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Gen. Hill addresses troops, guests during assumption ceremony

by Tech. Sgt. Jose Ruiz,
Southern Star Editor

MIAMI — U.S. Army Gen. James T. Hill assumed command of the U.S. Southern Command here Tuesday in a ceremony presided over by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Richard Myers.

Gen. Myers thanked Army Gen. Gary Speer for serving as the command's interim commander for the last 10

months.

Gen. Speer will depart USSOUTHCOM to assume the duties of the deputy chief of staff for operations, Headquarters, U.S. Army Europe in Heidelberg, Germany.

Gen. Hill comes to USSOUTHCOM from Fort Lewis, Washington, where he served as com-

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mander of I Corps.

As commander of USSOUTHCOM, the area of responsibility under Hill's command spans 15.6 million square miles and includes 32 nations from Central America, South America and the Caribbean.

During the ceremony, Hill spoke of the importance of USSOUTHCOM's continued involvement in the region to USSOUTHCOM personnel, community leaders and civilian and military dignitaries from Latin America and the Caribbean. He called the region an area "rich with tradition and promise."

"SOUTHCOM and American military involvement have played a large, important role in helping build democracy in Latin America and the



Photo by Sgt. Lucy Pabon

Hill speaks to command personnel, community leaders and regional dignitaries during the ceremony.

Caribbean," he said. "We must and will continue to provide meaningful support, mentorship and leadership to our allies and neighbors in order

to sustain their accomplishments."

Gen. Myers called Hill "the perfect choice to lead U.S. Southern Command," adding that he brings "invaluable" military experience to his new role as Combatant Commander.

"He's been in extended combat twice, including time as an infantry company commander with the 101st Airborne in Vietnam, and later with the Screamin' Eagles as a brigade commander in Desert Storm," Myers said. "He is also no stranger to joint combined operations, having served in the Pentagon and with a multinational force in Haiti."

Gen. Myers challenged Hill and the members of USSOUTHCOM to continue to build on the common values of freedom, economic opportunity, human rights and democracy

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the U.S. shares with its hemispheric partners and to reinforce the relationships the command has forged in the region during the past year.

Gen. Myers also commended the command for its contribution to the ongoing war on terrorism.

“This command continues to be an all-star team,” he said. “In the war on terrorism, we need flexibility, fresh ideas and men and women who look forward, not backward for solutions. I think Southern Command has reflected this as much as any command has in our war on terrorism. You have set an example that was crucial to our countries early successes.”

Addressing members of the lo-

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Photos by Tech. Sgt. Ray Sarracino

Marine Master Gunnery Sgt. Francisco Tavares leads a formation in rendering a salute during the assumption of command ceremony here Tuesday.

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cal community, Hill expressed his gratitude for their support of USSOUTHCOM.

“Miami is the de facto capitol of the Caribbean and Latin America,” he said of the host city. “You have generously opened your arms and institutions to the men, women and families of Southern Command. I thank you for what you have already done and look forward to working with you in the future in the continuing spirit of cooperation that is the cornerstone of our relationship.”

An El Paso, Texas native, Hill was commissioned in 1968 following his graduation from Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas.

He holds a master’s degree in personnel management from Central Michigan University and is a graduate of the Command and Gen-



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Ray Sarracino

Gen. Richard Myers, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, congratulates Hill and his wife, Toni, following the assumption of command ceremony.

eral Staff College and the National War College.

Hill’s decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal, Silver Star with two oak leaf clusters, Defense Superior Service Medal with oak leaf cluster, Legion of Merit with

three oak leaf clusters, Bronze Star with valor device and two oak leaf clusters, Purple Heart with oak leaf cluster, Meritorious Service Medal with three oak leaf clusters and Army Commendation Medal with valor device and five oak leaf clusters.

Berndt takes charge of MARFORSOUTH

NORFOLK, VA. – Lt. Gen. Martin Berndt took command of U.S. Marine Corps Forces, South (MARFORSOUTH) from Lt. Gen. Raymond Ayres Jr. Aug. 15 in a change of command ceremony in Norfolk, Va.

Ayres will retire from the Marine Corps after 36 years of service.

Berndt, who just completed an assignment as the commanding general of II Marine Expeditionary Force based at Camp Lejeune, N.C., hails from Oreland, Pa., and was commissioned a second lieutenant upon graduating from West Chester University in 1969.

Berndt's career highlights include service as rifle platoon commander and company executive officer with the 7th and 1st Marines in Vietnam. He has commanded 3rd

Battalion, 4th Marines, and 1st Battalion, 6th Marines, as well as the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit.

