Welcome to the Joint Task Force-Bravo Family

Guide for Spouses and Family Members

SOTO CANO AIR BASE, Honduras

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
HEADQUARTERS, Joint Task Force-Bravo
APO AA 34042-2500

Dear Joint Task Force-Bravo Family Member:

I'd like to welcome you to Joint Task Force-Bravo. You have my personal thanks to you and your Service Member as they support our operations here in Honduras. We know and understand the effect a separation can have on a family–but your family's sacrifice does not go unnoticed by us and our Nation.

Your family member is now a part of a very unique unit based at Soto Cano Air Base, which operates throughout Central America. Together with our teammates in other U.S. Agencies and partner nations, we help counter transnational organized crime, build our partner nations capacities, and quickly respond to any humanitarian assistance or disaster relief contingencies throughout Central America.

JTF-Bravo is a Joint Service organization, with more than 500 U.S. military personnel in addition to over 500 U.S. and Honduran civilians. We serve across five different units or Major Subordinate Commands, including the 612th Air Base Squadron, Army Forces Battalion, Joint Security Forces, Medical Element, and the 1st Battalion, 228th Aviation Regiment.

The Task Force is an amazing gathering of individuals who come together to form a team of U.S. ambassadors to some of our closest neighbors in the world. Moreover, they also share experiences while helping our neighbors grow and prosper, and in the end, your family member will come away with an appreciation for the people they engage with here.

One of my top priorities is the family. It's because of the support your Service Member receives from home, that they are able to accomplish what is asked of them here.

Please take the opportunity to review our Family Welcome Guide, which will give you a sense of the life and opportunities your family member will experience here, but also key information specific to you and your family. It also contains links to our website and several social media venues so you'll be able to follow our activities and know or have access to information affecting both you and your Service Member. Please don't hesitate to ask any questions that you may have or let us know if there's something that we can do to make this transition as smooth as possible.

Once again, we thank you for your sacrifice! We are thankful and extremely fortunate to have both you and your Service Member as part of this team.

Sincerely,

CARNS.SHAWN.FORREST.1036907343 Digitally signed by CARNS.SHAWN.FORREST.1036907343 Date: 2016.10.28 16:19:59 -06'00'

SHAWN F. CARNS
Command Sergeant Major, USA
Command Sergeant Major

HUGHES.BRIAN.TIMOTHY.1008256540 Digitally signed by HUGHES.BRIAN.TIMOTHY.1008256540 DN: c=US, o=U.S. Government, ou=DoD, ou=PKI, ou=USA, cn=HUGHES.BRIAN.TIMOTHY.1008256540 Date: 2016.10.28 18:39:10 -06'00'

BRIAN T. HUGHES
Colonel, USA
Commanding

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WELCOME

Our Motto:
"Progress Through Unity."

Welcome to the Joint Task Force-Bravo family!

We know that separation from a loved one can be hard; to make the best of it, it is important that you have all the necessary information, to familiarize yourself with the installation to which your family member is assigned.

This publication will introduce you to the life style at Soto Cano Air Base, visitation procedures, benefits, and contact information, as well as basic information on the Republic of Honduras.

Though it may not address all your questions, it provides general guidelines and contacts for further assistance.

Who we are:

A unit comprised of members from multiple services, capable of providing intra-theater operations in support of a variety of mission sets. Our team is one that prides itself on professionalism and building positive relationships with our Central American partner nations.

A member of JTF-Bravo on a MEDRETE

JTF-Bravo members on Chapel Hike 64

What we do:

Conduct and support joint operations, actions, and activities throughout the joint operations area, maintaining a forward presence in order to enhance regional security, stability, and cooperation.

JTF-Bravo supports U.S. interests in Central America through:

- Operations and activities that support law enforcement agencies in Central America.
- Developing cooperative security arrangement and confidence building measures between neighbors that contribute to reduced regional tensions.
- Meeting and coordinating with Ambassadors, Country Teams, Military Group Commanders, Senior Defense Officials and Defense Attachés.
- Exercising combined forces; JTF-Bravo normally supports three to five large exercises annually that are directed by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Joint Staff

The staff provides command and control, staff assistance, operational, logisticas and administrative support for forces deployed in the geographic area, in support of U.S. Southern Command directed operations.

Army Forces Battalion (ARFOR)

The battalion consists of a headquarters and support company and staff. The HSC conducts water purification, fueling and ammunition operations. The battalion includes permanent change of station positions, temporary duty on a 179-day rotation and individual augmentations.

