



The Rail Gunner Newsletter

VOLUME 5

THE RAIL GUNNER NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 1

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Capt. Clifford Pullig, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery commander, 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Regiment, 41st Fires Brigade, hands off a box of toys donated to the Families of the brigade by the communities within Leon County, Texas, Dec. 12.

Small Community is Big on Giving

Story and photos by
Sgt. Garrett Hernandez
41st Fires Brigade, PAO

Leon County is located about half way between Houston and Dallas on Interstate 45 and has a population of approximately 16,000 people, according to the 2010 census.

The people of that county came together to donate thousands of toys to the Soldiers of the 41st Fires Brigade, Dec. 12.

Gary Maples and his wife Susan transported the trucks full of toys. The Maples drove the 240 mile round trip three times with the help of a few of their friends.

The second load of donated toys contained over 5,000 toys. The Wal-Mart Distribution center in Palestine, Texas, donated the toys to Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA), explained Gary. The VVA then heard they were donating toys to the 41st



The Rail Gunner Monthly Staff

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COL William E. McRae
Command Sgt. Maj.
CSM Antonio Dunston
Rail Gunner PAO
NCOIC
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RAIL GUNNER 6 & 9 SEND



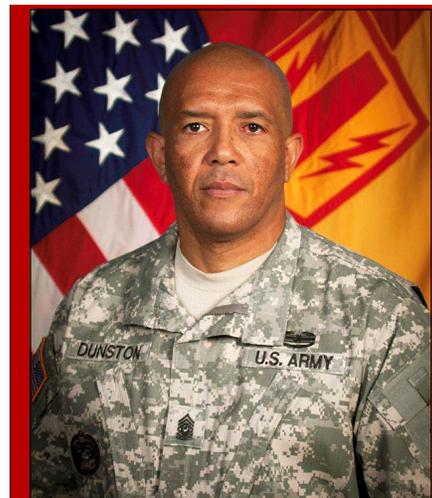
**Colonel
William E. McRae
41st Fires Brigade CDR**

private, we must be relentless in our pursuit of excellence.

Command Sergeant Major Dunston and I have every confidence that our Soldiers and Families will meet and exceed established standards. I am confident that, because of the time and energy put in here at home station, the Soldiers that we send out will be able to succeed at any mission they are given. I know every Rail Gunner will make us proud.

Again, welcome back and continue to press hard in our enduring pursuit of excellence.

RAIL GUNNER STRONG!



**Command Sergeant Major
Antonio Dunston
41st Fires Brigade CSM**

Rail Gunners, Family and Friends, Happy New Year!

Command Sgt. Major Dunston and I would like to welcome everyone back to work. We hope you were able to enjoy the holidays and spend some time with Family and friends. With the holiday season behind us, it is time to move forward with a "hit the ground running" mind set. Combat readiness is my number one priority!

I am certain that this New Year will be both a challenging and rewarding time for our extended Rail Gunner Team as different elements prepare for upcoming deployments and rotations to our Combat Training Centers. In order to set the conditions for success, it is imperative that as an organization, we continue to hone our skills and build upon the already solid teams we have formed.

This will often require long hours and lots of hard work. Now is the time to regain our focus and composure when it comes to training and individual readiness. This holds true for every member of the team. Across the organization, from the Brigade Command Sergeant Major and myself to our newest

Hopefully everyone had a good holiday season. Col. McRae and I would like to wish everyone in the Rail Gunner Family a happy New Year.

Now that the half day schedule has ended it's time to train again. It's time for the Noncommissioned Officers of the brigade to start kicking their training schedules into high gear. It is up to our fine NCOs to ensure that the Soldiers meet the training objectives.

I would challenge every one of our NCOs to strive for excellence and to help your Soldiers achieve excellence. After all, your Soldiers are reflections of you. Help your Soldiers reach their full potential whether that means going from passing their APFT to maxing it, or training your Soldiers in duty positions that are new to them. As an NCO you should also be willing to improve yourself.

We, as an organization, can't maintain excellence if we don't continue to improve. Once again the Colonel and I would like to welcome you back and wish you a happy New Year.

RAIL GUNNER STRONG!

