



The Iguana



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JTF-Bravo reaches out to area orphans

By Spc. Sarah Maxwell
Iguana Editor

When servicemembers are deployed to Joint Task Force-Bravo, they not only have a chance to be part of an organization that helps improve the quality of life of so many in the area with the task force's humanitarian missions, but they can also join their units in getting a more personal involvement with the Honduran community. Almost 400 children living in six different orphanages in the Comayagua and La Paz area have a much healthier life because JTF-Bravo's major commands give their support to them.

According to Mike Monaghan, chaplain's assistant who has visited five orphanages with JTF-Bravo units and other civilian missionary

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Private 1st Class Debra Hunt, formally of ARFOR, takes a moment to give a young orphan a much appreciated hug during the children's May visit to base.

Task Force-Enabler patrols Central Skies of Guatemala

By 1st Lt. Richard Komurek
Public Affairs

The two CH-47 Chinook helicopters skimmed across the lush jungle lowlands and hugged the rugged cloud-topped mountainsides of Guatemala as part of their highly classified mission. In addition to the U.S. military, the operation involved specially trained Guatemalan forces, agents from the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency and personnel from a U.S. joint interagency task force.

The complicated and potentially dangerous operation would require the combined forces to search the remote countryside for illicit drug crops, find wreckage of aircraft used by drug traffickers, set up border checkpoints, and conduct a raid of a drug lord's business offices and countryside estate.

Is this a new novel at the base exchange or the latest Hollywood action film? No, this is the reality of Operation Mayan Jaguar, the most recent Central Skies mission of Joint Task Force-Bravo.

JTF-Bravo, along with its host nation and inter-agency partners, conducted Operation Mayan Jaguar in Guatemala from July 18 to 26. The operation was based at the military side of the international airport in Guatemala City and their efforts to counter drug trafficking provided a wealth of information and training for all the forces involved.

For this year's operation, more than 25 JTF-Bravo servicemembers from the Joint Staff, ARFOR, JSF and the 1st Battalion, 228th Aviation Regiment, along with two of the regiment's CH-47 Chinook helicopters, made up Task Force-Enabler. Task Force-Enabler, the JTF-Bravo portion of all Central Skies missions, provides aircraft and personnel to help host nation forces and other U.S. government personnel combat drug trafficking operations throughout the Central American region.

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JTF-Bravo feeling pinch as fiscal year monies come to end

By Master Sgt. Jeff Bohn
Public Affairs

If love makes the world go around, then money fuels it. With few exceptions, the task force is starting to feel the pinch of end-of-year monies and an impending close out on fiscal year expenditures.

July 31 was the final date for IMPAC users in Joint Task Force-Bravo to use their card for normal expenses for the remainder of the fiscal year. Fourth-quarter funds are also under tight control as the task force takes final steps to balance the books and pay all of the must-pay expenses.

Units need to take some proactive measures to ensure they are prepared to survive the upcoming months of financial fasting, as well as prepare for the next fiscal year's funding.

With IMPAC use at a minimum, there is still a way to procure needed materials. Maj. Thomas Hunter of the base contracting office outlined the process for purchasing needed items. "Submit a DA Form 3953, Purchase Request & Commitment. Procedures on how to submit are located on the contracting Intranet

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Commanders Corner

Servicemembers get to see importance of our efforts

By Maj. Jose Torrens
Civil Affairs

As our nation recently celebrated another birthday, I began to reflect on the importance of our accomplishments as a nation. I realized that the reason why we are a great country is not because we are a rich or wealthy nation but because of our principles of freedom, equality and justice.

Our nation was not founded on any selfish, unfair or complicated principles but on simple principles of the rights of the individual, a government of the people, the separation of church and state, and the supremacy of the national government. The simplicity of our democracy allows our people to have a voice in how they are governed and understand how the government works.

Our Constitution embodies these principles; it is the foundation for a system that has provided us political stability, economic growth and social progress. Our system is so well accepted by us that often we complain about government officials, but never about the Constitution.

Granted our system is not perfect, but it works very well for us. It has endured in an ever-changing world, and it has always satisfied our own emerging needs. Anytime the people of our nation have felt the need to modify the Constitution, they have done so by approving amendments to it. These amendments have provided for greater freedom, equality and justice.

It is no coincidence that the society our constitution-

al system has created has served as an example for others to emulate. Since our beginning as a nation, people from all part of the world have come to America in search of freedom and the opportunity for a better life. These people have come from all corners of the world bringing with them a vast diversity of customs and traditions that have enriched us as a nation and made us stronger.

But we are not just a land of freedom and opportunity; we have also been a very benevolent world leader that has made many sacrifices to ensure and maintain world peace and stability.

In addition, our nation has a great humanitarian assistance and nation-building record that reflects our nation conscience and the desire for a better future. These efforts coupled with our many military involvements in the last century show our interest in sharing our principals and making the world a better place.

Military involvement at the end of the 19th century against Spain, twice in Europe, in Korea in the 1950s, from Southeast Asia to Southwest Asia, and more recently, in the Balkans show how our men and women selflessly serve around the world to protect freedom.

Another great accomplishment we should be proud of is our role in promoting democracy around the world.

For example, in the last 20 years plus we have seen many military governments in Latin America relinquish power to civilian rule and adopt the electoral process as their mean of choosing their leaders.

Our efforts have also helped these nations strength-

en their judicial system and the press in order to ensure accountability of their governments. They also have the democratization process. This has allowed these nations to join the community of free nations, which has had a positive effect on their economies and, most importantly, a great impact on the defense of human rights throughout the region. It is a know fact that democratic nations have a better record in respecting the right of others.

