

First Sergeants

By Jim Koenig

They work long hours under difficult circumstances and extreme pressure. They are expected to do several tasks at once and be a jack of all trades. They get phone calls in the middle of night, seven days a week with no overtime pay or additional benefits. They have the toughest job in the Army and it gets harder everyday. They are First Sergeants in the 22nd Signal Brigade.

"Everyone likes our first sergeant, he's on the ball", said Sp4 Pamela Henson, a legal clerk assigned to the 17th Signal Battalion, "He's sensitive towards the soldiers needs", the 21-year-old native of Rhode Island added, "as a matter of fact, he even came in on New Years day to make sure the troops were OK.

Sgt Rickey Moore, who calls Newport News, Va. home, said his first sergeant recently took the job over and immediately started "squaring things away". The training NCO for HHC Brigade continued, "He gets in early and leaves late, our first sergeant is bringing our company up to standards".

Any brigade first sergeant can be an unusually nice guy at times and a angry nasty bear at others. Through the years he's been called a counselor, sneaky, vile, a father-type, disciplinarian and everything else under the sun, but to most, he's a problem solver.

His job never ends, the paperwork



never stops. He's usually the first to arrive at the company and the last to leave. He often misses lunch and comes in on Saturdays and Sundays to pull his hair out over the duty rosters. But the top enlisted man of the Company always seems to have time for anyone who needs advice, is in trouble or a soldier who just needs someone to talk to.

"I feel my first sergeant is a pretty sharp person. He's dedicated, in at 6 a.m. and usually leaves at 8 p.m.," said Sp5 Alton Canady, a cook in the 32nd Signal.

PFC Anthony Carr, A Co., 440th Signal best described most brigade soldiers feelings towards their first sergeants by saying, "the first sergeant believes in getting the job done, he works everyone hard, but he's fair".

"Hey Sarge" is a no-no!

Sergeant Major of the Army, William A. Connelly, in a recent memorandum for the Chief of Staff of the Army said, "We must stop using the term 'NCO chain of command' and must start

using the term NCO support channel". The two-star Sergeant Major also added that "E" grades should be avoided, and Sergeants should be called Sergeants, not "Hey Sarge".