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Small Community continued



Soldiers from across the 41st Fires Brigade sort toys first by gender then by age before dividing the toys between the battalions of the brigade, Dec. 12. The toys were collected by the communities within Leon County, Texas and donated to the Families of the 41st Fires Brigade, Dec. 12.

Fires Bde., and gave them the toys to donate, explained Maples.

Gary and Susan are Veterans Service Officers and work as a team to help veterans of Leon County gain access to their benefits. Both Gary and Susan Maples served in the Navy.

Col. William McRae and Command Sgt. Major Antonio Dunston, commander and command sergeant major of the 41st Fires Bde., were both on hand to receive the toys for the unit.

This is the sixth year that the communities of Leon County have come together to donate toys to the Families of the 41st Fires

Bde.

The toys and money for the toys were collected by businesses in Leon County, Texas, Gary Maples explained. They collected over \$3,500 to buy toys for the unit.

The toys were given to the Soldiers who have children throughout the brigade to ensure the kids would have a merry Christmas.

“It makes me feel good seeing that people do care...it’s nice knowing that people care enough to take the time to buy a gift and donate to Soldiers. It is a good feeling,” said Spc. Ray-

mond Griffin, a Field Artillery Automated Tactical Data Systems Specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 41st Fires Bde., who received toys for his five children.

“It’s something that we just want to do to give back. You guys are on the frontlines, fighting for our freedoms and we just want to support you,” said Mr. Maples.

The Soldiers of the Rail Gunner Brigade send a huge thank you to all those who donated gifts and their time.

Celebration of Lights



(Left) Soldiers and civilians light candles on menorahs during the seventh night of Chanukah. Soldiers from across Fort Hood and community members from the surrounding area gather at the Spirit of Ft. Hood Warrior and Family Chapel Campus for a Chanukah celebration, Dec. 14. (Right) Chaplain Capt. Karyn Berger, the Ft. Hood Rabbi, 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Regiment, 41st Fires Brigade leads the congregation in prayer after lighting seven candles on menorah.

Story by
Sgt. Garrett Hernandez
41st Fires Brigade, PAO

The Jewish Congregation of Ft. Hood held its annual Chanukah party at the Spirit of Ft. Hood Warrior and Family Chapel Campus, Dec. 14.

Chanukah, the Jewish celebration of lights, commemorates two miracles, explained Chaplain Capt. Karyn Berger, the Ft. Hood Rabbi, 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Regiment, 41st Fires Brigade. The first is the victory of a small group of freedom fighters, the Maccabees, who prevailed against overwhelming odds to defeat an oppressive regime and took back the Jewish temple.

After returning to their temple, the Maccabees discovered only one cruse of oil remained to light the ancient menorah and rededicate the temple. The oil that was left was only enough for only one night of light, when eight nights were needed to rededicate

the temple. Instead of waiting for more oil to be made, the Maccabees lit the menorah and rededicated the Temple that day. The oil miraculously lasted all eight nights, added Berger.

The celebration started when the lights were turned off in the room. Then one by one the candles were lit on the menorahs. As the candles were being lit Rabbi Berger began to sing. As the room filled with candle light it also filled with song as more and more people joined in singing. On this night seven candles would be lit on the menorahs marking the seventh day of the celebration.

Following the lighting of the menorahs there was Shabbat Services after which the food was served. Rabbi Berger explains that during the eight day period that fried foods are typically eaten to commemorate the miracle of Hanukkah. Foods such as potato pancakes and donuts are traditional.

“It’s really a blessing to

have a much larger congregation,” said Spc. Daniel Najera from A Battery, 26th Field Artillery Regiment (Target Acquisition Battery), 41st Fires Brigade. “This is my first time being away from Family celebrating Hanukkah.”

The services were not only open to Soldiers and their Families, but also open to anyone in the surrounding communities that wanted to attend. Capt. Berger is one of only 12 Rabbis within the Army.

“Without the Army we would not have a congregation here,” said Aaron Beal who came from College Station visiting his parents.

The congregation has over 20 members, made up of Soldiers and civilians from the surrounding communities.

“My Family is away and the food is different, but all Jews are Family. So I’m not really away from Family, I just accepted a new one,” said Spc. Najera.