Being stationed overseas, in our case in Honduras, gives us a better perspective of the importance of our nation's international effort.

Here at Soto Cano Air Base we have the opportunity to be part of many missions of great impact for both the United States and for our Central American neighbors. From humanitarian assistance missions to engagements with our military and civilian counterparts, we have a great opportunity to serve as ambassadors for our nation and show that we strongly stand by our principles.

I would like to close this article with a quote from President Bush's inaugural address, which sums the intent of the article.

"Our democratic faith is more than the creed of our country; it is the inborn hope of our humanity, an ideal we carry but do not own, a trust we bear and pass along."

I hope this article serves as a reminder of the efforts and sacrifices Americans have made to make our nation and the world a better and safer place and, most importantly, remind us that we are part of this great effort.

Chaplain's Corner

The penalty has been paid, sacrifice brings peace with God

By Chaplain (CPT) Earl Vanderhoff
JTF-Bravo Chaplain

Guilt is an oppressive inner burden that drags us down and stifles joy. It's a sense of heart that stems from actual wrongs committed. Conscience hurts. We lie. We commit adultery. Guilt rises. It may only be temporary.

We bury the bad feelings with excuses. We harden ourselves against these ugly pangs. Yet, when we are alone with our own thoughts, guilt once again rears its head. We cannot shake it off. Despite every effort, we know God frowns on us. This guilt is a consequence of sin.

The plain truth is that a right understanding of sin lies at the root of all saving Christianity. Without it such doctrines as justification, conversion and sanctification are "words and names" which convey no meaning to the mind.

The first thing, therefore, that God does when he makes anyone a new creature in Christ is to send light into his heart and show him that he is a guilty sinner. The material creation in Genesis began with "light," and so also does the spiritual creation. God "shines into our hearts" by the work of the Holy Spirit and then spiritual life begins (2 Cor. 4:6).

Dim or indistinct views of sin are the origin of most

of the errors, heresies and false doctrines of the present day.

If an individual does not realize the dangerous nature of his or her soul's disease, it is no wonder if they are content with false or imperfect remedies.

I believe that one of the chief neglects of the contemporary church has been, and is, clearer, fuller teaching about sin.

Let us begin the subject by supplying some definition of sin. We are all, of course, familiar with the terms "sin" and "sinners." We talk frequently of "making a mistake" being in an imperfect world and of people committing "sins."

But what do we mean by these terms and phrases? Do we really know? I fear there is much mental confusion and haziness on this point. Let me try, as briefly as possible, to supply an answer.

Sin, is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, any law of God, given as a rule to the reasonable creature. Sin is that vast moral disease, which affects the whole human race, of every rank and class and name and nation and people and tongue, a disease from which there never was but one born of woman that was free.

Need I say that one was Christ Jesus the Lord? 2 Cor 5:21 For he made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

I say, furthermore, that "a sin," to speak more particularly, consists in doing, saying, thinking or imagining anything that is not in perfect conformity with the mind and law of God. "Sin," in short as the Scripture says, is "the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4).

The slightest outward or inward departure from absolute mathematical parallelism with God's revealed will and character constitutes a sin, and at once makes us guilty in God's sight.

There is only one final solution to guilt for sin. There is only one way the sense of condemnation may finally be eradicated. It's the simple and powerful Christian gospel. Jesus Christ suffered and died as a perfect sacrifice for sins. This sacrifice pays the penalty due for very specific sins. This sacrifice brings peace with God. It removes guilt. It is good news.

Our response? "Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19).

Turn from the error of your ways. Return to God. Trust the sacrifice of Christ as the only adequate payment for your sins. God will lift the sense of guilt and blame from your heart.

"Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).

New commander shares philosophy on task force

By Col. Michael Okita
JTF-Bravo Commander

As I make my introductory rounds throughout Joint Task Force-Bravo, I am repeatedly reminded of the depth and breadth of talent that is assigned here. Component commands and civilian organizations are replete with soldiers, airmen and civilians who bring both experience and youthful exuberance to this remote outpost.

I also see a command that is filled with a healthy number of junior and senior leaders, far more than I had anticipated. While initially surprised by our rank-heavy force, my study of the organizational construct and our mission requirements indicates the level of leadership that we find here is not only necessary, it is critical to the mission at hand.

The remoteness of this assignment and the readiness posture we share demands a level of personal discipline that blends initiative, self-learning and goal setting with the timeless need for sacrifice and teamwork. These particular traits, traditionally expected of leaders, are absolutes for everyone assigned to this posting.

Why? Because by design, our task force organization and environment places each one of us in a leadership role and puts us in the spotlight of our units, our services and the international community.

In spite of the position we hold or the rank we wear, each

of us is in a leadership position. We are team leaders, shift leaders and directors. We are commanders, foremen and first sergeants. We lead combined security patrols, hold leadership positions in relief organizations, and lead church groups. We are leaders to the weak, the poor, and the less fortunate. We are, by virtue of the uniform we wear and the nation we represent, a leader to so many throughout Central America.

Consequently, we can and should expect that our actions, of which few go unnoticed, will have an effect on someone every day. People are routinely watching what we do and the expectation for us to perform is particularly high.

So what of this leadership business? What of this demand for selfless service ... this requirement for teamwork?

Well, the task force needs your personal involvement for it to be successful. We need your energy, your enthusiasm, your professional competence, and your commitment. The task force needs your leadership. So, evaluate where you are today as a leader and get on with making good things happen for those you lead.

Whatever arena you compete in, whether in the civilian sector or in military service, whether you have been called to lead a team, build a team, or play on a team -- get started now.

