

## Army Space soldiers battle typhoon in Japan

By SSG Franklin Barrett, Unit Reporter

**O**KINAWA, JAPAN — Have you ever watched trees torn to shreds by the wind? Or, listened as the eerily somber voice of the tempest beats down on buildings without remorse? Look toward the shoreline! Those massive waves assaulting the beaches and seawalls — their brethren have killed many ...

Give your sympathy to the island of Okinawa, Japan, for this is its fate. The sub-tropical climate so coveted by homesteading soldiers and airmen grants no mercy, and can turn from paradise to vicious in a heart's breadth. The summer months and part of autumn bring forth the infamy and wrath of the western Pacific — the typhoon.

Bearing the name of a deity in Micronesian legends, Typhoon Sinlaku hammered Okinawa from September 4-6, 2002. The brunt of the storm reached winds in excess of 120mph. The impact on both the military and civilian communities was terrible. Dozens of civilian homes were destroyed. A great deal of damage was dealt to the island's land-based vegetation, as well as coral reefs just offshore.

At E Company, 1st Satellite Control Battalion, the damage was considerable. The soldiers on duty during the typhoon coined the affectionate phrase, "the darkest days of BOC," in reference to the complete loss of power experienced at the Buckner Operations Center. Never before had such a challenge been faced, but the efforts of the soldiers and leaders of E Co. to stand up to Mother Nature at her raging worst reflected great credit upon the unit, the 1st SATCON and the U.S. Army.

When Sinlaku challenged the resolve of the soldiers and the mission at the Fort Buckner Defense Satellite Communications System Operations Center, the soldiers stood defiantly as they expended every resource available to combat her fury.

The first sign of trouble was the loss of commercial

power. Fortunately, the host installation provides infrastructure support, including power, so standby generators were brought online to provide the DSCSOC Operations Building with its lifeline.

Unfortunately, the power feeders for the building eventually failed completely, rendering it useless, and severing the building's power input. The next step was to operate off the Uninterruptible Power Supply's Backup Batteries, which are designed to run for very short periods of time, less than 30-45 minutes.

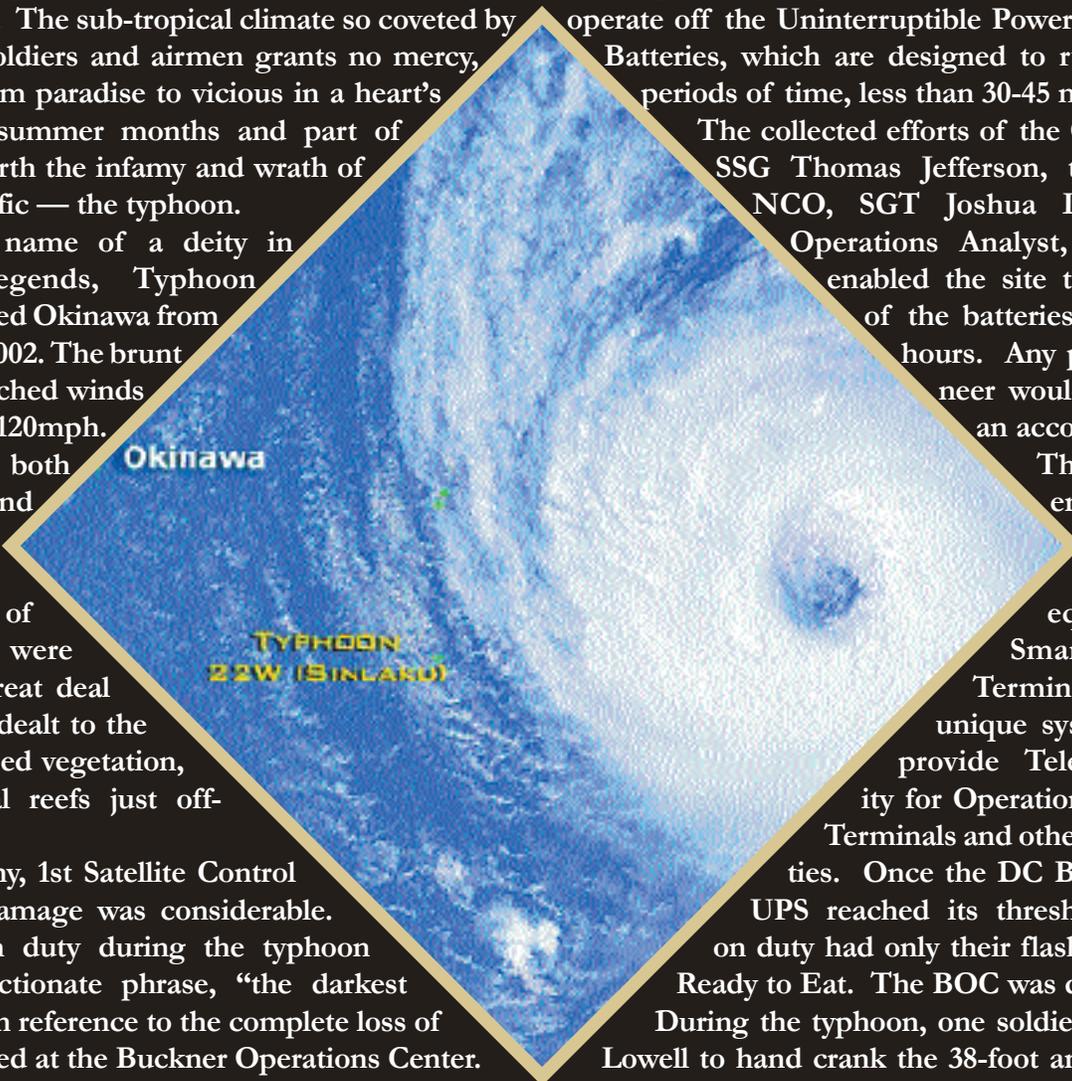
The collected efforts of the Operations NCO, SSG Thomas Jefferson, the Maintenance NCO, SGT Joshua Lowell, and the Operations Analyst, Frank Hughes, enabled the site to extend the life of the batteries to more than 11 hours. Any power-savvy engineer would marvel at such an accomplishment.