41st Fires Bde. Celebrates St. Barbara

Story by
Sgt. Garrett Hernandez
41st Fires Brigade, PAO



New inductees into the Order of St. Barbara raise a glass of grog to toast their membership into the order during the 41st Fires Brigade's annual St. Barbara Day Ball, held at the Killeen Civic and Conference Center, Nov. 30.

Every year artillerymen gather in the name of the corps' patron saint, St. Barbara.

This year the 41st Fires Brigade held its St. Barbara's Day Ball at the Killeen Civic and Conference Center, on November 30th.

According to the website Catholic.org, Barbara was sentenced to death after defying her father. As her executioner, also her father, made his way home after the beheading, he was struck by lightning and his body destroyed by flames.

With the introduction of gunpowder into Europe, St. Barbara quickly became the patron saint of artillerymen. Early artillery pieces were known to explode before being fired, and artillerymen would pray to St. Barbara for protection.

With the ball officially underway and dinner served, the lights were dimmed for a recounting of the history of field artillery within America. The history lesson then kicked off the

making of the traditional artillery punch known as grog.

The grog was made by senior noncommissioned officers from the brigade. Each senior NCO wore a comical costume and made a theatrical entrance into the banquet hall to add his or her ingredient to the grog. Each NCO explained what the added ingredient symbolizes to the field artillery.

After demonstrating exemplary service to field artillery, 23 Rail Gunners received a formal induction into the Order of St. Barbara

"The new members of the order were selected for their outstanding contributions to field artillery," said Maj. Charles Kean, 41st Fires Brigade executive officer and master of ceremonies during the ball.

The new inductees then raised a glass of traditional artillery punch to toast their induction into the order.

Along with the

induction into the Order of Saint Barbara, six spouses were inducted into the Order of Molly Pitcher; Jay Norman, Lorena Cantillo, Jessica Pullig, Laura Glielmi, Megan Mendenhall, and Tiffany Trepanier. Only civilians who have significantly contributed to their Field Artillery or Air Defense Artillery community are inducted into the Order of Molly Pitcher.

Mary Ludwig, also known as Molly, was married to William Hays, an artilleryman in the Continental Army. During the battle of Monmouth, Mary brought pitchers of water to her collapsed husband and heated cannons. She took his place swabbing and loading the cannon.

After the battle, General George Washington issued Mary a warrant as a noncommissioned officer, earning her the nickname "Sergeant Molly."

"We have seen field artillery units not only provide fire support but also be battle



Sgt. Maj. Glen Franklin, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, brigade operations sergeant major, adds his ingredient to the traditional artillery punch during the 41st Fires Brigade's annual St. Barbara Day Ball, Nov. 30. Franklin added cognac to the grog to symbolize the French contributions to America.

St. Barbara continued



Maj. Gen. Anthony Ierardi, Commander, 1st Cavalry Division, receives a wooden model of a Multiple Launch Rocket System from Col. William McRae during the 41st Fires Brigade's St. Barbara Day Ball at the Killeen Civic and Conference Center, Nov. 30.

space owners," said Maj. Gen. Anthony Ierardi, Commander, 1st Cavalry Division, and guest speaker for the ball .

Ierardi spoke about the importance field artillery plays in today's Army.

The formal portion of the event was brought to a close after

the 41st Fires Brigade Commander, Col. William McRae presented Ierardi with a small wooden statue of a Multiple Launch Rocket System.

After all the formalities were finished the dance floor was opened up to Rail Gunners for dancing.

"The brigade had a successful event," said Maj. Timothy Ungaro. "Soldiers and Family members' achievements were recognized, they all looked sharp, there was fellowship and dancing, the 1st Cavs., band's pianist sounded great, and everyone got home safely,"

Trunk or Treat



(Left) Crystal Buettner , a member of the 589th Brigade Support Battalion, 41st Fires Brigade, Family Readiness Group passes out candy to children during the 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Regiment and 589th Brigade Support Battalion, 41st Fires Brigade, Halloween events. (Right) 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Regiment and 589th Brigade Support Battalion, 41st Fires Brigade invited its Soldiers to decorate the trunks of their cars with Halloween decorations and pass out candy to the kids of the two battalions.

