Commanders' Corner

Gaining perspective at JTF-Bravo

By CPT Theodore Shinn Jr.
Air Operations Officer

Every time the Army sends me somewhere, it is very hard on my wife, Kristen. The last Joint Readiness Testing Center rotation for the 782nd Main Support Battalion out of Fort Bragg, N.C. was no different.

We had only about seven days left to go when I was told I was going to be sent away to Honduras for six months.

I had one month to prepare for the trip. Two of those weeks would be spent in Air Movement Operations School and one week would be spent going through the deployment site at Fort Benning, Ga. This is the way most things are done at Bragg.

There's an old saying at Bragg, "We don't plan, we just react." The truth is that Fort Bragg has so much going on that it significantly shortens planning and coordination time. I was always putting in long hours as the battalion Logistician.

Whether it was staying late trying to figure out the budget to track where every dollar was spent, working on an equipment matrix to deploy every piece of equipment we had or doing a night jump, I was putting in some long hours. Many times I would skip physical Training so that I could finish getting everything done that I had to do.

Then I stepped off the bird onto this Soto Cano paradise, to be the J-3 Air. I thank God every day that this is an air base and not an army base, because if it were an army base, we would all probably still be living in tents.

As it is, we have cable TV, VCRs, refrigerators, microwaves and air conditioning. The close proximity of the pool, gym, tennis/basketball courts, track, exchange, laundry/shower facilities, dining and various clubs is very convenient. All communities should be so fortunate. It would greatly cut down on time spent driving to all these locations.

This assignment has been wonderful. I have gotten to do many things I have always wanted to, such as SPIES training, snorkeling off a coral reef, foreign jumps and jumping from CH-47s. I have also got all the time I need to do PT and read.

It is still difficult being away from family, but I was able to bring Kristen down for a visit. Kristen is a Spanish teacher, and she had a wonderful opportunity to practice her Spanish.

We were able to see the Copan ruins, Roatan, Valley of the Angels, and Pulhapenzak Waterfalls. It was like a second honeymoon. I am very thankful for all of these wonderful opportunities.

As I look around at the country, I see many that are very poor and do not have the opportunities we do in the United States. It's a reminder to me to cherish the true richness of our heritage and prosperity in the U.S.

Joint Task Force-Bravo is doing many great and wonderful things for Central America.

We are helping to promote stability, improving medicine, ridding the world of illegal drugs and assisting in disaster relief. I am very proud to be a part of JTF-Bravo.

Shortly I will depart and head back to Fort Bragg, but I will do so well rested with a truly thankful spirit and a fresh perspective and appreciation for my place in the world.

Make sure you take a moment and reflect on these things while you are here.

Keep up the good work JTF-Bravo. Progress Through Unity!

Individual force protection

By Maj. Rik Combs
Joint Security Forces

When you think of Honduras, visions of the tropics and a laid back lifestyle immediately come to mind for most. However, reality often upsets those tranquil thoughts. Honduras and Comayagua have fairly high crime rates, and although not known for excessively violent crime, it's crime nonetheless. While Americans haven't been the usual target of would-be assailants, one cannot assume the situation on base and in the neighboring community as Main Street U.S.A. In other words, "We're no longer in Kansas, Toto."

Security and Force Protection are the responsibility of each person at Soto Cano Air Base. Never assume these vital functions are the "job" or responsibility of another. Joint Security Forces personnel work night and day to assure an orderly and safe living and working environment for everyone. The fire department and Medical Element are on call 24-hours a day to ensure the very best protection and care for residents here. However, these organizations can't do it alone.

You are the first line in the war on crime and in keeping Soto Cano a great place to live and work.

See **Security**, *Page 7*

Man's Spiritual Growth

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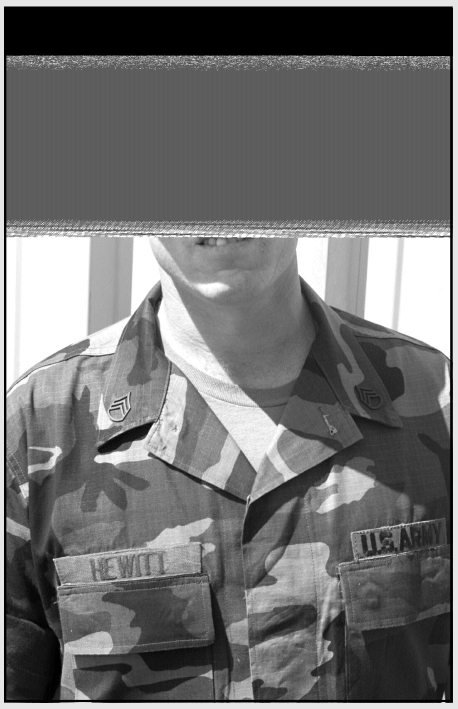
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MELGER

