

Install, Maintain Commo System

Compiled By
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516th Signal Company, 86th Signal Bn, 11th Signal Bde, Ft. Huachuca, AZ: Deployed approximately 120 soldiers to Mogadishu, Somalia, to support Operation Restore Hope & Continue Hope, January-June 1993; October 1993-February 1994. (Note: this company had two rotations for this mission; some soldiers returned for the second time) The 516th's mission—to install and maintain a communications system to support United Nations forces and its supporting elements.

Training. "We need to train as we'll fight..." SFC Robert L. Wiggins, platoon sergeant

"We need more combat type training to help soldiers protect themselves...combat procedures...more combat life saver training..." SGT Michael Curry, light vehicle mechanic

"...systems were up and running in no time once we got there...but...we need more training on what to do in a hostile environment...setting up site defense...when the UN took over the embassy we needed back-up fighting positions because we had everyone pointing (weapons) into someone else's area..." SPC Michael Siebellink, cryptographic repairer

"More schooling so we can do a better job...(fixed station and tactical signal training)..."

SGT Sharon Magee, wire systems chief

"Train your soldiers for war (during peace) and they'll respond during deployment" SGT Charles Howard, multichannel systems operator, rotation to Kuwait

Leadership. "Senior leadership was too busy trying to do the NCOs' and soldiers' job rather than their own...too much micro-management..." SGT Magee

"Don't send soldiers on a mission if

there's no job for them...overall, the senior leadership was good...but there were too many chiefs (senior NCOs) and not enough Indians...therefore, conflicting priorities..." SGT Curry

"Our senior NCOs made a great effort at trying to help soldiers with personal problems..." SPC Siebellink

Logistics. "Our authorized MTOE equipment was not adequate to support the mission...we had hand receipted equipment from other units... we still continue to send (non-deployable) soldiers..." SFC Wiggins

"We lacked the proper equipment...I'll have a better maintenance plan for all my equipment...ensure prop-



Soldiers deployed to Operation Rescue set up an extensive communications network outside the U.S. Embassy compound in Somalia. [Photo by Joint Combat Camera]

er equipment accountability...at all times..." SGT Magee

"Flying there (Kuwait) on commercial flights would've reduced layovers...we were held over in Germany for 17 hours due to aircraft problems...need better maintenance of planes and more available for deployments...not all equipment was accounted for but we were expected to sign for it...have hand receipts for all equipment you are responsible for...equipment wasn't maintained and

in poor condition..." SGT Howard

Overall Observations. "Be better prepared...all soldiers and equipment maintained and inventoried...families taken care of...open communication..." SFC Wiggins

"Keep everyone informed...on the same sheet of music...on anything and everything pertaining to the mission at hand..." SGT Curry

"Make sure everyone knows and understands the entire mission...don't leave anyone out...even privates need to know and can often offer good suggestions..." SPC Siebellink

"Keep soldiers and family members informed...and cared for before deployment...use soldiers in their MOS or don't send them...we had 31Ms working in the orderly room..." SGT Howard

593rd Signal Company (Wolf Pack), 86th Signal Bn, 11th Signal Bde, Ft. Huachuca, AZ: Deployed 80 soldiers to Mogadishu, Somalia to Support Opera-

tion Continue Hope, June—October 1993. (NOTE: replaced elements of the 516th) The 593rd's mission—provide long-haul communications support for the UN Coalition Forces and its supporting elements. Unit replaced soldiers already in country and used existing equipment. Provided access to UN and military telephone systems in Mogadishu from remote sites at Bardera and Biadoa, allowing UN forces to communicate with higher headquarters and the UN Command.

Training. "The soldiers were trained and ready to perform their communication mission. I think the physical fitness and personal hygiene standards were very important...in keeping my soldiers' stress level at a minimum." *1SG Clarence Abrams*

"Technically I was prepared...but I'd suggest we do more infantry-type training to better prepare soldiers for combat situations...continue MOS and CTT training..." *SPC Randy Huffman*

"More team training... and training on convoys, M60, M203 and site defense because we weren't prepared for this type of enemy..." *SPC Michael Imperial*

"We need training as a team...not thrown together with soldiers from another unit with different jobs... also equipment palletizing would've been quicker if more soldiers were trained in air cargo loading..." *SSG Rickey Letcher*

Leadership. "We had some great senior NCO leadership...they put the junior enlisted before themselves..." *SPC Imperial*

Logistics. "Getting desert camouflage uniforms, flack vests, and other protective equipment (prior to deployment) was a last-minute rush...getting a flight...our fly-out date was changed five times before we actually left, causing some anxieties..." *1SG Abrams*

"When the MEDEVAC unit left we had no medical support for our five signal soldiers there (45 days remaining in country)...getting used to no (dining) facility...just MREs and T-RATs..." *SPC Imperial*

"Let's get there on a better aircraft..." *SPC Huffman*

Overall Observations. "We need to know about the soldiers from the other countries which will be working with us; customs, mannerisms, uniforms...more information on the mission, location, personnel, geography..." *SSG Letcher*

"The R&R was a positive experience for me...it helped relieve stress and get our minds off things..." *SPC Imperial*

"The mail was very slow...and often misrouted (once in country)...morale and recreation was limited...and I feel that some infantry and medical units got more slots (for morale trips) than other combat support units...we need more unity among different units (all for one, one-for-all concept)..." *1SG Abrams* ■

An OOTW leadership challenge...

Create a Positive Atmosphere

By 1SG William Fassinger

The sting of frigid air and blowing snow hitting my face is just as vivid today as the day we loaded the last vehicle on the rail car. I reflected on the words my mentors gave me and searched for the knowledge and the courage to serve my country without fear.

I wanted to lead my soldiers in the best possible fashion on this and every mission. I knew my company was the best in the Army and our leadership would rise to the challenges at hand. I was also reassured in knowing my soldiers had received the best and most realistic training. The only thing that I feared at this point was the unknown.

"Welcome to Somalia!" It was almost a contradiction in terms. Why would you welcome someone to a country that has nothing? However, the time for leaders to motivate soldiers was at hand. It was hot—very hot—and the humidity sapped our strength.

The leadership challenges were in full force—lack of sleep, an unforgiving climate, back-to-back missions, etc. Field manuals, classroom training, exercises, role playing. All these things and more didn't get us close to the harsh reality that we were about to face. Every day was a new challenge in the art of leading and motivating soldiers.

Reflecting on this mission has allowed me to see what helped me and my NCOs create a positive leadership atmosphere. One of the keys to this, I believe, was the tough and realistic training standards we established in garrison and in field training environments. These scenarios were tested time and time again for both the leaders and the soldiers.

Our platoon sergeants and squad leaders were given missions, but were also given the opportunity and flexibility to plan for and execute those missions. They were given the chance to perform as NCOs.

In Somalia, the unit performed a variety of missions ranging from area security, battlefield circulation and control, convoy operations and raid operations in search of arms caches to base cluster defense operations.

There were many examples of exemplary duty performance among the soldiers and NCOs of my unit. I attribute this to realistic training, not cutting corners, setting standards and enforcing them, mentoring and taking care of soldiers.

Leaders at all levels react differently to each situation. I sincerely hope every NCO and soldier who participated in an OOTW mission will pass on all their experiences, good and bad, to all soldiers and leaders. We must continue to develop our soldiers to fill our shoes in the NCO Corps of tomorrow's Army. ■

Fassinger is the first sergeant for the 511th MP Co, (now deployed to Cuba) Ft. Drum, NY.



A Ft. Drum soldier provides security for Somali children during Operation Restore Hope. [Ft. Drum PAO photo]