Enlarge your vision, multiply your possibilities, and magnify your strengths and achievements. Your leadership is needed. The men and women of JTF-Bravo are counting on you. So too, are your neighbors throughout Central America. Make a difference today.



Photo by Martin Chahin

Col. Michael Okita began commanding JTF-Bravo July 17.

The Iguana

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NCOs responsible for setting safety standard

By Tech. Sgt. Troy Wright
Fire Department

As noncommissioned officers, our job is harder than most. We must see that our soldiers and airmen stay alive and uninjured while preparing to accomplish our Joint Task Force-Bravo mission. We must train our new members to follow correct procedures, retrain those who don't, and enforce the use of proper procedures in every task.

"All NCOs must accept that it is our job to supervise our personnel to safely accomplish our mission. We have the responsibility of the stripes we wear."

Tech. Sgt. Troy Wright
Fire Department

In our daily mission activities we hone our job skills to a fine point. We take inexperienced personnel and train them into highly skilled team members. As we train, we teach correct procedures and relentlessly enforce their use.

We are constantly aware that such things as boredom, routine training and laziness can lead our mem-

bers to take shortcuts that could result in accidents.

Our business is to keep the troops alive and accomplish the mission. Only through positive action can we do this. Too many times we let safety training become a mundane subject taught with little enthusiasm. Why does this often happen? Because it's a requirement. We must look at reality. Accidents will continue as long as NCOs consider safety as one more required class to teach during mandatory training time. We need to take the time to convey to our personnel realistic hazards that are potentially harmful or fatal.

Everyone has experienced or known about an unfortunate situation at one time or another that may have resulted in loss of life or serious injury of another military member, friend or relative. As unfortunate as they may be, use them as a foundation for future prevention measures and teach our most valuable commodity, the JTF-Bravo member, the importance of safe, precautionary methods of performing our duties.

NCOs must address safety daily in a no-compromise manner, teach members to perform to standard, and check and correct any deficiencies found. All NCOs must accept that it is our job to supervise our personnel to safely accomplish our mission. We have the responsibility of the stripes we wear. If a soldier or airman sees an NCO who doesn't perform to standard, whose fault is it if that soldier or airman has an accident? The NCO stands responsible.

Safety is not a careless turn of events. It is hard work, dedication, performance to standard, and a sincere belief that accidents don't just happen — but are caused by things that are allowed to continue uncorrected. We NCOs must take charge because safety is NCO business.

Malaria Alert: Do you know how to keep yourself safe?

Air Force and Army servicemembers are both being deployed to Honduras without appropriate chemoprophylaxis. Approximately 30 (360 annually) soldiers in-process each month without malaria prophylaxis.

Malaria risk in Central American countries includes rural areas of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. JTF-Bravo is located in a rural area. Soldiers deployed to JTF-Bravo participate in various missions and medical readiness exercises (MEDRETES) that have them traveling to and performing duties in rural areas. Soldiers traveling on MWR trips to Copan, Roatan and Bay Islands are also at risk for malaria.

The following is the preventive treatments every servicemember deployed in support of JTF-Bravo must follow:

Recommended Regimen: Chloroquine — 300 mg. a week beginning two weeks before entering the country and continued weekly until four weeks after departing.

Or: a loading dose of one tablet every other day for three doses, starting six or less days before entering the risk area.

Alternate Regimen: Doxycycline — 100 mg. a day beginning two days before entering risk area; continue daily while in country and for 28 days after departing.

Terminal Prophylaxis (both regimens): Add Primaquine — 15 mg. a day for 14 days starting one to 14 days after departing from the foreign country. Do not take Primaquine if you are G6P deficient.

If you came to Central America without any chemoprophylaxis, report to the pharmacy during normal duty hours, 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. and 1 to 4 p.m., with a copy of your orders and the medication will be issued.

The use of chemoprophylaxis against malaria does not negate the need for other preventive medicine measures, to include use of insect repellents with DEET, permethrin military clothing and netting application, use of bed netting in mosquito-infested areas, and proper wearing of military uniform (sleeves down, pants tucked in-

side boots). These measures are the *only* way to prevent getting Dengue fever.

Some frequently asked questions about chloroquine:

• **What happens if I forget to take my pill for a week?**

If you forget to take your chloroquine, take it as soon as you notice. Continue to take one tablet every week on your scheduled day. If it has been a week or more since your last dose, take one tablet followed by a second tablet six hours later. Continue to take one tablet every week beginning seven days after the double dose.

• **What happens if I got bit by a mosquito before starting chloroquine?**

If suppressive therapy is not begun prior to exposure, double the initial loading dose (adults 600 milligrams) and give in two divided doses, six hours apart (This is equivalent to one 300 milligram base tablet taken initially then six hours later). Then continue to take one tablet every week beginning seven days after the double dose.

• **Once I get malaria, what is the treatment?**

Drug selection and dosage regimens vary. However, for an acute attack of malaria the initial dose of chloroquine phosphate is 600mg base (two tablets) followed by a second dose of 300 milligrams base (one tablet). On day two take one 300mg tablet. On day three take one 300mg tablet. Primaquine is administered concurrently to eradicate the exoerythrocytic parasites in a dosage of 15 milligrams daily for 14 days.

• **Are there any drug interactions with chloroquine, i.e. ..., heart medicine, blood pressure?**

Cimetidine may reduce the oral clearance rate and metabolism of chloroquine potentiating side effects associated with chloroquine. Possible serious side effects include hypotension, ECG changes, transient headache, retinal damage, visual disturbances and blurred vision.

(Compiled by Capt. Susan Hocker, MEDEL nurse, and Capt. Ricardo Nannini, MEDEL pharmacist.)

