



Sergeant Earns Soldiers' Respect While Tackling Different Jobs



Staff Sgt. Erwin Kohlmorgen sings "Amazing Grace" while conducting chapel service.

Story and photos by Sgt. Nick Minecci

JUTIAPA, Guatemala – There is a common thread when servicemembers living and working on Base Camp Quetzal here discuss Staff Sgt. Erwin Kohlmorgen.

They all have respect and a genuine fondness for him.

Kohlmorgen is the unit supply specialist for the Cincinnati, Ohio-based 611th Engineer Company (Light Equipment), 983rd Engineer Battalion (Combat)(Heavy), 88th Regional Readiness Command, and the non-commissioned officer in charge of the Task Force Quetzal security forces.

Wearing several hats for the 611th's mission here, Kohlmorgen works an average of 18 hours of duty daily, accord-

ing to the 40-year-old father of two. Keeping the security forces running smooth, conducting rehearsals for the Security Reaction Force, making sure the unit's supplies are accounted for and the Soldier's needs are met, on top of any number of missions that crop up, are all part of his daily routine.

Despite all this, Kohlmorgen willingly added to his busy days when he accepted the responsibility of providing chapel services for the servicemembers here since there was no chaplain on site.

"It was brought up in an NCO meeting that there was no chaplain, and if there were going to be chapel services then someone who ministered in the civilian world would have to volunteer," Kohlmorgen said.

"The first sergeant from [the 312th Field Hospital] came up to me after the meeting and said, 'I can tell by the way you talk you are a minister, go tell them.' So I went and volunteered to perform the services," said Kohlmorgen, who is a children's pastor with the United Pentecostal Church in Cincinnati.

"I love being able to minister to people, to provide encouragement and provide good will," Kohlmorgen said.

"It meant a lot to me that the Task Force command sergeant major was at the service, and that my own troops were there too," he said.

Being a children's pastor and not an ordained minister does not bother the servicemembers who attend Kohlmorgen's chapel services. They say the fact that he stepped in to fill a void shows the strength of his character.

"He thinks of others before himself and

————— **See Kohlmorgen, page 2**

Translating for Guatemalan President Makes for Memorable AT

Story and photos by Sgt. Nick Minecci

JUTIAPA, Guatemala – March 27 will hold a special place in the mind of U.S. Army Reserve Soldier Spec. Beatriz Cruz for a long time.

Standing in front of the 312th Field Hospital Saturday, Cruz, a wheel vehicle repairer and track and wheel vehicle recovery specialist assigned to the Fort Meade-based 818th Maintenance Company (Direct Support), 326th Maintenance Battalion, 38th Ammunition Group, 99th Regional Readiness Command, said she was shaking inside her BDUs.

"I was getting so nervous, I just kept thinking to myself that I was going to be able to tell my dad, my two younger brothers and my whole family about the day," she said.

The event in question was the approach of Guatemalan President Oscar Berger, for whom Cruz acted as a tour guide during his visit to Base Camp Quetzal, following the Exercise New Horizons 2004 opening ceremony.

"I found out a few days earlier that I would be translating for someone, but didn't know who, then I found out it would be for the president. I was like 'Oh my God!' and thought I better not screw up," the Arlington, Va. native said.

————— **See Cruz, page 3**

KOHLMORGEN, from page 1

is so friendly, just a wonderful guy,” said Sgt. 1st Class Arthur Boone, a medical logistics specialist with the 312th Field Hospital here.

“He is a very good minister, he stepped into the role and has done a very good job. I don’t care that he is a children’s pastor, a pastor is a pastor to me. Once you are called to serve the Lord it doesn’t matter, and he is doing wonderful,” the Durham, N.C. native said.

“The fact he put himself out there, and that he does such a good job, it says a lot about him,” said Spec. Caniece Rhyne, a Soldier with the 375th Quartermaster Company, from Kansas City, Ks., after one of his services.

Captain Jon Brierton, commander of the 611th Eng. Co. (LE) said not only is Kohlmorgen his senior NCO here, but his friend as well.

“He is an incredible human being, he has a way of connecting with people and can put anyone at ease,” he said.

“At first he was apprehensive about volunteering because he is a children’s pastor, but he is such a great example of morality and ethics. I don’t have a first sergeant or a lieutenant here, so I call him my [executive officer],” said the Hebron, Ky. native.

“I am really proud to say he is not only my NCO, but my friend,” Brierton added.

The opportunity to deploy with his company to Central America was something Kohlmorgen said was too good to pass up, and he said being here has been everything he hoped for.

Going to the countryside with bags of candy his wife of 19 years Patricia packed for him has been one of the highlights of his tour, Kohlmorgen said.

“The captain and I went out to do a recon of the sites and there were some kids there. I have a big heart for kids, so I gave them some candy. All of a sudden there were a bunch of kids and I ran out of candy,” he said laughing.