The battalion's mission is to execute sustainment operations for JTF-Bravo within Central America, countering transnational organized crime, situational assessment, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and building partnership capacity.

1st Battalion, 228th Aviation Regiment

The 1st Battalion, 228th Aviation Regiment's mission is to conduct general aviation support operations in support of JTF-Bravo.

It is a composite battalion with UH-60 and HH-60 Blackhawks, and CH-47 Chinooks, providing airlift and evacuation capabilities to the region.

Typical missions conducted by the battalion include: countering transnational organized crime, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, air movement of people, equipment and supplies, aero-medical evacuation, and limited search and rescue. In addition to these operational missions, the battalion participates in selected special events and VIP support missions.

Mission

Joint Task Force-Bravo, as guests of our Honduran host-nation partners and the senior representative for USSOUTHCOM at Soto Cano Air Base, conducts and supports joint operations, actions, and activities throughout the joint operations area maintaining a forward presence in order to enhance regional security, stability, and cooperation.

Vision

A premier joint and expeditionary organization committed to being a reliable partner and promoting enduring regional security.

1. ARFOR members prepare medical equipment for a sling load
2. Medical evacuation by 1-228 Aviation Regiment

Joint Security Forces (JSF)

The JSF conduct installation security, force protection, and provide security support for personnel recovery, search and rescue, counter transnational organized crime, disaster response, noncombatant evacuation order, and humanitarian/civic assistance in support of JTF-Bravo operations and U.S. Southern Command operations throughout Central America.

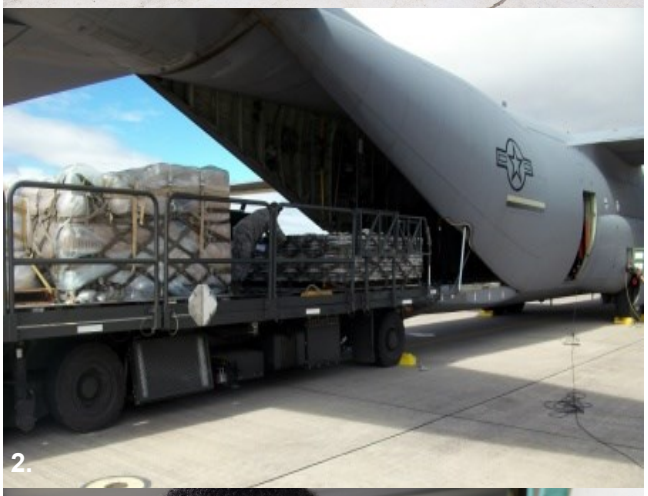
612th Air Base Squadron

The 612th Air Base Squadron provides air base support to Joint Task Force-Bravo and 12th Air Force including air traffic control, logistics, base civil engineering, fire department, airfield operations and personnel functions. In addition, the squadron maintains Soto Cano Air Base as the United States' only strategic gateway to CENTAM for SOUTHCOM.

Medical Element (MEDEL)

The Medical Element consists of U.S. Soldiers and civilians, along with Honduran professionals working together to provide a wide range of health care to U.S. service members and support to the people of Central America.

The MEDEL provides dental, pharmacy, patient administration, laboratory, veterinarian care for military working dogs, preventive medicine, radiology, emergency medical care, surgery, aviation medicine and physical therapy at its clinic and facilitates TRI-CARE referrals to Tegucigalpa for services that are not provided on base. All service lines are on-call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, but have limited service outside of normal clinic hours.



1. *Military working dog from Joint Security Forces*
2. *Members of the 612th Air Base Squadron offload, load, and refuel a C-130 Hercules aircraft at Soto Cano Air Base*
3. *Service members from MEDEL performs tooth extraction*

Living Quarters for
Soto Cano Service Members

Furnished government quarters are provided for military and DoD civilians on orders to Soto Cano. Lodging consists of temporary quarters, metal dorms, barracks and quads. Quarters are available for all personnel based on rank and availability.

All quarters run on 110 volts, are basic cable and internet ready, and include a DSN phone, DVD player, refrigerator, microwave and furniture.

Service members may reside in temporary quarters until permanent quarters become available.

Barracks rooms have a twin-size bed only; all others have twin or full-size beds. Service members may obtain local internet and cable services at their own expense. Linen is available for TDY personnel only.