Jaguar

(Continued from Page 1)

“We’re a tool for the host nation and U.S. country team ... without us they don’t have the assets to do their job. With us, they have a reliable and responsive aircraft package to meet the objectives of the mission,” said Maj. James Johnston, JTF-Bravo Chief of Counter Drug Operations.

Task Force-Enabler assisted nearly 50 officers and agents from the Guatemalan Department of Anti-Narcotics and about 15 other U.S. agents and personnel from the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency and Joint Interagency Task Force-East.

This year’s operation included new types of missions and targets for the team, which added to the overall success for the operation, said Johnston. Some of the new missions included border interdiction checkpoints along Guatemala’s border with Mexico and searches for the wreckage of drug trafficking planes in remote regions of the countryside.

“We flew agents out to see several clandestine airfields in order to verify and survey aircraft wreckage and get identifiable markings in hopes of tracking down where the plane originated from,” he said.

Though no drugs were found at the border checkpoints or aircraft wreckage locations, the missions gathered important information, provided training and increased the cooperation between all forces involved.

During one mission, 1-228th Chinooks transported country team personnel to conduct simultaneous raids on a suspected drug trafficker’s business offices in Guatemala City and a countryside residence more than 1.5 hours away, said Johnston.

The scope of the raids in two separate locations caught the

suspect by surprise and netted valuable information that will assist local authorities in gaining an indictment against the trafficker, Johnston said.

For the 1-228th’s Bravo Company, Mayan Jaguar was a valuable opportunity to get training and experience for its flight engineers and pilots. However, unlike previous counter-drug operations, no UH-60 Black Hawks were involved due to maintenance for replacement parts. This year it was Chinooks from start to finish. “It was unfortunate that the Black Hawks were down, but it gave us a great chance to do everything from planning through mission complete ... the whole air mission,” said Capt. Brian Warfel, Bravo Company commander. “The Guatemalans were very happy to get air support, and we were happy to give it to them.”

Perhaps nobody understands the challenges and benefits of Operation Mayan Jaguar greater than Lt. Col. Fletcher Crews, the commander of Task Force-Enabler. The safe completion of difficult missions by multinational and interagency personnel is what made the operation successful, he said.

“Our portion of the mission was well planned and flawlessly executed, and we came home with everything that we left with. That makes it a success in my book.”



Photo by Capt. Chris Willis

Guatemalan Dept. of Anti-Narcotics, U.S. DEA agents and Guatemalan officials load into a 1-228th CH-47 during the Central Skies mission.

Budget

(Continued from Page 1)

site. However, we have set Aug. 15 as the cut-off date for this type of submittal. The reason being is that purchases have to be competed among competent vendors. This can take several days. There are always last minute requirements, and we are here to support, but if you wait until after Aug. 15 to submit a purchase request, there is a very real possibility we can not fill your requirement,” Hunter said.

However, before submitting the requirement, the funds office must approve funding on a case-by-case basis.

“Get me the requirement on a DA Form 3953 and provide funding. The last part is the most critical and must be coordinated with the J8. If you don’t have the funding, you don’t have a requirement,” Hunter said.

For the funding, Maj. Kirby Spain of the budget office is the person with control of the purse strings. His job is to ensure money goes to those who need it most and ensures that the task force doesn’t overspend their allocations. It is a tremendous job considering each section has their own priorities and wants a piece of an ever-shrinking pie.

Regarding the budget projections, fiscal year ‘02 requirements for service contracts have been pretty well captured according to Hunter. Contracting is now working with required activities to build the statements of work, build and issue solicitations for bid, respond to contractor inquiries and negotiate and award contracts, which is an ongoing process that should take contracting up through the end of the fiscal year to complete.

For potential end-of-year funds, the contracting office will be spending the command’s funds right up to midnight Sept. 30. The key is to actually have the funding approved by the J8. Customer prepares the PR&C, gets funding approved with J8, and then drops it in the contracting office for action.

For more information contact your budget person, the task force budget office or base contracting.

Sec. of Army proposes more base closures

WASHINGTON (Army News Service) — A Department of Defense legislative proposal for another round of military base closings will soon be forwarded to Congress and has the Army leadership's full backing, Secretary of the Army Thomas E. White said Aug. 1.

Speaking to more than 300 Army officers, DoD officials and defense contractors at a meeting of the Association of the United States Army's Institute of Land Warfare, White talked about what he believes is the current state of the Army and where it is heading in the future.

"We (Department of Defense) will send to the Hill Friday a Most Efficient Facilities bill — current excess is at least 20 percent," White said. "This will be popular with nobody. We would rather be doing other things, but the battle must be fought."

All the service secretaries agree base closures and consolidations are necessary given their current force structures and the need to use the savings such an action would produce elsewhere, White said.

Another thing the service secretaries agree on, White said, is that each must be allowed to align force structure and resources to support national strategy. Too often in the past decade, the force structure and resources haven't been there — causing the Army to rely heavily on the Reserve and National Guard, take money from other accounts to pay for deployments and missions, and operate at a burdensome high operational tempo, the Army secretary continued.

"One third of the Army is currently either deployed or stationed (overseas)," he said. "Whatever forces the (Quadrennial Defense Review) determines, we must align strategy, force structure and resources for reasonable OPTEMPO."

One fiscal quandary robbing Peter to pay Paul has caused is a backlog of approximately \$18 billion in base housing maintenance — an issue that has adversely affected soldiers' and their families' quality of life, White explained. His answer — seek more private industry partners to renovate existing housing, build new quarters and manage all on-post housing in return for soldiers' monthly quarters allowance.

Within the past two years, the Army has already entered into contracts with industry to upgrade, expand and manage base housing at Fort Carson, Colo.; Fort Hood, Texas; Fort Lewis, Wash.; and Fort Meade, Md.