Staff Sgt. Erwin Kohlmorgen watches a helicopter with Guatemalan President Oscar Berger leave Base Camp Quetzal following the opening ceremony for Exercise New Horizons 2004.

“This one boy went into the woods and brought back part of a beehive with honey on it. He showed us how to eat it, you put the section in your mouth and suck off the honey then spit out the hive,” he said.

“That totally rocked! I have never eaten honey like that before and it meant so much to me, the kids felt so good about us they would do that,” he added.

“I feel so good about what we are doing here. It is an honor to do this job,” he said.

Task Force Quetzal is here for Exercise New Horizons 2004, sponsored by the U.S. Southern Command. The purpose of New Horizons is to work with the Government of Guatemala to perform humanitarian and civic assistance projects, exercise-related construction and medical readiness exercises. ❖

(Editor’s Note: Spec. Jennifer Budzek contributed to this article.)

Corrections

In the March 29 issue of The New Horizon the 312th Field Hospital was incorrectly identified as the 213th Field Hospital.

The 818th Maintenance Company (Direct Support) was listed as part of the 300th Area Support Group. It is part of the 38th Ammunition Group. We apologize for the errors.

The New Horizon is published in support of Exercise New Horizons 2004, at Jutiapa, Guatemala, under provisions of the Department of the Army, by the 214th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, 390th Personnel Group, 99th Regional Readiness Command, U.S. Army Reserve. The opinions and articles published in *The New Horizon* are not necessarily reflective of official stances or policies of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense or U.S. Government. Circulation 100

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Guatemalan President Oscar Berger kisses Spec. Beatriz Cruz on the cheek as she welcomes him to the 312th Field Hospital during his visit to Task Force Quetzal.

Escorting a head of state was not what the 23-year-old Soldier expected from annual training.

"I was active duty for three years, and nothing close to this happened," she said.

Serving with the Fort Bragg-based 659th Maintenance Company, 189th Corps Support Battalion (Airborne), 46th Support Group (Airborne), 1st Corps Support Command, Cruz said she was used to fast-paced work, as COSCOM units serve in the Army's rapid deployment force, ready to deploy anywhere in the world in 18 hours.

"But this, I was not expecting this," she said laughing.

As she discussed the past week, Cruz said one of the events that shocked her most was appearing on the front page of the Guatemalan newspaper *Prensa Libre*.

"The Guatemalan soldiers were coming up to me and saying that my picture was in there, and in [*Guatemala Siglo Veintiuno*], and that like millions of people read that paper so every Guatemalan knew about me," she said, her eyes wide at the thought.

Among those who saw her in the paper were two half-sisters she has never met who live in Guatemala.

"My dad is from Guatemala City, but I never met that side of my family, so I hope when I go to Antigua [today] we will be able to meet. That will be exciting," she said.

Excitement is not unusual to Cruz how-

ever, who said that she has been hit with many challenges since she joined the Army.

"I got to Ft. Bragg and the guys were like, 'She'll be a female and show up just to work in the office.' I knew I had to prove them wrong, and I did," she said.

"A lot of people look at me funny in general because I am

a mechanic, but I'm kinda a tomboy.

"I like to just hang out with the guys and do my job. I love being a mechanic because it is a hands-on job. I am not an office kind of person," she said laughing.

"I am not saying working in an office is bad," she added quickly, "but I can't just sit at a desk."

While she currently works as a front-end supervisor for in a clothing store in Northern Virginia, Cruz said she is starting a second job at an auto shop on the weekends when she returns.

"I am basically a manager at the store now, but I am just not authorized to open and close the store or counsel people, not that I want to do that," she said.

She added that she is excited to head home so she can be with her two-year-old son, Xavier.

"This is the longest I have been away from him, even when I was on active duty," she said.

"But I think I may ask my first sergeant about coming back because this has been so much better than I ever thought it would be," she said.

"We are working with all the other services, and this is so interesting to get to work with them and see how they do their job, and they see how we do ours, and we all learn from each other," Cruz said.

"I have been able to get to know people from all over, different units, different services, this has been so cool," she added. ❖

Memos from the Mayor's Desk

☞ There are two no-salute zones on Base Camp Quetzal. They are in the LSA, from the laundry tent continuing west, and in the TOC area.

☞ Smokers, if you are going to smoke, do not walk and flick ashes everywhere. I have seen several individuals just flicking their cigarettes. This is a no-go. Use the designated butt cans. If you are walking, field strip the cigarette and put it in your pocket until you get to a butt can.

☞ Guatemalan vendors will be set up at the Guatemalan headquarters every Thursday from 3-8 p.m. They will accept dollars and Quetzals.

☞ There is no eating of food in the the LSA. We do not want rats, mice, snakes and the rest of the food chain living in our tents with us. Eat in the designated area only.