In 1990, Berndt moved to Stuttgart, Germany, where he served as a Middle East/Africa planner, as the U.S. Military Liaison to the West Africa Peacekeeping Force in Liberia, and as the Assistant Chief of Staff of Headquarters, U.S. European Command.

He has also served as a political-military planner with the Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff where he was responsible for development of the U.S. military commitment to NATO.

Berndt served as the Deputy Commander, Marine Corps Forces, Atlantic between 1995 and 1997.

Subsequently, he served as the Director Joint Training at U.S. Atlantic Command and as the Com-

mander of the Joint Warfighting Center. *(Courtesy of U.S. Marine Corps Forces, South)*



Lt. Gen. Martin Berndt receives the unit colors during the ceremony.

Marines join friendly forces for training

by Marine Cpl. Paula Fitzgerald

PUERTO ROSARIO, Paraguay — A group of 14 Marines and one sailor from Camp Lejeune, N.C., shared knowledge and supplies with Paraguayan and Bolivian forces during the riverine phase of UNITAS 43-02 July 13-28

The two-week exercise is an annual event that allows United States forces to exchange ideas and learn about their foreign counterparts. One of the primary missions was to educate the forces about small-boat and small-arms tactics, field medicine and staff planning.

“We really appreciate what the United States gives to us,” said Paraguayan Navy Lt. Navio

Filemón Duarte, second in command of the Paraguayan ship Itaipu. “When they send people here to teach us about tactics, we can take that knowledge back to our units and share it with others.”

The U.S. sends a group of Marines to the country to perform live-fire exercises with the Paraguayan and Bolivian riverine forces each year.

Some of the major topics U.S. Marines stressed during this deployment included patrolling and navigation tactics on water and land, according to Cpl. Gilbert J. Hernandez, a machine-gunner and coxswain from Small Craft Company, Headquarters Battalion, 2nd Marine Division.

The U.S. Marines also gave classes about marksmanship, maps and charts.



Photo by Cpl. Paula Fitzgerald

National Guard soldiers reflect on USSOUTHCOM tour of duty

by Tech. Sgt. Jose Ruiz, USAF
Southern Star Editor

If you're stationed at the U.S. Southern Command, chances are you've become acquainted with the 25-member security team from the Puerto Rico National Guard, 1st Battalion, 65th Infantry over the past few months.

The infantry soldiers, based out of Cayey, Puerto Rico, are not hard to find. They've been a presence in the command since April, manning the headquarters' multiple entry control points around the clock checking badges, inspecting packages and vehicles and keeping an eye out for signs of trouble.

"Our mission is augmenting the Department of Defense Police to pro-

vide security to USSOUTHCOM and its satellite facilities," said 1st Lt. Melvin Arreaga, commander of the forward deployed unit. "We're an infantry unit, but here, we have some of the same duties as a military police unit."

They are duties his soldiers are well prepared to carry out, according to Arreaga, who added the unit was qualified to perform MP duties in the months preceding their April deployment to the command.

Some of the soldiers have embraced the new mission they've been called on to do.

"It's quite different than being in the field, but as a military member you tend to adjust quickly to change." said Sgt. Noel Zayas, one



(Photo by Sgt. Randy Quintana)

Spc. Albert Burgos prepares to use a mirror to inspect the underside of a vehicle at one of the headquarters' entry control points.

of the unit's team leaders. "I see the security duties as just another part of my military career. I like it so far."

The deployment is the first for most of the soldiers, who typically fill man-days during monthly and annual

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drills.

“Some of them are city and state policemen, some own their own businesses,” Arreaga said. “We also have government employees, private industry employees, a teacher and even a few that are unemployed.”

Arreaga pointed out that the soldiers adjusted quickly to their new mission and workplace thanks in part to the pre-deployment support they received from the USSOUTHCOM Reserve Affairs Office and the U.S. Army Southern Command.

He added that most soldiers see the deployment experience as a positive one, partly because of its location.

“We’re grateful to have this mission,” he said. “Soldiers in Cuba, though closer to home, don’t have the same working and living conditions that we do, and what is available to them in terms of facilities and recreation is limited. Here, we can visit Orlando, Tampa, the Everglades and countless other attractions around us, so it feels more like a regular job than a deployment.”