Next year's Army budget is good news, White said. It goes a long way to help close the pay gap between the military and the private sector, and funds a TRICARE For Life initiative. The secretary challenged attending defense contractors to ensure that the technology will be there when needed.

"War is ultimately about the control of land," White said. "We cannot expect technology to be the silver bullet that answers all the questions, but it must be part of the answer."

While the U.S. Army is the most dominant one in the world, White said, it is only the ninth largest and therefore everyone in the Army must support its Transformation efforts to maintain its qualitative edge. With 435,000 troops, the Army is the smallest it has been since 1940, he said.

White promised he and Army Chief of Staff Gen. Eric K. Shinseki would act quickly on the perception of junior officers that they are micromanaged by their seniors. That perception was one of several grievances found by the Army Leader and Training Development Panel survey of 13,000 officers and family members conducted last year. The results of the survey were released in May.

(By Joe Burlas, ARNEWS)

SPIES training prepares SAR team

By Spc. Sarah Maxwell
Iguana Editor

Members of the voluntary Soto Cano Search and Rescue team have to be prepared for one of the toughest jobs anyone can have -- being the first on the scene of a downed aircraft.

Here in Honduras where an ambulance could be hours from the crash, if there is one at all, the SAR team will be the best chance of survival for injured Americans. It would be the EMT, fire department and police all in eight-man teams brought in by helicopters onto the scene.

For some the intense physical and mental training members face on the weekly team exercises is exactly the kind of challenge they like.

Aug. 2 was no exception. SAR team members, and some who just wanted the experience, mastered the skills of special patrol insertion/extraction system (SPIES).

Team members learned how to put themselves into a full body harness and help their buddies attach themselves to a rope hanging from a 1st Battalion, 228th Aviation Regiment UH-60 Black Hawk. They were then taken up for a ride over the far side of base and gracefully brought back down to the ground.

SPIES is used in an area where the terrain is too harsh to land a helicopter, like on a mountainside or in dense forest -- both of which Honduras has plenty of, said Sgt. Freddie J. Davis Jr., three-month SAR team member.

"We usually would rappel down, but because you can't rappel up a rope, we use SPIES to get out. If there are casualties, we use a jungle penetration, which is kind of like a chair, or we'll use a litter, and they're hoisted out," he added.

According to Sgt. Bill Howe, a rappel master who helped inspect the equipment for safety, this was the time when the team's knowledge was tested. Unlike the first time the team did SPIES, members had to re-

ly on themselves to get them through training.

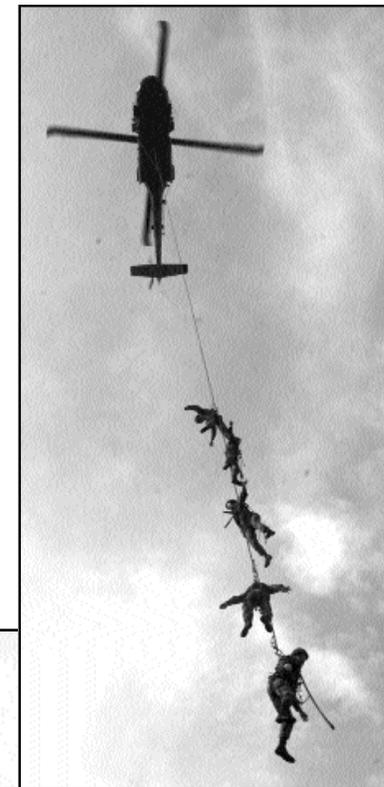
"In the field we (rappel masters) are not going to be there on the ground. The (servicemembers) will be required to hook themselves up and inspect each other's harnesses," he said.

Staff Sgt. Billy Bohannon, two-month-old SAR team member, not only enjoyed the adrenaline rush he got from the training, but he also feels like it completely prepared him to conquer a real-world team mission using SPIES.

"It was an unbelievable experience. It was an extreme rush. I liked it from beginning to end," said Bohannon.

"Because there's so many things that can go wrong, you have to work together as a team to make all those things go right."

"Once you get up in the air, you feel like the mission is getting accomplished and everything's going to be ok," he added. "I have no doubt that we can do this mission."



Left: Five SAR team members hang from a UH-60 Black Hawk while holding their arms out to keep from spinning during SPIES training Aug. 2. As many as 10 team members can be on the rope at once. **Below:** Team members return to the ground after being taken on a five-minute ride.



Stamens, pistils, petals; flowery phrases enroot budding pride, leaves garden flourishing with flora

By Master Sgt. Jeff Bohn
Public Affairs

"I think I shall never see, a poem as lovely as a tree ..." is an excerpt of Joyce Kilmer poetry from nearly 90 years ago that most likely wasn't created while looking at Honduran palm, banana or hibiscus trees, but certainly spoke of the aesthetic pleasure given by trees and plants in general.

