

Brigade returns from field

By Jim Koenig

22nd Signal Brigade soldiers returned from the field last month after 20 exhausting days and nights of proving they were the "Voice of V Corps." It was hard work but most agreed that the Army has to train during peace, to win during war.

ARTEP

Before the exercise, code-named Crested Eagle, began members of the 17th and 32nd Signal Battalions deployed to undisclosed field sites. There they received their first Army Training and Evaluation Program (ARTEP) test as a brigade.

The two Battalions were evaluated by experienced and knowledgeable NCO's and officers from the 440th Signal Battalion and the brigade staff, according to 1st Lt. James P. Totter an evaluator who monitored the ARTEP.

Field duty in the winter turns many soldiers off but a surprisingly high number of signaleers said they enjoyed the exercise.

"I love the field", said Sp4 Diane Hoopes, 17th Signal Battalion, "you get more training out here and you see what's going on in the communications field." The 21 year-old Californian said she didn't feel she received enough NBC training but over all, it was a good exercise.

A few problems

Twelve 32nd Signal soldiers ran the Relay 3 site located in the middle of large boulders scattered around a 30 degree hillside. Sgt Victor Medina, a six year veteran from San Juan, P.R. said, "We had a few problems the first couple of days, but we got it under control and squared away."

During the exercise an element of the 440th Signal was joined by a 19-man communications team from the German 3rd Corps at one of the isolated sites. The two units worked independently of each other but found time to spend some off duty moments together.

SSgt. Tom Martin, B Co 440th said, "The German meals come three to a package and they are great." 20 yards away Dieter Hoffmann, a 26 year-old German Sergeant disagreed with Martin by saying, "The American C-rations are better than ours, we all like them."

Even on field duty some strange and unusual things can happen. Like a 500 pound pig running through your tent, or a giant owl landing on your antenna and knocking out your communications, or getting chased by a ferocious german shepard dog. During Crested Eagle, 22nd soldiers experienced these events and more.

55 mph winds

Sp4 Katrina Lowery, a 23 year-old B Co 440th soldier from Macon Ga., said 55 MPH winds hit and broke one antenna and caused some problems but added, "I like the field, and except for laundry problems I would rather be here than back at the Kaserne."

Sp4 Kenneth Beall, who manned the operations switchboard for HHC, 32nd Signal said "we had a lot of mud, rain and snow but everything kept running smooth". The Monroe La. native added that the exercise was especially good for the new soldiers who have arrived recently.

Fifty-plus mile per hour winds, snow, cold pouring rain mixed with 10-18 inches of mud and slush and sub-freezing temperatures didn't make Crested Eagle an enjoyable exercise. But it did prove one thing. If the 22nd Signal Brigade is ever called upon to move out in war time under any kind of conditions, they can do it, because they have done it before.