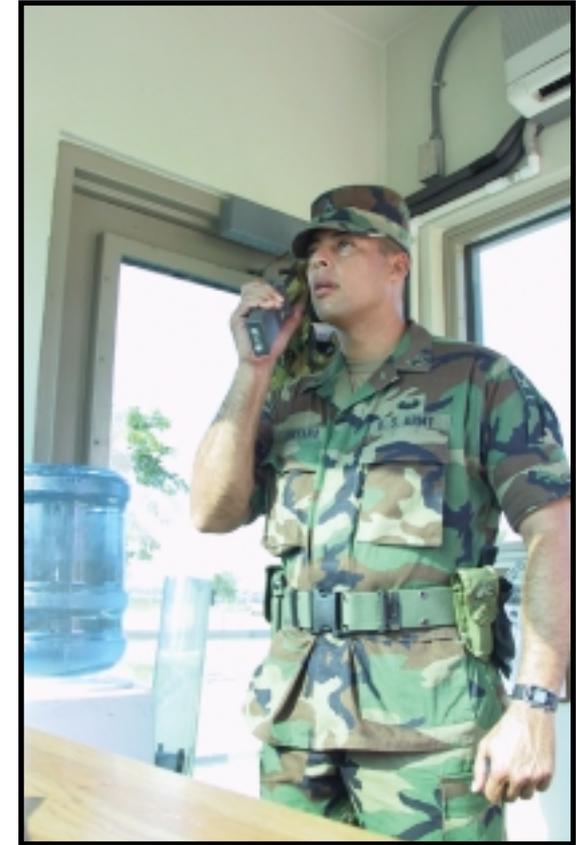
Arreaga also cited military pay as another reason the soldiers have

welcomed the deployment.

“For the soldiers who were unemployed when we deployed, this has given them a chance to come out of their financial slump,” he said. “Also, many of the ones who were employed back home are actually earning more pay than they earned in their civilian jobs. In some cases up to three times more.”

Because they mostly work and live together, the deployment has given the soldiers a chance to get better acquainted with each other.

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(Courtesy photo)

Sgt. Randy Quintana communicates with the Department of Defense Police desk sergeant during a security shift at Gate 6.



(Photo by Sgt. Randy Quintana)

Col. Luis Nazario, second from left, 165th Infantry Battalion commander, takes time off from a local visit to join soldiers from his unit for a friendly game of dominoes.

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“We try to get together socially as much as possible,” Arreaga said. “When we do, we play basketball

or dominoes and cook meals. We also go on recreational trips and to restaurants together.”

Spc. James Rivera said he has made a few new friends within the unit dur-

ing the deployment.

“Before coming here, I didn’t know many of them at all,” he explained. “But now, I’ve gotten a chance to know them and, so far, we’ve gotten along pretty well.”

Rivera and his fellow soldiers are scheduled to continue providing security for USSOUTHCOM through April 2003, and despite being away from home and family, Rivera said he’s looking forward to his remaining time at USSOUTHCOM.

“To this point, it has been a positive experience,” he said. “I’d like to be able to stay the whole year. If something pops up after that, I’d welcome that too.”

Arreaga said much of

his soldiers’ positive outlook on the deployment has to do with the reception they’ve received from their USSOUTHCOM hosts, and he expressed gratitude to those who have made the deployment experience both possible and pleasant.

“We’d like to thank the USSOUTHCOM leadership for placing their trust in the soldiers of the Puerto Rico National Guard, especially Col. James Willey, the garrison commander,” he said, speaking on behalf of the men in his unit. “We’d also like to thank USSOUTHCOM’s military and civilian personnel for their welcoming response to our presence. It has helped make our job easier every day.”

GUARDING GTMO

U.S. Marine Corps security force company stays 'on line' to ensure base is safe

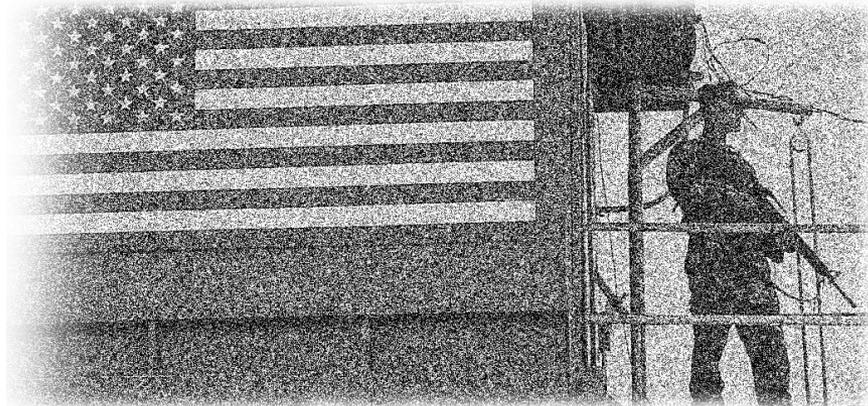
by Spc. Chris Pisano
Joint Task Force 160