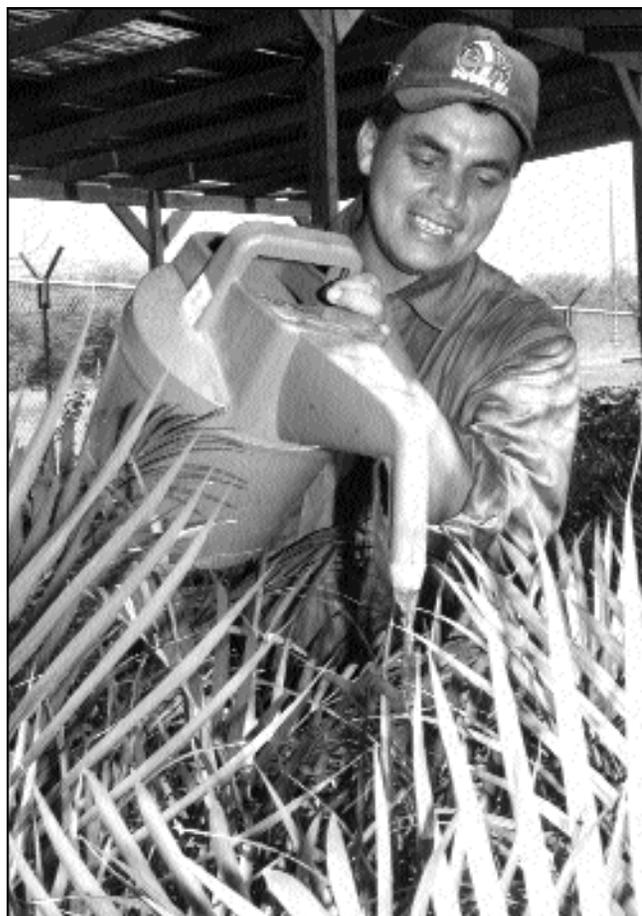
During the summer heat, the absence of trees and vegetation can not only make for scarce shade, but also not be very pleasing to the eye. There is an opportunity on the base to spruce up your area, indoors or outdoors, and bring some of the lush tropical scenery to your local hooch or office area at minimal expense.

DynCorp has a nursery nestled in the back of the Sierra area that offers free shrubs, flowers and trees to military folks looking to beautify and accentuate their environment. From budding young roses to palm fronds, there are plants to suite most situations.

The nursery has been available for more than a decade, with its present location being in service for the past three years according to Joe Adams, who is the DynCorp manager in charge of the nursery.

The goals of gardening are many. Perhaps the goal is to create a relaxing office environment by adding some color and dimension, or maybe giving some curb appeal to the hooch. It may just be the satisfaction of spending time outdoors getting one's hands dirty and burning some stress. Air Force Lt. Col. Mike Ryckley, AFFOR's director of operations, is one such servicemember who took advantage of the opportunity and who shared his thoughts on what makes his green thumb an enjoyable hobby.

"It's extremely satisfying to start with a bare patch of gravel and dirt, after a few hours of labor, ending up



Miguel Medina of DynCorp tends to his garden as the caretaker of the base nursery in the Sierra area.



Photos by Master Sgt. Jeff Bohn

Sprucing up a hooch with botanical specimens lends a tropical look, increases shade and shows

pride of ownership as displayed by Air Force Lt. Col. Mike Ryckley's home in the November area.

with something that is esthetically pleasing to the eye. It's also mentally relaxing and good exercise. Trust me, swinging a pix-axe to break through compacted gravel and dirt is a good work out! Of course, there are some areas having mostly clay that are not as bad and are easier to plant in," Ryckley said.

Even with the availability of free plants, the nursery hasn't been overrun by customers seeking to beautify their hooches.

"Before, at the old location in the TMP yard we were averaging 15 to 20 customers each week, but because of the new location is off the main road in the back of DynCorp, our average has dropped to 6 to 10 customers weekly," Adams said.

On the other hand, Ryckley has made multiple trips to the nursery over the past few months and has massed more than 25 plants. He has even taken plant cuttings and rooted them from scratch, which is a practice many nurseries do to propagate additional plants. His favorite is a low-growing sedum, which is a ground cover plant that produces clusters of flowers each year.

Adams said they have 25 to 30 different types of plants and flowers. They are attuned to the fact that not everyone wants high maintenance plants, so they keep the selection diverse with low-maintenance greenery. Two of the most popular plants are Mala Madre and Camarones. Among the dozens in stock, they have: Rosas, Ala de Angel, Claveinas, Santa Marta, Hortencia.

Ryckley's efforts have turned his hooch into a floral spectacle. While it may take a season or two for the plants to fill in, his efforts will be a legacy for the next generation of Soto Cano servicemembers.

"The area around the hooch was pretty bland looking—just a bunch of gravel and some grass. I've owned several houses and always enjoyed doing the landscaping. I figured whatever I did would only improve things," Ryckley said.

There are many reasons as to why folks should grow plants in their areas. Ryckley said personal satisfaction and providing an environment for butterflies and hummingbirds were tops on his list of botanical reasons. For the novice gardener, there is only one way to find out if he or she has what it takes and that is to try. Obviously the young plants need some nurturing, but after they are established and the rainy season hits, they are pretty much self-sustaining.

For those who would prefer indoor horticulture in their office or home, container growing is popular and available. With pots from the base exchange and a little effort, servicemembers can bring the greenery indoors with minimal effort.

"For the ones in the pots, just add water and a little [fertilizer] now and then. For the ones around the hooch, I just make sure the weeds and grass are kept away," Ryckley advised for keeping plants happy and healthy. He also said a large part of the gardening success goes to the self-help store on base. They stocked all the gardening tools he needed to turn the ground and work the earth into something that plants would find hospitable.

For folks interested in starting their own oasis, Adams explained the parameters for getting plants.

"There are no set rules or limits, any JTF-Bravo servicemember is welcome. We only ask that you take no more than you will plant and care for. When a customer plants a garden he is expected to care for it. We do not have the manpower available to tend each individual garden. We do not furnish pots. If a customer brings their own, our nurseryman will pot the plant for them," Adams said.

Operating hours are 7:15 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. The primary operator is Miguel Medina. He has run the nursery for the past three years and is very knowledgeable and enjoys his work. If anyone is having problems with their plants he is more than willing to help or give advice, Adams said.