'Fire Dawgs' train, educate others on preventing fires

By SMSgt. Robert Jenkins
Fire Department

"Attention in the station: 'We have a report of a fire in Bldg. 371, there are two personnel unaccounted for.'"

This is the moment that all firefighters around the world train for — the point in time when people's lives are at risk and property is being destroyed.

When this happens at Joint Task Force-Bravo, there are about 18 people ready to respond 24 hours a day and put their training to use. This group works a 48-hour shift.

At the fire station, they have a kitchen, TV room, training room, fitness center, and sleeping facilities. In essence, the firefighters spend half of their tour at the fire station. There are two operational shifts that work the alternating 48-hour schedules.

Besides the shift workers, there are others that support the fire protection mission. The communication center is the main 911-reception location. There are two Honduran Nationals and two military firefighters working 24-hours a day that receive calls and dispatch resources. When the new fire alarm system goes into operation, the computerized alarm receiver will be located in the communications center.

Preventing fires is the main goal of the Fire Prevention section. This two-man shop inspects all the JTF-Bravo facilities annually looking for fire and life safety discrepancies. These are then turned over to the facility manager for correction. The fire inspectors also provide newcomer's briefings, hands-on fire extinguisher training, and review plans for construction projects.

Training is the key to any successful operation and the fire department is no exception. The assistant chief for training is responsible for all training conducted within the department. This includes proficiency training, upgrade training and certification training. Training makes up the majority of the operational shift's duty day and can include everything from assigned and transient aircraft to confined space rescue.

The firefighters can be called upon to perform a wide range of operations. The day of just fighting structure or aircraft fires is long gone. Today's firefighters are also trained to deal with hazardous chemical releases from various containers. This requires them to wear specialized suits that protect them from the liquid and vapor hazard.

Another hazardous tasking is confined space rescue. This entails entering an area that has limited access and the possibility of a toxic atmosphere. These areas include below grade pits, above ground fuel tanks and fixed wing fuel cells.

Another aspect that is prevalent in Honduras is brush firefighting. When the rain stops and the vegetation dries up, brush fire season is under way. Again, this requires specialized clothing and equipment.

Photo by Martin Chahin

Members of the Soto Cano "Fire Dawgs" train in real conditions to contain fires that attack the base.

The local fire departments are very limited on resources, so they count on JTF-Bravo for support. There is a written agreement between the Comayagua Fire Department and the JTF-Bravo fire department that allows base resources to be used off base.

The firefighters have also deployed to other countries in support of military operations. In December 1999, a crash truck and a crew of four were sent to Columbia.

Also, a two-man crew spent fourteen days in Guatemala helping to extinguish numerous brush fires.

The JTF-Bravo "Fire Dawgs" are always ready to respond and assist to any call whenever and wherever they are needed.

Martin takes over as new Medical Element commander

By SPC Jeremy Heckler
Iguana Editor

COL (Dr.) James Martin took over as the head doctor of Joint Task Force-Bravo's Medical Element (MEDEL) from LTC (Dr.) Michael Russo in an outdoor ceremony held Oct. 6.

Russo leaves Soto Cano Air Base for Walter Reed Army Institute of Research to serve as Chief, Department of Biomedical Assessment, Division of Neuropsychiatry.

He spoke of the commitment of the MEDEL staff to their jobs and the hospitality of his Honduran hosts.

"Last month, I promised emergency leave to my pharmacy noncommissioned officer in charge SSG Joseph Nopo so he could attend his grandmother's funeral. He had only to wait upon the return from leave of our pharmacy officer in charge. However, our pharmacy OIC failed to return from leave and I had to pull Nopo's leave and deny him the freedom to return to his family at his time of need," said Russo.