Temporary quarters are wooden buildings of tropical design; a full quarter is 16 feet by 32 feet with screened windows and a tin roof with air conditioner and ceiling fans for cooling.

Metal dorms are for TDY personnel and come in a variety of sizes based on your rank. Temporary quarters and metal dorms have communal latrines, shower and laundry rooms centrally located near the living areas.

Quads are reserved for personnel E7 and above on 12 month tours. The quads come in studio and apartment versions to include a bedroom, bathroom and kitchen.

1. *Enlisted barracks exterior*
2. *Enlisted barracks interior*
3. *Metal dorms exterior*
4. *Quads exterior*

Base/Post Exchange Services

Soto Cano AAFES Main Exchange is a retail facility offering merchandise such as food, snacks, health and beauty care, cleaning, laundry, bedding, house wares, clothing, sports and outdoor items, and a variety of electronic products.

Family members who are visiting Soto Cano are allowed purchases from this facility as well.

Other services provided are:

- **Western Union money transfer**
- **Local currency Exchange**
- **Video rental**
- **Postage stamps**
- **Gift cards**
- **Convenience special order**
- **Military Exchange credit card services**
- **Online shopping at** https://www.shopmyexchange.com/

Dining Facility

The dining facility, operated by the Logistics Readiness Center, offers a great variety of foods. The menu includes a variety of options, including taco and pasta bars on different days, as well as desserts.

The standard rates for eating at the Dining Facility are : Breakfast $2.60, Lunch $5.55, Dinner $4.85 .

If visiting Soto Cano, family members are authorized to use the Dining facility.

Hours of operation:

Monday-Friday	Weekends and Holidays
0630-0900	0630-0930
1130-1330	1130-1330
1700-1900	1700-1830

1. & 2. The Soto Cano Base/Post Exchange (foreground) and Dining Facility (background)
3. Food line at the Dining Facility

Morale, Welfare and Recreation programs include:

- Recreation center and library
- Lempira Tours and Travel (Copan Ruins, Roatán, La Ceiba, Utila, Lake Yojoa, other Central American countries)
- Basic scuba certification
- Basketball and tennis courts
- Outdoor swimming pool
- Sports fields and quarter-mile running track
- Wood shop
- Hammock shop
- Fitness center
- Sports equipment, 55 bicycles, ice chests and other equipment available for sign out
- Movie room
- Free golf passes and golf clubs

1. *Children from a sponsored orphanage visit the Soto Cano Air Base pool (left)*
2. *Valley of the Angels*
3. *Comayagua Golf Club*
4. *Pulhapanzak Waterfall*

The JTF-Bravo Chapel coordinates monthly humanitarian outreaches to the villages around Soto Cano Air Base. These programs allow services members to give back to the community while creating spiritual resiliency. Programs included are:

Chapel Hikes

The JTF-Bravo Chapel sponsors monthly Chapel Hikes where Service members deliver donated food and supplies to remote and very underprivileged Honduran villages in the areas surrounding Soto Cano Air Base.

Orphanage Visits

Service Members from JTF-Bravo have supported more than 500 children from different orphanages for many years. Volunteers spend time interacting with the children, donating much needed supplies and doing construction work on the buildings in which they live.

Habitat for Humanity

As part of this housing project, Service members participate in the construction of proper homes for under privileged Hondurans in the Comayagua and La Paz areas.

JTF-Bravo is an organization that helps bring much needed support and humanitarian assistance to remote areas as well as nearby communities throughout the Comayagua valley.

1.

2.

3.

4.

1. ***Service members pack food and supplies before a Chapel Hike***
2. ***Service members hands food and supplies to a local woman during a Chapel Hike***
3. ***Service members visit local orphanage***
4. ***Service members participate in local housing projects***

How do I send mail to Soto Cano?

If your family member is a civilian, or serving a Permanent Change of Station tour (usually one year), use the following address:

Name
PSC 1300, Box #___
APO, AA 34042

If he or she is on Temporary Duty, use:
Name
PSC 1300, Box G.D.
APO, AA 34042

If my family member does not bring a cell phone or purchase one after arriving, is there some way he or she can call home?

Yes. Every room comes equipped with a Defense Switch Network (DSN) phone, and your family member can use this to place morale calls. To do this, your family member should contact his or her home station operator and request to place a morale call.

Additionally, free Wi-Fi is available at the Recreational Center, Gym, Chapel and the Last Resort Community Activity Center (CAC).

Soto Cano Post Office

How do I contact my family member in case of emergency– for example, a death in the family or a serious illness?