Servicemembers take advantage of MWR program

By Robin Gonzales
MWR

Curtis Govan, 1st Battalion, 228th Aviation Regiment communications specialist, left Soto Cano after one year and took far more with him than just memories and a household shipment. He took back furniture he made at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Wood Shop.

Six months ago Govan decided he would accept a challenge: What he could make with MWR's offer of \$300 worth of free wood? Never having worked with wood did not stop him. He said, "If they can do it, I can do it. I just need someone to guide and help me." And that is just what he did. He found what he wanted to make in a furniture catalogue, put his drawing skills to work designing the project, and made a king sized bed frame (he started "small").

Govan said it took over a month to make the head and footboards and side

rails, and there were quite a few problems along the way. Some of his calculations were off and some of the types and sizes of wood were not quite right, forcing him to start certain sections over again.

There were several times he said he almost gave up. However, every time he got discouraged, Govan said the MWR Wood Shop attendants would encourage him and provide invaluable advice and assistance. The end result was a bed he was extremely proud of having made. Now Govan was truly bitten by the furniture making "bug." He proceeded to make a queen sized bed and entertainment cabinet for a 27-inch television.

These two projects took about two months to make as he worked on them simultaneously, but they went a lot more smoothly thanks to the lessons learned making the king-sized bed.

As with the first project, he used exclusively Honduran mahogany and finished the pieces with a combination of burgundy and cherry stain.

He added that he chose Honduran mahogany over cedar and pine because it was not only beautiful wood, but he could probably not afford to buy Honduran mahogany made furniture when he returned to the states.

Honduran mahogany, while beautiful, is not a lightweight wood and when asked if the three pieces would meet his shipping allowance, Govan said luckily he was not shipping much else back to Fort Gordon, Ga. He indicated the king and queen sized beds and the entertainment center would not exceed his authorized shipping allowance and added that he wished he had started doing wood projects earlier in his tour — he still had some unused weight allowance.

Govan is retiring from the Army this December and plans on using his newly learned wood working skills to benefit his congregation's needs when he becomes an ordained minister. He said he challenges everyone on this base to get involved in MWR activities for the challenge.

"They'd be surprised at their abilities if they really try," Govan added. He knew what he was talking about. Six months ago he did not know the difference between a planer and a router. Today he is the proud owner of custom furniture made at the MWR Wood Shop.

Sgt. 1st Class Lottie Lewis, ARFOR supply, returned to Fort Bliss, Texas, after taking advantage of everything MWR had to offer while serving her six months here. She left with custom-made Honduran mahogany furniture and four pieces of wicker furniture along with memories of MWR trips and much more.

When Lewis arrived six months ago, one of the first things she did was start her wicker furniture projects at the MWR Wicker and Hammock Shop. She even had her husband and her children involved in wicker making when they came to visit her last month.

In addition to a wicker love seat, rocking chairs and bookshelf, she had furniture made from Honduran ma-



Lewis used her free mahogany wood from MWR to have this dresser made at a local wood shop.



Photos by 1st Lt. Richard Komurek

Sgt. 1st Class Lottie Lewis relaxes in one of her wicker rocking chairs she made at MWR's Wicker Shop during her six-month tour on Soto Cano.

hogany. Lewis had a sleigh bed and carved chest of drawers custom made off base and used a portion of her MWR allocation to purchase Honduran mahogany for these pieces.

When the projects were completed, the wood shop attendants assisted her in taking the pieces apart for shipping and labeled them so that her husband could put them back together.

"I encourage everyone, especially the young soldiers, to get involved in making wood, wicker and hammock crafts through MWR. It is a good way to get starter furniture, particularly the wicker items, and especially for young soldiers just starting out," said Lewis as she watched her custom made furniture being packed up.

She added, "By starting projects as soon as you arrive on base allows you time to not only develop your skills but to make a variety of projects for no cost through MWR."

MWR Schedule

Certification in Utila
Aug. 17 to 20, 24-27, 31 to Sept. 3

Copan Ruins
Aug. 17 to 19, 31 to Sept. 2

La Ceiba Beach
Aug. 31 to Sept. 2

Roatan Islands
Aug. 17 to 20, 24 to 27, 31 to Sept. 3

San Pedro Sula
Aug. 17 to 19, 31 to Sept. 2

Valley of Angels
Aug. 11, 19, 25

Guanaja Islands
Aug. 25 to 27

Cigar Factory Trip
Aug. 17

Historical Comayagua
Aug. 11

Villa Elena Golf Course
Aug. 11, 12, 18, 19, 25, 26

Lake Yojoa
Aug. 11, 12, 18, 19, 25, 26

Siguatopeque Shopping
Aug. 18

Villas Telamar
Aug. 17 to 19, 31 to Sept. 2

Horseback Riding
Aug. 11, 18, 25

Bowling in Tegucigalpa
Aug. 11, 25

Dive Classes on Base
Aug. 10 to 12

BRIEFS

Immunizations

MEDEL now has vaccinations available. The following are U.S. Army FORSCOM immunization requirements for Central America:

Hepatitis A -- two shot series

Hepatitis B -- all medical personnel and those at high risk for contact with blood and body fluids, three-shot series

Influenza -- current annual vaccine

Measles -- should have been given on entrance into the military

Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV) -- should have been given on entrance into the military

Tetanus-Diphtheria -- one dose every 10 years

Typhoid Vaccine -- varies depending upon route given

Yellow Fever Vaccine -- one dose every 10 years

If you review your record and find you need immunizations, you may come to EMT during sick-call hours 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. Monday through Friday. You should bring your yellow shot record as well as your medical record because some immunizations may have been documented in one place and not another.