NAVAL STATION
GUANTANAMO BAY, Cuba — All that separates Naval Station Guantanamo Bay from communist Cuba and the possibility of terrorist attacks is a fence. And along that 17.4-mile fence line, their professionalism and vigilance keep GTMO safe from harm. Guarding the border between GTMO and Cuba are the Marine reservists from Texas serving in Marine Corps Security Force Com-

pany, DET A, Bravo Company 123.

And make no mistake; these reservists have a full-time job.

“Basically, we protect the fence line and do reconnaissance 24 hours a day, seven days a week,” said Sgt. Jose Diaz, sergeant of the guard with MCSF Co. “We accomplish our mission through the guards keeping watch in the many Marine Observation Points along the fence line and also through the foot and mounted patrols, which are conducted 24 hours a day.”



Between the guards in the MOPs and the Marines on constant patrol, there is very little that they miss, according to Diaz. But the MOPs, which are the guard towers you can see peppered across the northern GTMO horizon, are what really allow the Marines to carry out their mission.

“In the MOPs, they observe just about anything and everything the Cubans do,” said Diaz. “And the Cu-

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bans on the other side do the same to us. I don't blame them. We look at them, so why can't they look at us? But I don't think they do as good a job as we do. We're more disciplined. I have faith in those Marines in the MOPs and out on patrol. They're pretty observant and really detailed as to what's going on."

Attention to detail is everything within the MOP, for the security of the entire base could be compromised if a vigilant eye is not kept on the border below.

"I observe everything, right down to a twitch of a finger. If I fail in my job,



Photos by Spc. Chris Pisano

Marine Cpl. Mark Palos leads a foot patrol along the northeast gate entrance.

everyone on the base might die because there will be no warning," said Lance Cpl. Ramirez Gomez. "In this work, you have to stay focused. If the Cubans try anything on my MOP, they'll have to answer to my

M-16. I'm here to protect the base and to serve the Marine Corps and my country."

And given the current global threat of terrorism since Sept. 11 and the fact that 598 detainees are be-

ing held right here in GTMO, watching out for troublesome Cubans is now only one potential threat to look out for.

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“Since Sept. 11, the importance of our mission has increased ten-fold,” said Cpl. Mark Palos. “Not only do we have to watch the Cubans but also look out for possible terrorist attacks. There’s a real possibility that terrorists can come through that fence. People have to realize that there is a communist country on the other side, and we have no say on what goes on over there. If they want to let terrorists into their country, they can. We’re the only thing between them and the base.”

With all the attention placed on the war on terror and the detainees, the long-standing mission of these Marines might be somewhat overshadowed, but it is a mission that needs no out-

side attention to get done.

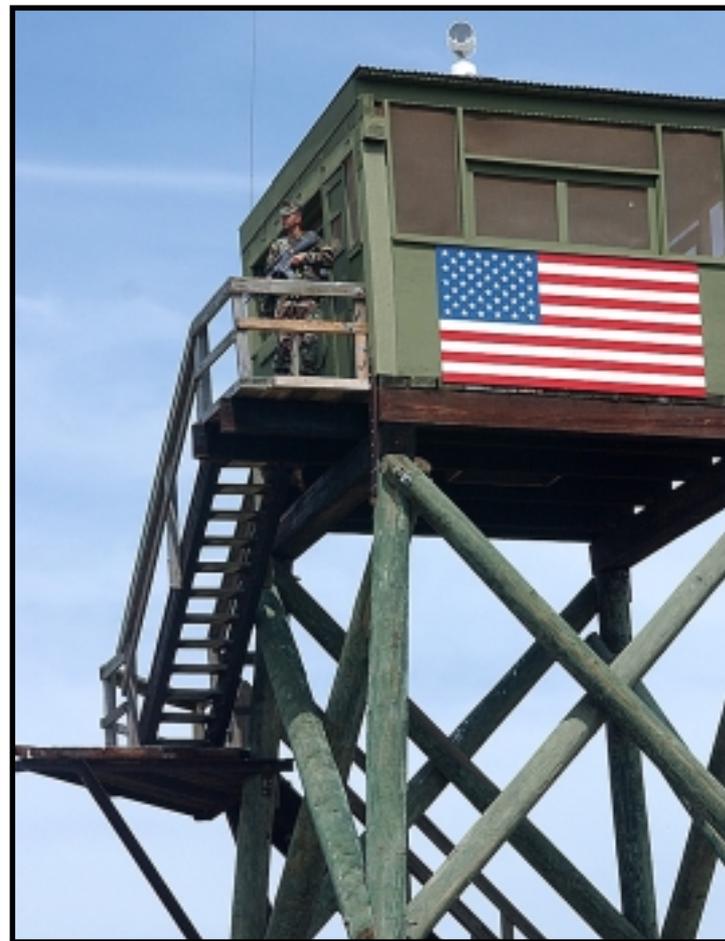
“Most of the attention is going to Camp Delta now, but we’re not looking for attention or glory,” said Palos. “We have a job to do. They can keep all the thunder they want.”