"Nopo and I and our entire MEDEL family were shaken by this turn of events, but SSG Nopo demonstrated the dedication to mission that should serve as an example to us all. On his own, without a pharmacist, he ran the MEDEL pharmacy, reliably refilled all prescriptions, reviewed pharmacy procedures and stock, found shortcomings, reported them and repaired them."

"He stood up to the plate when Joint Task Force-Bravo and MEDEL needed him and served his country and his mission with dignity and loyalty."

Martin said that he aspires to continue to accomplish the mission of MEDEL at JTF-Bravo as the new commander.

Martin comes to Soto Cano from the Health Services Division of the Office of Surgeon General, Washington, D.C.

Martin is a native of Oxford, Miss., and received his bachelor of science in chemistry from the University of Mississippi, obtaining his Doctorate of medicne from the University of Mississippi Medical Center.

Upon entering active duty, Martin was assigned as a general internist and subsequently chief of medicine at Vincenza Amy Hospital, Vincenza, Italy.

Martin has also served as Group Surgeon with the 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), Fort Devens, Mass., and as Division Surgeon, 10th (Mountain) Division, Fort Drum, NY.

After a fellowship in infectious disease at Brooke Army Medical Center, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, Martin was assigned as infectious disease staff physician and later Special Project Officer for the Persian Gulf Illness Program at William Beaumont Army Medical Center, Fort Bliss, Texas.

He then moved onto Korea where he served as the deputy commander for Clinical Services for the 121st General Hospital and chief of Clinical Services, 18th Medical Command, Seoul, Korea.

He served as chief of Clinical Operations at Walter Reed Army Medical Center Washington, D.C., before commanding the DeWitt Army Community Hospital and Health Care System.

Martin's military education includes the Army Medical Department Officer Basic and Advanced Courses, the Special Forces Officers Qualification Course, the Army Command and General Staff College and the Army War College.

Martin's military decorations include the Special Forces Tab, Airborne Wings, the Expert Field Medical Badge and Army Flight Surgeon Wings.

His military awards include the Army Achievement Medal, Army Commendation Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal and the Legion of Merit.

Photo by SPC Jeremy Heckler

Col. (Dr.) James Martin receives the MEDEL guidon, at the change of command ceremony held Oct. 6

Belize

(*Continued from Page 1*)

force's civil engineering shop, composed of 1LT Jonathan Hadley and Tech. Sgt. Maria Kraft, conducted the runway assessment and then visited Dangriga and several other Belizean towns, where U.S. military civil engineers had built New Horizons projects. All of the projects escaped serious damage.

According to Maj. Carl Agar, operation's chief of the Humanitarian Assessment Support Team, the hardest part of the mission was coordinating with other agencies.

"There was some frustration in the early hours of the operation, because everybody was cocked and ready to go, but you can't launch until you get the nod," Agar said. "We had to work closely with several agencies, such as the Office of U.S.Foreign Disaster Assistance, the Belize MILGROUP, the airport's airfield manager, and the Belizean Defense Force. It took some time in the beginning, but what we learned and the relationships we built will help us in the future.

"Then, once we got started, everybody really pulled together," Agar said. "Everybody knew what they needed to do, and we didn't have anybody standing around with nothing to do."

Both Agar and Wood commented on how the deployment package of personnel contained the perfect mix of skills. In shaping the Hurricane Keith team, operations planners used a blueprint of the package dispatched on Operation Smokey — the team sent to fight fires in Guatemala earlier this year.

"If you have the expertise, you're going to go," Wood said. "It doesn't make a difference if you're a man or a woman, or a soldier, airmen or Marine. We want to take the best with us on these operations."

Two of the 1-228th's UH-60s flew 22.4 hours in support of the mission while the Chinook flew 14.8 hours. In between transporting emergency supplies and OFDA assessment team members, the aviation battalion also moved members of Britain's Coldstream Guards, the famous regiment that defends Buckingham Palace.

The Guards had been bivouacked on Caye Caulker, engaged in jungle warfare training, when asked to lend a hand with clean-up efforts on Ambergris Caye, which was hardest hit by the storm.

Just weeks before the hurricane slammed into Belize, Joint Task Force-Bravo had conducted a hurricane exercise, planning on how they'd respond to a devastating storm such as Hurricane Mitch.

"It was very fortuitous we had the exercise just weeks before Hurricane Keith hit," Wood said. "We knew it was hurricane season, so we were thinking about storms. Some of the same tools and thought processes that we used during our hurricane exercise were transferred to Belize."