Travel Warning

The American Embassy in Tegucigalpa recommends that U.S. personnel traveling for official travel or recreational purposes avoid booking flights on Atlantic Airlines. It is a new commuter airline that has not established a safety record and the ownership of the company is unclear.

College Classes

Registration at UMUC has started for the following three-semester hour classes at the Soto Cano Education Center, open from 7:30 to 11:30 a.m. and from noon to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Please see Sandra Guillen, education technician for government-paid 75 percent tuition assistance with the remaining 25 percent paid by with cash or credit unless student uses the GI Bill/VEAP. Classes are from Aug. 20 to Oct. 11 from 6 to 9 p.m.:

BMGT 360 Human resource management Tuesday and Thursday

ENGL 101 English introduction to writing Monday and Wednesday

MGT 160 Principles of supervision Monday and Wednesday

MATH 101 Concepts of modern algebra Tuesday and Thursday

Tennis Tournament

Chief Master Sgt. Allen Nicksich, AFFOR senior enlisted advisor, lunges at the tennis ball while playing in the Soto Cano Tennis Open held July 27 to 29. Nicksich came in third place. Second place was won by Spc. Josue Ponce, intelligence, and first place was captured by Chazz Pope, Lockheed Martin. Pope also officiated the event.

Pope said it turned out to be a very successful three-day tournament and MWR plans on having doing it more often. He said he wanted to thank all the players who came out to the tournament and the Lizard Lounge and MWR for their support.

"I feel we have a good tennis community here on Soto Cano, and I see it growing in the near future. We are process of setting up a tennis ladder for all levels of play plus coordinating tournaments with players in Siguatepeque and at the Villa Elena Country Club in Tegucigalpa. So, to all the folks out there, get out your racquet and play tennis. Don't have a racquet? Stop by the Recreation Center and check one out for free."



Photo by 1st Lt. Richard Komurek

Orphans

(Continued from Page 1)

organizations in the area that help run and support the orphanages, the orphans in Honduras are not the same as they are in the United States. In the states, most children are in the institution because their family is deceased. But, in Honduras when a family is too poor to give a child the basic necessities of life, the child most likely will end up in an orphanage where he will at least have food to eat and a roof over his head. While the orphanage may be better than what their family can provide, but it is still far from the living standards the average American child grows up with.

That's where charity like the support provided by the units helps out.

2nd Lt. Joseph Ayoub, ARFOR, has been involved with helping orphans for about a year in his unit and also in the Honduran Charity Organization. He said his unit supports their orphanage of 130 children by hosting a Latino Dance Night at the Rally Point on base. They usually raise about \$100 a month from the dance. It is then used to buy basic household supplies for the orphanage — things like brooms and mops, which they wouldn't be able to afford otherwise.

ARFOR supplies a special need by taking water buffalos filled with good drinking water three times a week to the rural orphanage. They also visit the orphans once a month and invite them on base once a quarter where they enjoy a filling lunch and play games all day.

As with the other organizations on base that sponsor orphans, former ARFOR members who returned to the states send packages of clothing and toys to the children. Some have even enlisted churches and charity organizations to help. ARFOR accepts about five packages a month.

The Medical Element here on Soto Cano also does its fair share with the orphans they support -- more than 150 children in two orphanages. They raise the money for the orphans by paying two or three dollars to wear their civilian clothes on Fridays. A substantial amount of the \$70 to \$80 they raise a week goes toward the kids. The unit also receives about 10 boxes of clothing and toys a week donated from people in the United States.

1st Lt. Maria Ortiz, MEDEL, has been in charge of her units orphanage visits since May. She said the benefits from helping them out can be easily seen. When the children see the van from Soto Cano pull up, they're so happy that they try to jump into the van before anyone can get out.

"You can just see it on the faces of those kids," she said. "It's not the items we give them; it's just the fact that we can be there with them is what makes them happy. Maybe for an hour or hour and a half we can be a part of their family."

She said visiting the orphans can also help people deal with the fact that they had to leave their own children or loved one in the states.

"Maybe they can't hug their kids here, but they can hug these kids," she said.

Yet for some people, the way the children have to live, sometimes bunking with 10 to 15 in a room, sleeping on small mattresses where a fitted sheet is a luxury, is too much to bear.

"Some people can't go to the orphanage more than once or twice," said Ortiz. "It's just too painful for them."

But, for most people it motivates them to get involved with something that they know will make a difference in the kids' lives.

"People will visit the orphanages and they'll see what kind of conditions the kids are living in. They'll almost always end up helping out," said Monaghan. That is evident in the more than 200 packages a week the chapel receives for the orphanages, from people in the states.

The 1st Battalion, 228th Aviation Regiment has one of the highest aviation operational tempos in the Army, and members still find the time to visit their units orphanage about once every other month.

"We buy food from the dining facility and take it out there with us," said Sgt. Tyrone Hardy, 1-228th, who's in charge of the orphanage visits. They also play sports and other games with the kids.

AFFOR also contributes tremendously to two orphanages, helping more than 150 children with their twice-a-month visits and thousands of dollars of donated goods going to the orphanage a month. According to Air Force Capt. Celiann Gonzalez, the person in charge of the visits, they serve lunch and spend time with the younger kids and play sports and cook tortillas with the older kids.

Ortiz said her hope is that the people who have visited these orphanages and know what it is like for the children here will take that knowledge with them when they go back to the United States because a little something from the states can go such a long way here. She said she just wants to see them have a better quality of life.

To the servicemembers who haven't had the chance to visit an orphanage yet, Ortiz suggested not letting this opportunity to slip by.

"I really believe a visit to an orphanage will give you a much better perspective on your life."