When they’re not “on line” doing their job, the Marines here conduct extensive training, said Diaz, which includes martial arts, working with mines and polishing their basic infantry skills. Everyone in the unit really holds their own, he said, and takes the training to heart — after all, they may need it someday.

“We try to do a lot. We know how to do our job,” said Palos. “Back at home during drill weekends, we also do a lot of infantry

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Lance Cpl. Ramirez Gomez keeps a vigilant eye from his Marine Observation Point.

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operations and tactics.”

And now that they’re deployed to Guantanamo Bay, the unit as a whole is well prepared to accomplish their task.

“I was active duty before, so I’m used to being away from home,” said

Diaz. “It’s hard to just get up and be gone for a year, but I think that these Marines are handling it very well. They miss their families, but their minds are always on the job.”

“Well, this is my job,” said Cpl. Keith Harris. “I know why I’m here, so I have to go do it.”

“You learn a lot of tolerance and patience,” said Palos. “Nothing is set in stone. You have to learn not to take it personally; it’s all just business. We all have a job to do.”

That business is part of the long and distinguished history of the Marines at Guantanamo Bay, and the legacy continues with the tireless efforts of these reservists.

“This base has

been changed from Marine to Navy, but the security has always been Marine, since the Battle of Cuzco Wells in 1898. Only since Sept. 11 has the intensity increased,” said Palos.

“For over a hundred years, Marines have been here doing this job, and we will continue to do so as long as we need to,” said Diaz. “I think that people really don’t understand that there is a communist country on the other side of that fence. All of the Marines here take this job very seriously.”

Marines often have the reputation of being fanatical about being Marines. For these reservists, it’s simply a grave responsibility.

“We have a vital mission here,” said Cpl. Kevin Martinez. “If we weren’t guarding that fence line, there’s no telling what could happen. We’re keeping the people here safe, and we’re going home safely. That’s the Marine Corps way.”



A shift gets ready to roll out on a mounted patrol with armored HUMVEES.

Women's Equality Day

**USSOUTHCOM
Chief of Staff,
Brig. Gen Richard
A. Huck presents
a plaque of ap-
preciation to Fr.
Jean Gordon
after her presen-
tation during
Women's Equal-
ity Day celebra-
tion, Monday in
the
USSOUTHCOM
MCR.**

*(Photo by Tech. Sgt.
Ray Sarracino)*



USSOUTHCOM hosts IA conference

By Robert Munger
U.S. Southern Command
Information Assurance Division

Col. Benjamin Fletcher, U.S. Southern Command J6 director, hosted USSOUTHCOM's 2nd Annual Information Assurance Conference, Aug. 5-9, in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

The conference had several purposes:

- To present pressing information assurance issues via DoD briefings.
- Review associated IA products in a vendor exposition
- To foster teamwork

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Photo by Tech. Sgt. Ray Sarracino

Fletcher presents Haave with a token of appreciation for her IA speech.

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among key IA players in the Latin American theater

The conference attracted approximately 130 people, representing USSOUTHCOM.

Also present were members of the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Security and Information Operations, White House Office of Cyber Security, Joint Task Force Computer Network Operations, Defense Information Systems Agency, National Security Agency, United States Space Command and the Land Information Warfare Activity Fort Gordon, Ga.

A variety of private industry vendors exhibited information assurance related products and services.

To ensure the inclusion of various viewpoints at the forum and enable individuals with hands-on work-

ing experience to interact directly with policy makers, the briefings and classes held during the general session involved representatives from all levels of the IA profession. These included information system security managers and officers, network system administrators and information dissemination managers. The goal of this arrangement ensured expression

The general session began with a guest speaking appearance by Carol Haave, deputy assistant secretary of defense for security and information operations.