The colonel said Belize skirted serious damage, and Hurricane Keith paled in comparison to Mitch. Hurricane Mitch razed Honduras, killing thousands, displacing even more families, and inflicting millions of dollars worth of damage.

Photo by Master Sgt. Pat McKenna

A young Belizean girl sits in in the middle of the carnage in San Pedro in the aftermath of Hurricane Keith.

"The country still hasn't fully recovered," Wood said. "Hurricane Keith didn't paralyze Belize like Mitch did to Honduras. The lights were back on in Belize City in a matter of days, and there was a minimal loss of life. The tourist trade in Belize has been set back, but six months from now, I expect things will be back to normal there."

According to Agar, the greatest threat to Belize is rising water, flooding and the threat of diseases like malaria and dengue fever.

The task force and the 228th received praise from U.S. Ambassador to Belize Hon. Carolyn Curiel, U.S. SOUTHCOM commander Marine Gen. Peter Pace, and the people of Belize for quickly confirming the airfield could support aircraft so that humanitarian organizations could shuttle in much-needed supplies.

"The whole team performed exceptionally well," Wood said.

"The important thing was that we accomplished the mission, helping to relieve suffering and bringing the country quickly back to its feet," the colonel said.

Photo by 1st Lt. Kim Garbett

Ravin rocks

Members of the DOD band Ravin performed at the Oasis Club on base over the Columbus Day weekend. Performing before a full house on Oct. 6-8, the band played a variety of music from The Red Hot Chili Peppers to Jimmy Buffett.
"I really enjoyed them," said Master Sgt. Chris Sheppard. "They were really down to earth and played my kind of music. It was definitely a nice change of pace."
The event was sponsored by MWR and AFPEO.

USARSO Chaplain Stake addresses troops, teaches aspects of prayer during breakfast

BySPC Jeremy Heckler
Iguana Editor

Chaplain (COL) John Stake, the United States Army Southern Command Chaplain, addressed soldiers, airmen, and Marines of Soto Cano at a prayer breakfast held in the base Dining Facility Oct.11.

Representatives from, Roman Catholic, Gospel, and Protestant congregations participated as Chaplain Stake gave his message on ACTS of prayer. This acronym stands for "adoration" focusing people upon God; "confession," confessing sin and shortcomings; "thanksgiving," as they focus upon God and what he has done-resulting in their thanksgiving; "supplication," bringing their requests and concerns before God who can do more with these than they can, said Chaplain (CPT) Arleigh Von-Seggern, base chaplain.

"The chaplain said that prayer consists of four elements: adoration, confession, thanksgiving and supplication," said CPT Joshua Keesal, MEDEL company commander, who attended the event. "Too often all we do is ask for things in prayer. Supplication, also known as requests, should only be one quarter of prayer. Perhaps we would be emotionally and spiritually happier if we praise God for who he is and spent more time thanking him for all that he has done for us. If we ever lose track of the fact that we are very blessed and well off, all we need to do is step off base for a few minutes to see the poverty around us. We are so richly blessed. The message I took home from the prayer breakfast is that I need to spend more time thanking God for smiling so brightly on my life."

He added that he enjoyed being able to strengthen his faith while sitting with his soldiers.

"I always attend the prayer breakfasts because we need to stop the train every now and then and integrate God into our lives," said Maj. Steven Goodroad. He added that he enjoyed listening to the chaplain's stories that he wove into his speech.

The number of attendees grew to about 50 over the course of the breakfast as troops drifted over to listen to Stake's message.

Orphans: Neglected by some, loved by many more

By1st Lt. Kim Garbett
Public Affairs

Photos by 1st Lt.Kim Garbett

CPT Dan Franks, 1st Battalion, 228th Aviation Regiment flight surgeon, checks for a rash on a young girl at the Tierra Santa orphanage near La Paz.

MAJ Steve Goodroad, ARFOR operations officer, passes out candy to some of the orphans after they had eaten lunch.

Security

(*Continued from Page 2***)**

Simple things each person can do will greatly impact the Soto Cano community in a very positive way. First of all, each individual should take care in securing personal and government property. It isn't possible to completely eradicate theft at Soto Cano Air Base, or in Honduras for that matter, but locks, and preventative measures will go a long way to deter those with bad intent.

