

Metro Bus Operator Helps Give 'Band Aid' To El Salvador

By ERIC RAPP

(May 7, 2002) For South Bay Division 18 Operator Horace Leftwich, being in the Army Reserve gives him the chance to help people while doing what he loves – playing his clarinet in a band.

Sgt. 1st Class Leftwich recently returned from El Salvador, where he and his unit, the 300th Army Band, 63rd RSC, spent nine days playing throughout the country as part of Operation New Horizons 2002.

The mission of the operation was to build schools and medical clinics, dig new wells, and conduct readiness training exercises in El Salvador's earthquake-stricken Usulután region.



▲ Sgt. 1st Class Horace Leftwich, a Division 18 Metro Bus operator, helped entertain the people of El Salvador.

The band was there to show that "aside from the military aspect, there was a goodwill and entertainment aspect" to the operation, says Leftwich.

One of his favorite parts of the trip was interacting with Salvadoran children. "We showed them how to hold the instruments, and introduced them to some American music," he says, "like concert, pop, and even a little jazz."

He also enjoyed visiting Mayan ruins near the San Andreas archaeological site, shortly before the band performed for the Salvadoran public at the site.

Leftwich, a 12-year MTA veteran, also plays with the Fullerton College community band in his off hours.

Even after 24 years in the Army Reserve, Leftwich is looking forward to being a part of Operation New Horizons 2003.

"We're going to Belize," he says happily.

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