Haave touched on numerous IA-related issues including change, communication, and future prospects for the field. "This is really about an ongoing process," she stated. "Clearly we're in an era of change."

Her briefing concluded with a question-and-answer session that, according to participants, reflected

high interest in the rapidly developing IA field.

"I thought her comments were pretty good and direct. It seems like IA is becoming more streamlined," said Hilda Santos of the IA Security Office of Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico.

Another participant, Gunnery Sgt. Ronald Mehring of the 2nd Marine Air Wing summed characterized Haave as "a wealth of knowledge," commending her for what he called "a great speech."

Other discussions held during the general session included such topics as Network Defense and Threat Analysis.

Other topics covered during the conference included Information Assurance Vulnerability Alerts, Public Key Infrastructure, Secret and Below Interoperability and Regional Computer Emergency Response Team processes.

Missed appointments impacting clinic costs

Story and photos by Tech. Sgt. Ray Sarracino
Staff Writer

When most people make a health clinic appointment, they have every intention of making it.

A missed appointment results in wasted time for the medical staff, time that could be put to use caring for another patient.

This issue not only causes problems for the staff, it affects costs as well.

According to Dr. (Col.) Paula K. Underwood, Acting Commander of the USSOUTHCOM Health Clinic: "On the outside, missed appointments are billed to the patient if not cancelled at least 24 hours

ahead of time. In the Miami area the fair market value of an office visit can range from \$50 to \$150."

The number of missed appointments from Jan. 1 through July 1 was 413. According to Col. Underwood, the economic equivalent of these "no-shows" adds up to \$61,950.

This is a substantial cost when one considers that practically all of it is avoidable by simply contacting the health clinic at least 24 hours in advance if you can't make an appointment.

The clinic will begin sending information on personnel and their family members who missed appointments back to their di-



Sgt. 1st Class Melvin Gibson, Health Clinic NCOIC (left), and Underwood consult records during a meeting.

rectorates, said Underwood. This can result in counseling for the member in an effort to address the "no-show" behavior.

If you need to cancel an

appointment for yourself or a dependant, contact the health clinic as soon as possible (minimum 24 hours prior to the appointment) at (305) 437-3559.

News briefs

Reduced tickets

Reduced price United Artists theatres movie tickets are currently available for purchase at the Codina Building, Suite 110, Office 8. Tickets cost \$6.50, are valid for up to a year and can be used at any United Artist movie showing, to include the following:

- Movies at the Falls 9000 SW 136th Street, Miami (305) 255-5491
- Lauderhill 13 7800 Commercial Boulevard,

Lauderhill (954) 748-6441 • Boynton Beach 9 244 N. Congress Avenue, Boynton Beach (561) 736-5773

More United Artists theater locations can be found at <http://www.uatc.com>.

For more information, call (305) 437-2726.

Appreciation games

The Miami Dolphins will host the following USSOUTHCOM ap-

preciation games at Pro Player Stadium: • 7 p.m. Thursday versus the Chicago Bears. (Pre-season) Includes round trip bus transportation from Hooters Doral at 8695 N.W. 13th Terrace, Miami. • 1 p.m. Sept. 8 versus the Detroit Lions. (Home opener) Includes round trip bus transportation from the headquar-

• 1 p.m. Sept. 22 versus the New York Jets. Includes round trip bus transporta-

tion from the head-quarters.

Valid identification is required at the time of purchase. The cost per ticket is \$25.

There is a limited of two tickets per eligible USSOUTHCOM active duty, Department of Defense and contractor personnel.

Grand opening

The Information Tickets and Reservations Office will host a grand opening from

10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Sept. 20. The event will include giveaways, raffles and prizes.

Services offered by the ITR office include tickets for sporting events, concerts and local attractions.

For more information, call (305) 437-2639.

Appreciation day

The Miami Museum of Science & Space Transit Planetarium, located at

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3280 S Miami Avenue, Miami, is hosting a USSOUTHCOM Appreciation Day.

Attractions include a “*Won’t you be my neighbor?*” Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood hands-on exhibit, an astronomy introduction for young visitors, planetarium shows, a wildlife center, hands-on puzzles and thinking games and displays from the Smithsonian Institution’s Expedition: *Exploring Latin America & the Caribbean*.

Entry is free with military identification. General admission tickets are \$3.

Deadline for signing up

is noon Sept. 11.