Dalhart Texas Honors Veterans

Story by
Sgt. Garrett Hernandez
41st Fires Brigade, PAO



Col. William McRae answers question from a group of Cub Scouts from Dallam and Hartley counties before taking part in Veterans Day celebration in Dalhart, Texas, Nov. 10.

Members of the 41st Fires Brigade Color Guard along with Col. William McRae, 41st Fires Brigade commander, traveled to the small town of Dalhart, Texas to take part in the town's Veterans Day Celebration, Nov. 10.

The town of Dalhart is located in the Texas panhandle and takes nine to 10 hours to drive there from Fort Hood.

The Soldiers were met by Richard Knight, himself a retired Army lieutenant colonel, when they arrived at their hotel in Dalhart. The town welcomed the Rail Gunners with open arms.

Everywhere the Soldiers went they were being thanked for their service by adults or asked numerous questions about what it is like to be a Soldier by children. While in this small community the Rail Gunners were treated almost like celebrities.

Meals were eaten in group settings with different members of the community such as members of the town's Chamber of Commerce, members of the Lions Club or the XIT Rangers, a local horse riding club.

Before the Saturday's celebration the Soldiers were treated a tour of CSS farms. CSS farms grow all of the potatoes used by H-E-B, for the grocery store's own brand of potato chip.

Most people in Dalhart depend on farming or ranching for their income. There are several large cattle feed lots and farms surrounding the town, according to Knight.

On the day of the parade and celebration, the winds were blowing at 20 mph with gusts up 50 mph. The parade wound its way through town and ended in the town's park where the ceremony was held. During the parade one, could hear parents and grandparents telling the children to stand up for the American flag as it approached. Also, men could be seen taking their hats off and everyone, men, women and children, would place their hand over their heart for the Colors as well.

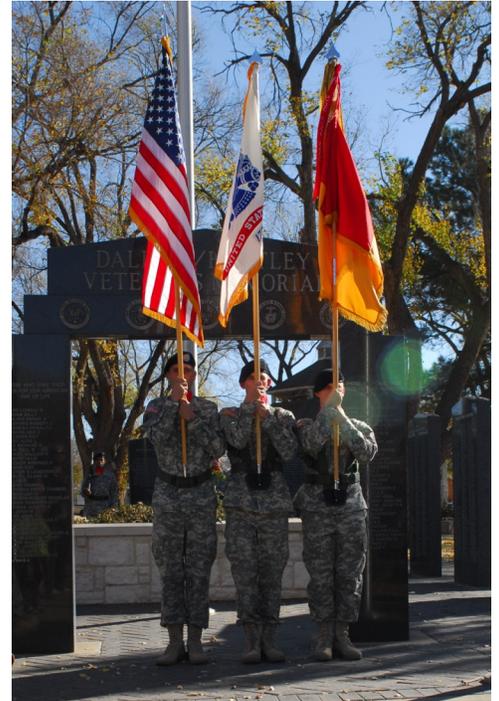
When the memorial was dedicated on September 11, 2004 the veterans of Dalhart asked Brig. Gen. Charles B. Allen, assistant division commander (support), 4th Infantry Division, to speak community during their celebration. Just two months later, on November 29, 2004, Allen was killed in an Army helicopter crash outside of Waco, Texas.

Everyone really liked General Allen and his aide 1st Lt. Christmas and felt a real sense of loss when they died, Knight recounted.

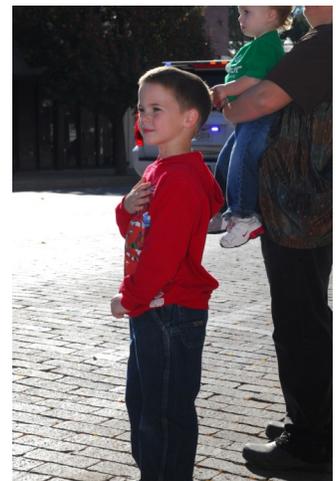
The town honored Brig. Gen. Charles Allen in 2007, the same year the 41st Fires Brigade headquarters building was dedicated in Allen's name, by adding a plaque to their memorial. Since that year, the 41st Fires Brigade has sent senior leaders to the town to participate in the Veterans Day celebration.