If you need to reach your family member in an emergency, you should contact the American Red Cross at (877) 272-7337, to speak to a Red Cross Communications Specialist. They are the approved avenue in such matters. For more information on this important service, see the following websites.

Red Cross Military Family Services
http://www.redcross.org/find-help/military-families

Red Cross Emergency Communication Services
http://www.redcross.org/find-help/military-families/emergency-communication-services

I don't have an emergency, but I haven't heard from my family member in some time and am concerned. How do I contact his or her unit leadership?

In non-emergency cases, during local duty hours, you can speak with the leadership from each unit by calling 011-504-2713-5123 (Commercial), followed by the corresponding 7-digit number below (unless otherwise stated). If you have access to DSN, use the prefix 312 and the 7-digit number.

- 1-228th Aviation Regiment 449-6507
- 612th Air Base Squadron
  449-6257 (First Sergeant)
  449-6251 (Director of Operations)
- Army Forces Battalion 449-6205/6219
- Army Support Activity 449-6241
- Joint Security Forces 449-4257
- Medical Element 449-4190/4724

For all other calls after duty hours, please dial: 449-5200

FINANCIAL ENTITLEMENTS

What entitlements will my family receive because of this assignment?

All service members stationed in Honduras will receive Hardship Duty Pay in the amount of $100 per month. Additionally, all service members who are married will receive Family Separation Allowance in the amount of $250 per month.

Will my family continue to receive the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) while my spouse is deployed?

Yes. For service members on Temporary Duty (TDY) or Temporary Change of Station (TCS), their family members will continue to receive BAH at the rate designated for their permanent duty location. For service members who have a Permanent Change of Station (PCS) to Soto Cano, their family members will receive BAH at the location specified on the service member's orders.

When should we expect to receive those entitlements?

Service members qualify for Hardship Duty and Family Separation Allowance after 30 days of being in country.

What should we do if we have not received them?

Service members who have not received an entitlement should fill out a Pay Inquiry Form and submit to their unit S-1 or visit the Finance Customer Service Section.

VISITING SOTO CANO AB

Can family members visit Soto Cano?

Yes, family members are authorized to visit Soto Cano and stay for up to 14 days. If your family member is not sharing living quarters, you may stay in their quarters. No later than five days prior to arriving, your family member should seek the necessary permissions to gain you access to the base.

Does my family member need to submit paperwork prior to arrival on base?

Yes, he or she must submit an "Unofficial Base Pass" through the Joint Security Forces Liaison Office. This will require you to provide photocopies of your passport and drivers license. Please note that this process requires five working days for processing.

Do I need immunizations prior to travelling to Honduras?

Family members do not need immunization prior to traveling to Honduras; however, if you plan to visit Panama and then return to Honduras you must have a yellow fever shot.

Is there a base lodging facility? If not, how many people can the rooms accommodate?

Soto Cano Air Base does not have a base lodging facility for families, but there is transient billeting for a small sized family. Availability is mission dependent and on a first come basis. Your family member should check for availability, get approval from their unit and make a reservation with the billeting office prior to your arrival date.

Must a visiting family member go through a country clearance process?

Family members visiting Honduras do not require a country clearance. To enter Honduras, you must present a U.S. passport with at least six months remaining validity.

U.S. citizens do not require a visa for tourism, but you must provide evidence of return or onward travel.

May I fly space-available military travel into Soto Cano Air Base?

Service recognized dependents may fly space-available; however, flights into and out of Soto Cano Air Base have limited space and are scheduled only once a week.

Your family member must obtain documentation, in the form of a letter, verifying authorized travel from the installation or unit commander. The letter must state your family member's name/rank, DoD Identification number, permanent change of station location, contact information, passenger's name and current residence information, length of authorized stay, and time frame the approval letter is valid.

Passengers are removed from the Space-A Register on expiration date of the approved time period stated in the letter or after 60 days. Each letter is valid for one round trip to your family member's duty location. You must present a copy to passenger terminal personnel and you must keep a copy for yourself while traveling.

For questions on available flights, your family member should contact:

Soto Cano Air Base Passenger Terminal
DSN: (312) 449-6636/6665
Commercial: 011-504-2713-5123 x6636/6665
Email: southcom.sotocano.jtfb-asa.list.space-a-scab@mail.mil

Charleston Air Force Base Passenger Terminal
DSN: (312) 673-3083/3048
Commercial: (843) 963-3083/3048
Email: spacea@charleston.af.mil

Cargo plane lands on Soto Cano Air Base and provides available space for donations through the Denton Program

What is the process once I arrive at Toncontín International Airport in Tegucigalpa?