Pay attention to work areas for unusual things (unlocked or unsecured, strange packages, unusual arrangements, etc.), and don't wait or ignore something that just doesn't seem right.

Report those that are believed to be in the wrong place, or acting in a suspicious or odd manner to the JSF Desk at ext. 4170. Never assume the situation is someone else's job or that the situation will resolve itself.

When downtown or out and about in Honduras, stay alert, remain unpredictable and never keep the same routine.

Avoid large crowds or gathering places as much as possible, and immediately depart an area whenever something doesn't seem right or civil unrest occur.

Measures taken by all Joint Task Force-Bravo personnel and leadership in the past 90 days have had dramatic results.

The numbers of crimes and thefts have been reduced measurably and there hasn't been a hootch break-in since July.

Together Soto Cano can be a pleasant and enjoyable experience for all, but it takes a team effort from everyone.

BRIEFS

Crime Prevention

Don't leave your laundry unattended! It only takes a moment before thieves can make away with your items. We need to make Soto Cano a large neighborhood watch area. If you see something out of place, question it or contact JSF at ext. 4170 immediately. Together we can make Soto Cano the most secure place in the military.

Fashion Show

A fashion show will be taking place Oct.21 at La Cabana. After the show, there is a dance scheduled. For more information contact CPL Williams at ext. 4380.

UMUC Courses

Come in to the Education Center, Bldg. H-56, next door to the Post Office and get your Tuition Assistance forms. The government will pay 75 percent ($103.50) while you pay 25 percent ($34.50) for each CAPP 100 A, J, and K class, which is only one semester-hour credit. These CAPP classes do not have the traditional formal examination to pass, but are built on participation seminar mode. Many students can only attend weekend classes; thus, a full class is only one Saturday and one Sunday.

CAPP 100A, Hardware and Software, one-semester-hour, Nov. 4 and 5, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

CAPP 100J, Security, one-semester-hour, Nov. 18 and 19, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

CAPP 100K, Accessing Internet, one-semester-hour, Dec. 2 and 3, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Each 3-credit class costs students 25 percent ($103.50), while the Government pays 75 percent ($310.50):

IFSM 201, Introduction to Computer Basic Systems, three-semester-hours, Oct. 23 to Dec. 15, from 6 to 9 p.m., Mondays and Wednesdays.

SPAN 111, Elementary Spanish I, three-semester-hours, Oct. 23 to Dec. 15, from 6 to 9 p.m., Mondays and Wednesdays.

MATH 101, Concepts of Modern Algebra, three-semester-hours, Oct. 23 to Dec. 15, from 6 to 9 p.m., Mondays and Wednesdays.

BMGT 110, Introduction to Business and Management, three-semester-hours, Oct. 23 to Dec. 15, from 6 to 9 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Latrine Closure

Latrine K-201will be closed for repair on Oct. 30. Call Denia Garcia at ext.4464 for any questions on the closure.

DLP TEST to Resume

The Defense Language Proficiency Test examinations will resume Oct. 10, at the Soto Cano Air Base Education Center, to be scored by USARSO Fort Buchanan Education Center. The wait for DLPT Scores will be long because of the resignation of the test examiner recently, per conversation between the test control officer (Ms. Martin) at Fort Buchanan and the test control officer (Mo Eckols) at Soto Cano AB. The education center is not resuming DLAB testing until further notice.

Referees Wanted

MWR is looking for flag football referees. If interested, get with Eduardo Castillo in Bldg. H-401 or call him at ext. 4268. This is a paid position and experience is desired.

Weekend Bible Study

The Base Chapel Community is sponsoring a weekend Bible study Oct. 27 through the 29 at Gualiqueme House on Lake Yojoa. The cost is 200 Lps to cover the cost of lodging. For more information, call the Chapel at ext. 4351.

Fright Night at the Oasis Club

MWR is sponsoring Fright Night at the Oasis Club Oct. 27. There will be free food, T-shirts as well as a live band. Come in costume and compete to be the best-looking character. Doors open at 8 p.m.

Halloween Party at the Zone

The Zone is sponsoring a Halloween night for all senior NCO's and officers. There will be a dart contest, costume contest and a chance to bob for beverages as well as a mummy wrap. The cost is $10 .