"It's a big deal to know that citizens support you and that they are thinking of your welfare," said Staff

Sgt. Steven Lonix, communications Noncommissioned Officer and bugler for 41st Fires Brigade.



The 41st Fires Brigade Color Guard post the national, Army and brigade colors in front of the Dallam and Hartley Veterans Memorial during the Veterans Day celebration in Dalhart, Texas, Nov. 10.



A young boy holds his hand over his heart as the 41st Fires Brigade Color Guard passes with the American Flag during the Veterans Day celebration in Dalhart, Texas, Nov. 10.

Del Harris Visits with Rail Gunners

Story by
Sgt. Garrett Hernandez
41st Fires Brigade, PAO

On November 19, Basketball coach Del Harris visited Abrams Physical Fitness center to talk to the 41st Fires Brigade about team building.

Del Harris is currently the general manager for the Texas Legends, the developmental team for the Dallas Mavericks. Harris has been head coach to National Basketball Association teams such as the Houston Rockets, Los Angeles Lakers, the Milwaukee Bucks and the Dallas Mavericks. Harris has coached internationally as well, coaching the teams from Puerto Rico Team, China's national team and the Dominican Republic team.

Harris talked in basketball references during his speech. Talking about the importance of not only the star players but the supporting players and focus. After his inspiring speech Harris took question from the Soldiers of the brigade.

"It was nice to see someone from the NBA or that level of competition, come and talk to us," said Pfc. Brandon Moorman, a Utilities Equipment Repairer with B Battery, 589th Brigade Support Battalion, 41st Fires Brigade.

At the end of the question and answer segment, Soldiers were invited to compete for a signed copy of Harris' new book. The Soldiers shot baskets from the free throw line until there was only three Rail Gunners left.

Harris also took time to sign autographs and poses for pictures with any Rail Gunner that asked.

"It was really motivating," said Pfc. Jordon Olmsted, a Multiple Launch Rocket System crewmember with A Battery, 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Regiment, 41st Fires Bde.



Del Harris speaks to the Soldiers of the Rail Gunner Brigade about the importance of team building during his visit to Abrams Physical Fitness, Nov. 19th. Del Harris is currently the general manager for the Texas Legends the developmental team for the Dallas Mavericks. Harris has been head coach to National Basketball Association teams such as the Houston Rockets, Los Angeles Lakers, the Milwaukee Bucks, and the Dallas Mavericks.



Col. William McRae presents Del Harris with a Cavalry Stetson from the 41st Fires Brigade in appreciation for taking his time to talk to Rail Gunners. Del Harris is currently the general manager for the Texas Legends, the developmental team for the Dallas Mavericks.



Basketball Coach Del Harris takes time after his speech to sign autographs and pose for pictures with Rail Gunners. Del Harris visited Abrams Physical Fitness center to talk to the 41st Fires Brigade about team building, Nov. 19.

Rail Gunners Return Home



Soldiers of 1-21st Field Artillery Battalion, 41st Fires Brigade “Rail Gunners”, march into the 1-21st Field Artillery Battalion headquarters area, to a round of applause from the gathering of Families and friends, Sept. 1. The Rail Gunners have just returned from their deployment to Afghanistan where they provided transportation and security for NATO personnel in and around the Afghan capital city of Kabul.

Soldiers from 1st battalion, 21st Field Artillery, 41st Fires Brigade, returned to Fort Hood safely from their deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, Sep. 1.

The Rail Gunners were responsible for the transportation and security of members in support of the NATO Training Mission Afghanistan, in and around the Afghan capital city of Kabul.

The Soldiers received a round of applause when they marched into the 1-21st Field Artillery Battalion headquarters area where Families and friends gathered to greet the troops.

The night became even more extraordinary when the

crowd was witness to Spc. Alberto Sdelamora’s marriage proposal to his girlfriend, Mariaya Santiago.

Sdelamora, a motor transport operator in 575th Field Support Company, 1st Battalion, 21st Field Artillery Regiment, 41st Fires Brigade, made the proposal over the loud speaker system after informing the crowd that he had an announcement that he would like to make.

“I couldn’t feel my legs because I was so nervous,” Sdelamora said.

There was a collective “ahh” from the crowd of Families and then the moment was celebrated with another ovation after Santiago accepted Sdelamora’s ring.