☞ The Dining Facility hours of operation are:
Breakfast: 5:30 - 7:30 a.m.
Lunch: MRE
Dinner: 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

☞ The AAFES trailer is open from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. and 6 - 9 p.m. daily.

☞ Catholic Mass will be celebrated Easter Sunday, 9-10:30 a.m. at the Chapel tent.

☞ Lights out is at 10 p.m.

☞ Laundry drop-off is 5:30-7:30 a.m. Pick-up is 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

☞ We need volunteers to help serve in the MWR tent. If there are not enough volunteers by noon the tent will be closed that night.

☞ If you need help, see me, Maj. Norris or 1st Sgt. Morse I can be reached at the Mayor's tent.

Outside the Wire

Nine Deaths in Iraq Won't Deter Coalition, Officials Say

Story by Donna Miles, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — Five U.S. soldiers and four civilians were killed in separate attacks today in Iraq, coalition officials reported during a Baghdad news briefing.

Army Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt, deputy operations director for Combined Joint Task Force 7, said the U.S. soldiers were patrolling northwest of Habbaniyah when their vehicle hit an improvised explosive device. The explosion left a crater measuring 15 by 10 feet, he said.

In a separate incident in Fallujah, Kimmitt said, four coalition contractors traveling in two separate vehicles were killed after coming under attack by grenades and small-arms fire. Officials said U.S. Marines are investigating details surrounding the incident.

However, news sources in Baghdad reported this morning that jubilant crowds gathered around the burning vehicles and dragged at least one of the bodies through the streets. No details were available about the civilians' nationalities.

The names of all killed in the attacks were being withheld until their families are notified.

Kimmitt said the nine families — five military, four civilians — will receive knocks on the door today informing them that their loved ones have been killed. "It's tragic, and we grieve with these families," he said.

But to allow these tragedies to deter the coalition from its mission, "to buckle under to a bunch of insurgents" would be the ultimate disgrace to their memories, Kimmitt said.

He called the attacks examples of "a slight uptick in localized engagements" in Iraq, which he said have had a "negligible impact" on the coalition's progress. During the past week, Kimmitt said, daily engagements have averaged 28 per day against coalition military forces, five per day against Iraqi security forces, and just under four per day against Iraqi civilians.

Meanwhile, he said, the coalition is "stepping up its offensive tempo" to kill or capture those instigating the attacks.

Even as the attacks were occurring, Kimmitt, said schools and health clinics were opening, oil output was increasing and critical steps were continuing to be taken to build and restore

Iraq's essential services and infrastructure.

Dan Senor, Coalition Provisional Authority spokesman, said 18,000 individual reconstruction projects have been completed in Iraq during the past nine to 10 months. "This averages 75 to 100 projects per day, and the process moves forward," he said.

Kimmitt said Fallujah, a former Baathist stronghold, harbors a small percentage of foreign terrorists and former Saddam Hussein regime elements who "just don't get it" and believe they can "turn back the hands of time" to reverse Iraq's progress toward democracy.

"It's a small minority of the people," he said.

"Most of the people want to move forward and be part of the new Iraq."

Kimmitt dismissed a reporter's question whether Fallujah has become too dangerous for coalition activity. "I don't feel that there is any place in this country that coalition forces think is too dangerous to go into," he said.

Like the Army's 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment and 82nd Airborne Division before them, Kimmitt said, members of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force now responsible for the area are "dedicated to going into Fallujah at any time to restore order, to establish a safe and secure environment and to get on with the progress that is being denied to the vast majority of citizens in Fallujah."

Kimmitt said the coalition expects the insurgents to increase their attacks as the countdown continues to the June 30 handover of sovereignty to the Iraqi people.

He called today's attack and those likely to be launched in the future — particularly those involving civilians — as a "sign of desperation" and "cowardice" among foreign terrorists and former regime elements in Iraq.

Those who carry out these attacks "have a different vision for the future of Iraq than the majority of Iraqis," Senor said. Polls consistently show that most Iraqis "are grateful for their liberation," he noted, and anxious for the country's occupation to end.

Paradoxically, he said, polls show that most Iraqis don't want the coalition to leave, presumably due to fears that Iraq's security situation will degrade.

Sports Report

NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament Road to the Final Four

Sweet 16							
(9) UAB	74	(3) Pittsburgh	51	(8) Alabama	80	(1) St. Joseph's	84
(4) Kansas	100	(2) Oklahoma St.	63	(5) Syracuse	71	(2) Wake Forest	80
(3) Georgia Tech.	72	(1) Duke	72	(6) Vanderbilt	53	(1) Duke	66
(10) Nevada	67	(5) Illinois	62	(2) UConn	73	(7) Xavier	63
(1) St. Joseph's	84	(3) Texas	71	Elite Eight		(8) Alabama	71
(4) Wake Forest	80	(7) Xavier	79	(4) Kansas	71	(2) UConn	87
				(3) Georgia Tech	79		