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RECOVERY ROOM CAFE
Buy 5 drinks of any choice, get the 6th one free!
Good through the month of October only!
Coupon

Fever

(*Continued from Page 3*)

fect on Soto Cano AB to prevent the growth and spread of mosquitoes, however, there are no such controls off the base.

With that said, it is important for personnel to adhere to performance of proper protective measures every day, especially during the wet season and while off the base. This includes applying DEET or Deep Woods Off to exposed skin, wearing the uniform with the sleeves down, all the buttons fastened, and the pants tucked into the boots, and making sure that uniforms are treated with permethrin. Personnel can also help the pest control personnel on Soto Cano by eliminating any temporary containers you might have around your hootch and by keeping your doors closed at all times.

Every once in awhile, someone does come up with Dengue here in this area, usually after being away from the base on a mission, hiking, weekend pass, etc. If you think you are experiencing symptoms of Dengue Fever, go to MEDEL and get checked out immediately. Do not hesitate for any reason, since quick diagnosis and treatment will greatly reduce complications and facilitate a speedy and normal recovery.

For additional information on Dengue Fever or any other disease threat to deployed personnel in Joint Task Force-Bravo's area of operations, contact Preventive Medicine Services, Medical Element (MEDEL), at ext. 4200/4500.

MEDEL Recovery RoomCafe feeds caffeine, sugar addictions in social environment

By CPT Joshua Keesel
MEDEL

In recent weeks, Joint Task Force-Bravo has added a new shop designed to fill that caffeine addiction ... the MEDEL Recovery Room Café.

The Recovery Room Café is located just past the volleyball court by MEDEL's barracks.

Though the grand opening ceremony was Sept. 30, the Recovery Room Café has been serving great drinks and snacks since Sept. 5.

The Recovery Room has a complicated and unique history. For years, it used to be a bar and nightclub, similar to the Lizard Lounge or the Rally Point, where soldiers, airmen, and Marines could go to listen to loud music, dance and to get some drinks. When the decision was made to de-glamorize alcohol on post, the soldiers of MEDEL decided that they still wanted a place where they could meet and socialize, even if it had to be non-alcoholic. And voilá, the idea for a coffee shop was created. CPT (Dr.) Dana Thomas, the former JTF-B flight surgeon, and 1LT Jeremy Seigfried, an EMT nurse here, were the movers and shakers behind getting the Recovery Room Café up and running.

Since people like to have their coffee and sugar-filled delights at various times throughout the day, MEDEL realized that it would be very difficult to make a profitable business by maintaining the same Friday and Saturday night hours that the Recovery Room always has had. In order to ensure that the Recovery Room Café could be open during the duty day, the hours when most people like to stop by for a drink, MEDEL contracted out managing the Recovery Room Café to two entrepreneurs already running a successful coffee shop in La Paz, Mariano Villalobos and Ernesto Calix. JTF-B personnel may recognize Villalobos; he also works for the education center as the Intermediate Head Start Spanish teacher. The Recovery Room Café is open from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Friday. Saturday, the hours are 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. With convenient hours like these, "I don't have the time to stop by for a snack and drink" is not an acceptable excuse."

The Recovery Room Café has food and drinks for everyone. Whether you are in the mood for a cup of black or specialty flavored coffee, or you want a banana split, the Recovery Room Café is there for you. The Café serves lattes, cappuccinos (hot and cold), mochas, teas, flavored coffees, non-alcoholic blender drinks, iced tea, hand made fruit punch, fruit salads, and an assortment of pastries and ice cream dishes.

Profits from the Recovery Room Café are split between the two general managers and MEDEL's Plaque and Orphanage Fund. For years, all profits from the Recovery Room went to support the two local orphanages MEDEL had adopted and to assist sections to buy going-away plaques for their soldiers.

So now, after all supplies are restocked and the managers are paid in accordance with their contract, MEDEL gets the rest of the profits.

All things considered, the MEDEL Recovery Room Café is providing a great service to all of JTF-B and making a small profit for the managers and MEDEL at the same time.

Movie Schedule

Friday, Oct. 20 7:15 p.m.
The Cell (R)
Saturday, Oct.21 4 p.m.
Space Cowboys (PG-13)
Saturday, Oct. 21 7:15 p.m.
Coyote Ugly (PG-13)

Sunday, Oct. 22 4 p.m.
X-Men (PG13)

Sunday, Oct. 22 7:15 p.m.
Bless The Child (R)