

# 16th NCO braves fire

By Jim Koenig

SCHWEINFURT, Germany (FbF)- A Communications Platoon sergeant from Fort Hood, Texas was credited with saving thousands of dollars of equipment during this year's REFORGER exercise. On September 8, the 16th Signal Battalion NCO rushed into a blazing tent, which had been set fire by a malfunctioning heating stove, and pulled to safety all of the equipment from within the tent.

After removing the equipment and aiding in putting out the fire, SSgt. Lorenza Sands became unconscious from smoke inhalation and had to be evacuated to a German hospital in nearby Schweinfurt, almost dying on the way.

"I was in the first sergeant's tent when someone yelled fire!", the 33 year-old NCO recalled. Sands then grabbed a fire extinguisher and ran into the burning tent, spraying the flames and removing cots and other equipment.

"The smoke was extremely thick and I was unable to breathe", Sands said, "So I backed out, caught my breath and returned inside."

## Flames three feet high

Witnesses said the flames were soaring three feet above the tent and down the sides when the native of Miami, Fla., surged in.

With the help of other NCO's and soldiers, the fire was put out but Sands

soon collapsed because of extreme smoke inhalation, according to eye witness, Pvt.2 Gary Johnson, a soldier in Sands' platoon. Johnson and C Company's Commander, Capt. Ronald Vandiver, rushed Sands to the civilian hospital in Schweinfurt.

## Almost dies

"On the way to the medical facilities", Johnson said, "Sergeant Sands went into a deeper state of unconsciousness and suddenly quit breathing." The 19 year-old soldier began CPR, aided by his commander, and started Sands breathing. "After ten minutes, Sergeant Sands quit again", Johnson, a Tactical Satellite and Microwave Operator said, "We repeated CPR again and got him to the hospital."

Doctors treated Sands for smoke inhalation and minor burns, releasing him for duty the next day. After the ordeal the modest soldier stated, "I was just doing my job as any NCO would have done."

Lt.Col. John Watkins, Battalion Commander of the 16th Signal Battalion, attached for Reforger to the 22nd Signal Brigade, said, "The equipment and part of the tent was saved due to the quick reactions of Sands and his personal aid to control the fire." Watkins, who is participating in his second Reforger as the 16th Signal's Commander, said he was equally proud of Johnson for saving the platoon sergeant's life.

## Two 440th soldiers injured in vehicle mishap

HOECHST, Germany (FbF)- Two soldiers from the 440th Signal Battalion, on September 14, were injured when their M151 jeep lost a wheel and struck a guardrail, flipping the vehicle over twice.

The soldiers, Sp4s James Harrell and George Booker both of C Company 440th, were transported to the 97th General Hospital in Frankfurt after the 3:30 a.m. crash on route 45 near Hoechst.

Booker was released with bruises while Harrell suffered a dislocated shoulder and was admitted to the hospital.

Military authorities are investigating the accident.

## Special days in October

Fire Prevention Week.....	October 3
Child Health Week.....	October 6
Columbus Day.....	October 11
Hoechst Volkfest Begins.....	October 14
Halloween.....	October 30