The last joules of energy were consumed by a single piece of equipment. The Smart Multi-Circuit Terminal (SMCT) is a unique system designed to provide Teletype connectivity for Operations Centers, Earth Terminals and other SATCOM facilities. Once the DC Bus voltage of the UPS reached its threshold, the soldiers on duty had only their flashlights and Meals Ready to Eat. The BOC was dark and silent.

During the typhoon, one soldier teamed up with Lowell to hand crank the 38-foot antenna utilized by the BOC Auxiliary Satellite Control Terminal, an AN/GSC-39B Medium Satellite Terminal.

SPC Robert Adanitsch volunteered for the unpleasant chore. Hand-cranking is no easy task. Normally, electronic drive motors in the antenna maintain the antenna's azimuth and elevation tracking of the satellite, but under emergency conditions, tracking has to be maintained by hand-cranking the antenna. Fortunately, he only had to hand-crank for less than an hour.

Lowell commented on the teamwork evident through-



out the long night. “Everyone was trying to do something, their part, without getting in anyone else’s way during a critical moment. Adanitsch really rose to the occasion, very eager to learn and to help,” he said.

Hughes and Lowell’s focus was on the site itself, restoring power, with Jefferson leading operations under emergency conditions. Without the well-calculated efforts of these three key personnel, the typhoon would have hindered operations far longer than it did.

The following day, the powerhouse team coordinated with a Marine Corps unit on the adjacent base, Camp Foster, and a 200-kilowatt mobile generator was provided to get the site back up. Jefferson’s efforts directly contributed to this unique emergency support, and BOC came back to life. However, it wasn’t until the main feeders were repaired, and normal power operations restored, that business started returning to normal.

The effects of the typhoon were felt for almost a week after the typhoon had passed.

Dealing with the challenges of typhoons and the effects on operations was no new thing for Jefferson. Typhoon Sinlaku was his third. He lauded the Herculean efforts of the “typhoon shift,” saying “Good teamwork the whole time. Everything just clicked.”

“The soldiers had their heads and hearts in the game,” he concluded.

For their efforts during those few days of overwhelming challenges, the soldiers and civilians most closely involved with the restoration of site power were awarded for their dedication with letters of achievement and Army Achievement and Commendation medals.

All personnel involved agreed that the effort was collective, and without the steadfast determination of each soldier on duty during the typhoon, operations restoration would not have been as swift.

The mission and operations have long since returned to normal. Typhoon Sinlaku hit hard, pushing the envelope of the resources of the unit. But E Co. drives on, and continues to support its fellow DSCSOCs and warfighters from the front lines to garrison.

E Co. extends the challenge to Mother Nature: bring your worst, and we will persevere.

## Thanksgiving in Qatar brightened for Space soldiers by special visitor



Chief of Staff of the Army GEN Eric K. Shinseki, left, administered the oath of re-enlistment to SSG Steven Adams from the Joint Tactical Ground Station Central Command. The once-in-a-lifetime event took place in Qatar, where Adams was deployed and served as the Engagement Control Team leader. Photo by SFC Robert Wall

By MAJ Laura Kenney, Army Space Command  
and CWO Vernon Dayton, Unit Reporter

CAMP AS SAYLIYAH, Doha, Qatar — What makes the Thanksgiving season special? Besides the food that is ... Often it’s the company you keep, and, for soldiers of the Joint Tactical Ground Station, Army Space Command, deployed here from Fort Bliss, Texas — the guest list definitely made Thanksgiving 2002 one to remember.

Chief of Staff of the Army, GEN Erik K. Shinseki, topped the list of special persons who came here to share holiday time with soldiers and sailors.

Three JTAGS soldiers shared a pre-Thanksgiving lunch with the general and other soldiers and sailors. But one JTAGS soldier really hit the jackpot, and was administered the oath of re-enlistment by the Army’s top general.

SSG Steven Adams, Engagement Control Team Leader, raised his right hand and repeated the time-honored words to the stern but friendly face of the man with four stars on his desert pattern BDU cap.

“I do solemnly swear, that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the

(See *Thanksgiving*, page 47)