Mystery theater

The Gator Den and Galley, located at the U.S. Coast Guard Integrated Support Command at 100 MacArthur Causeway in Miami Beach, is hosting a Sleuth Murder Mystery Theater titled “*Kim and Scott Tie the Knot*” from 6:30 – 9:30 p.m. Sept. 28.

Cost for tickets are \$20 and include a dinner buffet and cash bar.

For more information, call (305) 437-2715.

Reduced tickets

The USSOUTHCOM Information, Tickets and Reservations office has limited quantities of reduced price tickets to the Parrot

Jungle and Gardens and Miami Seaquarium.

Tickets will be sold on a first-come, first-serve basis until quantities run out or offers expire.

For more information call the ITR office at (305) 437-2726.

Army Garrison online

The U.S. Army Garrison, Miami is now located on the world wide web.

You can access their site from any personal computer with Internet access.

Visit for access to services and updated information.

Feedback and suggestions are also welcome.

The Web site address is <http://www.southcom.mil/usag-miami/index.htm>.

Newcomers

The Family Support Center is sponsoring a newcomers briefing 8 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Sept. 13 at the Base Operations Education Center located at the Codina Building, Suite 110, 8300 NW 33rd Street.

The briefing includes presentations from the TRICARE representative; U.S. Southern Command Health Clinic; Housing Office; Traffic Management Office; Education Office; Legal Office; Quality of Life Office; Morale, Welfare, and Recreation; Department of Defense Police; and chaplain.

For more information or to reserve your seat at the briefing, call **(305) 437-2667**.



Felix Peguero-Luna takes a return during a championship finals match.

USSOUTHCOM team vies for tourney championship

Photos and story by Tech. Sgt. Jose Ruiz,
Southern Star Editor

Aug. 14 was championship night for contenders from Fort Lauderdale's recreational volleyball league, so the men and women of the U.S. Southern Command's volleyball team arrived early at the city's Holiday Park Gym.

Their confidence boosted by a 7-2 record and a season that began with six consecutive victories, they warmed up in preparation for the two games they would need to win in their bid for the league's coveted top spot.

In their first game — a semi-final match against the Southpaws — USSOUTHCOM got off to a good

start by taking off quickly on the scoreboard with a 4-0 lead.

They held on to a mostly narrow lead through the first half of the match, but when an injury left the Southpaws one man short, USSOUTHCOM upped the ante with an offensive barrage, ending the match with a 25-17 win.

The Southpaws fought back in the second match, which proved to be a much closer contest than the first. Both teams flirted with leads, but neither was able to take full control of the match.

USSOUTHCOM edged to a 25-

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Volleyball

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23 victory in the final moments of the match to claim the semi final win, eliminating the Southpaws and moving on to the finals match against the Sand Fleas — a team responsible for one of their two losses.

“This is the team for us to beat,” said USSOUTHCOM player Elizabeth Coffman of the Sand Fleas before the match. “We lost to them before, but we’ve also beat them before. I think we can do it again tonight.”

But the Sand Fleas proved to be a much tougher foe for USSOUTHCOM than the Southpaws, immediately taking a 6-1 lead during their initial finals match.

The USSOUTHCOM 5-point deficit quickly grew to a 12-point deficit.

With the team trailing 20-8, USSOUTHCOM huddled and discussed strategies to stop the Sand Flea offensive and narrow the score.

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Mark Van Oordt readies to return the ball during a semi-final match.

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With Felix Peguero-Luna serving, USSOUTHCOM's offense suddenly gained momentum, and the team outscored the opposition 11-2 to tie the match at 22 points.

The teams tied again at 23, then 24, but USSOUTHCOM reached 25 points first and the referee granted them a short-lived, 25-24 win.

The Sand Fleas contested the one-point victory, arguing that volleyball rules call for two-point wins during matches, and after several minutes of discussion, the game was resumed. But USSOUTHCOM quickly reinforced their win by adding a point to the scoreboard ending the dispute with a 26-24 win.

The Sand Fleas came back tougher in the second match, quickly taking off on the scoreboard with a 10-2 lead and overpowered the

USSOUTHCOM defense to sustain the lead through a 25-16 win.

With the championship game now tied at one match each, USSOUTHCOM's championship bid now rested on their performance during the final, 15-point tiebreaker.

The Sand Fleas scored first, taking an initial 3-0 lead, but USSOUTHCOM did not allow the lead to grow further.

Using slower, less risky returns, USSOUTHCOM crept their way to an 8-8 tie.

Despite a sustained effort through the game's outcome, USSOUTHCOM was unable to stop the Sand Flea offense or overpower its defense, and they fell prey to their opposition 15-10, and five points short of their championship bid.

