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## OFFICERS OF V CORPS' 440<sup>TH</sup> SIGNAL BATTALION PADDLE AWAY POST-DEPLOYMENT STRESS ON THE RHINE

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**DARMSTADT, Germany** — Everybody needs a little inspiration now and then.

Officers from the 440<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion of V Corps' 22<sup>nd</sup> Signal Brigade recently had a chance to find a bit of their own floating down the Rhine River.



PHOTO COURTESY 22<sup>ND</sup> SIGNAL BRIGADE

Officers of the 440<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion of V Corps' 22<sup>nd</sup> Signal Brigade paddle the Rhine River during a recent "Inspiration Day" the unit conducted to help relieve post-deployment stress.

Stepping aside from the supply and maintenance issues they deal with day to day as they work through getting the unit "squared away" after its deployment to Operation Iraqi Freedom, the officers decided to paddle away their stress.

The journey from stress to inspiration grew out of a conversation between the battalion's chaplain and 440th Executive Officer Maj. Mark Rosenstein. The goal was simple: select a day to get the officers away from the stress of their post-deployment repair work.

"Inspiration Day" was conceived to meet this goal. The objectives were to foster leader teamwork, nurture the officers' spirit, and facilitate esprit de corps among them. The 440<sup>th</sup>'s leaders decided that a sporting event would best shape the day. Ideas such as volksmarching, hiking, kayaking, and canoeing were discussed. With the help of the Wiesbaden Outdoor Recreation center, canoeing was selected as the day's premier event.

The day of the event, excitement began to grow as the 23 officers unloaded the canoes and set them afloat in the river. As expected of Army leaders, the team worked together, made a risk assessment, had a safety briefing and a brief canoeing lesson, and then paddled away.

The first leg of the trip lasted about 1.5 hours. Some took it easy and admired the scenery, while others raced and splashed each other the entire way. At the halfway point, all canoes came ashore, and everyone was organized into teams for individual and team canoeing competitions. The final competition was mounting the canoe while in chest-deep water and then racing across the width of the river. Needless to say, everyone got wet.

After the competitions and lunch at a nearby German outdoor restaurant, the "Roadrunners" gathered at the river for a discussion by the chaplain on leadership, motivation, and "Generation X."

The 440<sup>th</sup>'s Commander, Lt. Col. Edwin Drose Jr., also spoke briefly on the value of what it means to be an Army leader, and then the canoes launched for the return home.

Unlike the first leg of the journey, many of the officers took it easy paddling home.

The battalion dubbed its first-ever “Inspiration Day” a success, and plans to use it as the blueprint for a similar event in September for the unit’s senior NCOs and future soldier-level events.

