Toby Manzanres casts a weather sensor balloon skyward.

BRIEFS

Comayagua Curfew

In response to the new 1 a.m. closing time of Comayaguan bars, all Soto Cano personnel must be on base by the new weekend curfew of 1:30 a.m.

Mail Restrictions

In accordance with MSG R031232Z MAY 01, from the Military Postal Service Agency, APO 34022 (Tegucigalpa) and APO 34042 (Soto Cano) will have mailing restriction "N" added to our restrictions list. What this means to postal customers is that personnel in the United States will no longer be sending registered mail to this location. This change will be effective June 1.

Other options are using insured or certified mail. While these are not traceable, they are accountable. Individual parcels can be insured up to \$5,000. With certified mail, you can pay extra for a return receipt to verify the delivery.

Other restrictions implied here that should be noted:

"D" Coffee is prohibited inbound. You can send Honduran coffee out to your friends and relatives.

"F" Firearms of any type are prohibited in all classes of mail.

"M" Fruits, animals, and living plants are prohibited.

House Keeping

Over the next several weeks, technicians from Dyncorp IMD Computer Maintenance and from communications will be conducting a sweep of all computers on the JTF-Bravo network.

The purpose is to update network security and Norton Anti-Virus on every computer and do other necessary updates. This will take up to one hour on each computer.

Please cooperate and allow the technicians to do their job. Users will have to log off and allow them access to their computer for up to an hour until the process is complete. In the next weeks they will move on to the Bravo, Delta, and Echo areas.

Classes Ready to Start

The University of Maryland University Campus (UMUC) will give 3 semester hours of college credit for each of the following term classes, June 4 to July 27:

BMGT 110 Intro To Business Management Mon & Wed

IFSM 201 Intro To Computer Bas System Mon & Wed

CAPP 303 Adv M/Computers Appl & Software Tues & Thurs

MATH 105 Contemp. Topics/Applic/Algebra Tues & Thurs

For more information, stop by the education center in Building H-56.

New Horizons 2001 comes to an end

Task Force-Aurora U.S., Guatemalan forces earn welcome in rural community

By Master Sgt. Jeff Bohn
Public Affairs

Task Force Aurora's ribbon-cutting, closing ceremony was held in Guatemala City at El Redentor, one of the five newly created schools, May 3 in front of nearly 500 Guatemalan and American citizens and servicemembers.

This marked the culmination of Task Force Aurora's successful New Horizons 2001 exercise and the beginning of their redeployment to Puerto Rico, where most of them serve as members of the 65th Reserve Support Command. On hand at the ceremony were multiple distinguished visitors including the Madam Ambassador Prudence Bushnell, the United States ambassador to Guatemala.

In a ceremony of Spanish and English speeches, there were a couple of messages directed toward the American servicemembers that made the creation of five schools, two wells and a medical readiness exercise possible.

After a speech in Spanish, Bushnell addressed the American servicemembers directly: "It is my job to represent

the policy and values of the United States of America, and I have to tell you the policy of bringing New Horizons to Guatemala was initially a controversial one because there are many people in Guatemala who see men and women in uniform not as people who are going to build wells, build schools and take care of them. And therefore, there was some controversy.

"It took more than words to persuade many people and the press that (this) New Horizons was an exercise of friendship and of service — and you did it.

"People didn't believe my words, but they sure did believe your deeds. I thank you very much because you have contributed to a critical part of the change Guatemala is going through in its viewpoint toward the military and its viewpoint toward the United States. Thank you, and God Bless."

After the ambassador spoke, the American servicemembers received accolades from Alvaro Lionel Mendez Estrada, the Guatemalan Chief of Staff of the National Defense.

"On behalf of the Guatemalan Army, I will take a few minutes to tell



Photo by Master Sgt. Jeff Bohn

TF-Aurora's ribbon cutting ceremony was completed by Madam Ambassador Prudence Bushnell.

the American people that you are welcome forever in this country," he said.

After the speeches by the dignitaries the audience was treated to two dances that were performed by local school children.

A tour of the newly completed school followed the ribbon cutting ceremony. Refreshments were served in a nearby hotel, and the ceremony concluded.

Task Force-Lempira Combined forces achieve mission ahead of time

By SPC Sarah Maxwell
Iguana Editor

After four months of engineering operations, New Horizons 2001 Task Force-Lempira, in the Gracias region, was brought to a close May 4 with a ceremony held in the small town square dedicated to the Honduran and American forces who made the humanitarian mission possible.

Leadership from both armies and the U.S. Ambassador to Honduras, Frank Almaguer gave speeches to the Hondurans and bilingual National Guard soldiers. They also gave and received awards in appreciation for the work put into the mission.



Photo by SPC Sarah Maxwell

The joint honor guard showed the unity between the nations.

About 100 Puerto Rican National Guard soldiers along with Honduran forces comprised most of the manpower for the task force.

The main objectives they were given were building four new schools with three class-

rooms each and constructing three new medical clinics.

Along with the new construction, the task force also helped build up and maintain the area's infrastructure by repairing and improving bridges and building coverts.

Beginning Feb. 5, the mission had a deadline to end no later than May 15. The task force not only met the objectives, but also exceeded them by finishing 20 days early and doing additional work in the area.

Having been involved with the planning and implementation of the task force for more than a year, TF-Lempira Commander, LTC José A. Fernandez said one of the factors contributing to the success of the mission was the fact there wasn't a language barrier between the U.S. soldiers and the Hondurans.

"We have the advantage of being bilingual, so it opened all the doors of the community," he said.

Fernandez went on to say how proud he was of his troops for their contribution and that they can all take a different perspective on life after spending time in a developing country.

Almaguer was also proud and grateful for the contributions that have been made.

"The projects that have been completed will remind Hondurans forever what you did," he said in Spanish to the formations of Honduran and U.S. troops.

"I can not tell you how proud I am to represent you here in Honduras," he added in English to the U.S. troops.

The visitors were also entertained by children performing traditional Honduran dances.