Upon arrival, you must walk into the customs area and go through the tourist/Honduran immigration line where your passport will be checked and stamped.

After, you must proceed to the baggage claim area to collect your bags where you will find the JTF-Bravo liaison officer. You will then walk through the exit and into the airport's main entrance area.

May I ride the base shuttle from the airport in Tegucigalpa to Soto Cano Air Base?

Yes, you may use the base shuttle from the airport in Tegucigalpa if your family member has previously reserved a seat for you through the Personnel Office.

During your visit, you may also accompany your family member on trips sponsored by MWR on a space-available basis, provided you complete a letter of Release from Liability from the U.S. Government.

What should I do if I get stranded in Tegucigalpa or have an emergency while traveling?

The first thing you should do is try to contact your family member.

In case of emergency, you may contact the U.S. Embassy .

Telephone: +(504) 2236-9320 or +(504) 2238-5114

Emergency After-Hours Telephone: +(504) 2236-8497 or +(504) 2238-5114 or +(504) 2236-9320, extension 4100.

How can I stay current on JTF-Bravo news while my family member is in Honduras?

The primary publication source for JTF-Bravo is the official webpage at:

www.jtfb.southcom.mil

You can also follow us on our social media sites:

Facebook

https://www.facebook.com/JointTaskForceBravo

Twitter

https://twitter.com/jtfbravo

Instagram

https://instagram.com/jtfbravo

Flickr

https://www.flickr.com/photos/131825268@N07/albums

Whom should I contact if I have additional questions?

For additional questions, please email the JTF-Bravo Public Affairs team at southcom.sotocano.jtfb-pao.list.public-affairs-all@mail.mil.

Joint Task Force-Bravo
Soto Cano Air Base, Honduras

Facts About Honduras

The Republic of Honduras is located at the heart of Central America. It's borders are the Caribbean Sea (to the North), Guatemala, Nicaragua, and the North Pacific Ocean between El Salvador and Nicaragua (to the South). Honduras has a total area of 112,090 square miles, making it slightly larger than Tennessee.

On the northern part of the country, in the Caribbean Sea, lie the Bay Islands. They are very popular for scuba diving and are known for their massive coral reef barrier, which is the second largest natural reef in the world.

Across the country you may find clear turquoise waters, pristine beaches, lush jungles, breathtaking mountains, and challenging rivers to explore as well as enjoy the history of the country through the Mayan ruins of Copán or colonial cities and towns such as Comayagua.

Honduras has 18 departments (states) and its capital city, Tegucigalpa, is located in the department of Francisco Morazán, approximately an hour away from the historical city of Comayagua.

The official language is Spanish but English is widely spoken in businesses and it is the main language used in the Bay Islands.

Official currency is the lempira but U.S. Dollars are accepted in most commercial areas and some rural parts of the country. ***Exchange rate (as of October 2016): L. 23.09 per $ 1.00***

The climate is sub-tropical in low lands, temperate in mountains. The rainy season is from May to October and the dry season is from November through April.

The estimated population is 8.5 million people.

Basic Do's and Don'ts in Honduras

The Do's

- Respect host nation laws, regulations, customs, traditions and people
- Stay alert while traveling, remain security conscious (review Off-limits areas)
- Greet and shake hands with everyone when introduced or meeting someone
- Use official tittles and last names unless told otherwise
- Purchase items on local currency if possible
- Pay the posted price for taxi fares or agree on a price before getting into a taxi

The Don'ts

- Ridicule host nation customs, traditions, standard of living or people
- Visit areas or establishments deemed Off-limits
- Give rides to strangers
- Display arrogance or intimidate host nation civilian populace
- Beckon anyone with the index finger
- Make unauthorized transfer of U.S. currency or merchandise
- Drink tap water on or off-base

IMPORTANT SITES

- Military One Source
  http://www.militaryonesource.mil/

- U.S. Passports and International Travel information:
  http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/honduras.html

- National Military Family Association
  http://www.militaryfamily.org/

- Army and Air Force Exchange Services
  http://www.aafes.com/

- Official SOUTHCOM website
  http://www.southcom.mil/Pages/Default.aspx

- American Forces Network, Honduras
  https://www.facebook.com/AFNHonduras