Bunny Negrette said the loss

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Elizabeth Coffman spikes a shot during a game against the Southpaws. USSOUTHCOM won the game 25-17, 25-23.

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probably had more to do with who they played in the finals versus how they played.

“Having lost to those guys previously, I think there was a psychological factor there,” she said. “It just made it a little more mentally challenging for us.”

Despite having to settle for runner up, Felix-Peguero-Luna said he still considers the season to be an overall success for the team.

“It exceeded our

expectations,” he said. “We came here not knowing who these people were, but we came together as a team and overcame every obstacle to make it to the finals.”

Having finished the tournament with an unrealized goal, Negrette said the USSOUTHCOM team has ample reason to be a presence at the tournament next season.

“We have something to look forward to,” she said. “We want to come back, do better and win the whole thing next year.”



Players from the USSOUTHCOM volleyball team take time off from practicing to pose for a team photo. The team finished second in a Fort Lauderdale recreational volleyball league. They are: (from left) Felix Peguero-Luna, Bunny Negrette, Elizabeth Coffman, Tammy Baker, Lisa Samson, Mark Van Ordt and Juan Hurtado.

Play ball!

The Mariners, USSOUTHCOM's MWR-sponsored baseball team will compete in the tri-county South Florida Baseball League beginning Sept. 8. They are (back row from left): Scott Vinger, Paul Dwyer, William Krauthammer, Rafael Virrueta and Zachary King. Middle row from left: Carlos Blanchard, Clifton Evans, Pedro Austin, Juan Trevino, Al Ruiz and Jason Vaghan. Front row from left: John Maloney, Stephen Eubanks, Ron Farnham, Rondell Davis and Jorge Ubalde. Not pictured are: Jeffery Miles and James Trospen.



(Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jose Ruiz)

Meal statements required on travel orders

By Donna Bowden
DFAS, Orlando

Effective Oct. 1, all travel orders must have one of the following statements:

1. Government meals are available and directed,
2. proportional meal rate is directed,
3. commercial meals are directed, and
4. government meals are available and directed at no cost.

The regulation governing meal entitlements may be found in the Joint Federal Travel Regulation (JFTR), U4125, Paragraph A3 b. The JFTR states that “the use of Government

mess is directed.” When the regulations changed to read “directed” it was done so deliberately. Guidance has been received that “available” may not be used to mean “directed.” The order approving official must determine the appropriate meal rate for the traveler. If one of the above statements is not reflected in the orders, the default meal rate is to commercial meals.

Several units are still follow-

ing the old by using the following statements: if government quarters and meals are unavailable, a statement of non-availability will be required and/or government mess is directed if available. If either of these statements are used after October 1, 2002, the traveler will be paid the

commercial meals.

The orders must also reflect the correct meal rate for Training and Doctrine Com-

(TRADOC) schools. Guidance on meals for TRADOC schools is located at the following website: www.armymwr.com/portal/travel/lodging/availability.asp. DFAS Orlando will pat the meal rate that is directed in the orders.

Using the appropriate meal statement in the orders will reduce the number of necessary amended orders, supplementals, and overpayments.

The following website contains the online regulation: <http://books.usapa.belvoir.army.mil/cgi-bin/bookmgr/BOOKS/r6008105/CONTENTS#1.18>.



Iris Rivera



Service: Army and Air Force Exchange Service
Organization: BXMART
Duty title: Customer Service Representative
Hometown: Ponce, Puerto Rico
Hobbies: Cooking, dancing, watching videos, spending time with my grandchildren.
Favorite duty station: Fort

Leavenworth, Kansas

Career highlights: Being awarded a certificate of appreciation from the Army.

Officer Phillip Laurestia



Service: Civilian
Organization: Department of Defense Police
Duty title: Police officer
Hometown: Scarborough, Tobago
Hobbies: Body building, soccer
Favorite duty station: Miami
Career highlights: Receiving letters from Gen. Peter Pace,

Maj. Gen. Alfred Valenzuela and Gen. Charles Wilhelm for outstanding service, participating in the assumption of command ceremony and receiving a letter of appreciation from the Defense Commissary Agency for helping them during the 2001 and 2002 tent sales.

Commander's address

**Gen. James T. Hill,
commander, U.S.
Southern Command,
addresses the crowd
during a commander's
address Thursday.
Gen. Hill outlined his
vision for
USSOUTHCOM during
his tenure as com-
mander.**



(photo by Chief Petty Officer Gabe Puello)