“I nodded [yes] because I couldn’t speak, I was crying,” said the future bride, Santiago.



Sgt. 1st Class Sheena Ferrell, communitarian section noncommissioned officer in charge, 1-21st Field Artillery Battalion, 41st Fires Brigade, holds her daughter Faith as they wait to greet Staff Sgt. Tommy Ferrell after returning from his deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, Sept. 1.



Mariaya Santiago accepted Spc. Alberto Sdelamora’s, a motor transport operator in 575th Field Support Company, 1-21st Field Artillery Battalion, 41st Fires Brigade, marriage proposal after he returned from deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, Sept. 1.

Settling into Home



The Soldiers of the 41st Fires Brigade pose for a picture with the Pierce Family after completing the yard work for the Family's new home, Sept. 15. Pierce was paralyzed from the chest down after his vehicle drove over a 300 pound bomb in Helmand Province, Afghanistan on Jan. 9, 2010. (Courtesy photo)

Story by
Sgt. Garrett Hernandez

Despite the cloudy skies and the threat of rain, 22 Soldiers from across the 41st Fires Brigade met at lot 14 on Key Wish Drive in Morgan's Point Resort, Texas, to help a fellow brother-in-arms by adding the finishing touches to his new home, Sept. 15.

In all, approximately 55 Soldiers across Fort Hood gave their time to assist a fellow service member. Soldiers of all ranks – privates, Noncommissioned Officers, and officers alike, gave up their Saturday morning to help former Marine Staff Sgt. Jack Pierce.

The Soldiers lay patches of sod, planted trees, bushes and flowers in front of the newly constructed home provided to Pierce, who was paralyzed from the chest down after his vehicle drove over a 300 pound bomb in Helmand Province, Afghanistan on Jan. 9, 2010, through the Homes for Our Troops program. The house was built to allow Pierce the freedom of movement allowing him to live more independently.

Homes for Our Troops is a

national non-profit organization founded in 2004. The organization provides houses to disabled veterans.

The building of the house began June 15 and the yard was the last step to complete the new home. The homes that are provided by Homes for Our Troops are given at no cost to the disabled veterans.

"It's a warm feeling, knowing that Soldiers from my unit would come out here to donate their time to help someone else," said 1st Lt. AnneMarie McCreight, the executive officer for Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Regiment, 41st Fires Bde. "To come out and lend a hand to help him live a better life outside of the uniform is easy motivation to come out here," said McCreight.

As the Rail Gunners gathered to lend a helping hand, the physical labor that helped finish the new home also helped to polish the Rail Gunners' team and boost the esprit de corps.

"Doing something outside of your normal duty will help bring a team together," said 1st Sgt. Jeremy Hall, the first sergeant for Battery A, 26th Field Artillery Regiment (Target

Acquisition Battery), 41st Fires Bde.

In the spirit of volunteering and the good-natured gesture, the Soldiers from the 41st Fires Bde. received an equal sized payout by knowing their time was used to help someone in need.

"It makes me feel good, helping others out," said Spc. Steven Degonia, a heavy wheel mechanic, 589th Brigade Support Battalion, 41st Fires Bde.

The leaders within the brigade made a point to lend a helping hand. With all the volunteers on hand, the yard was completed quickly. The entire yard was finished by noon.

"I can't ask these Soldiers to give up some of their time to be out here if I'm not willing to give up some of my time," said Command Sgt. Maj. Antonio Dunston, the brigade command sergeant major for the 41st Fires Bde. "It's one of the most rewarding things I could ask for, seeing these Soldiers volunteer their time on a weekend," said Dunston.

Teens Receive Extreme Look into Army Life

Story and photos by
Staff Sgt. Kyle J. Richardson

During the last few weeks of summer break, some teenagers frantically scramble to prolong their leisure time. Some attempt to extend their vacation by collecting extra hours of sleep, work, traveling, training for fall sports or playing countless hours of thumb-numbing video games. However, a small group of teens took an unc customary break from the normal teenage-routine and launched themselves into the world of field artillery.

Twenty-five teens volunteered to give up the comforts of their day to participate in the first Teen Extreme summer event hosted by the 41st Fires Brigade Tuesday on Fort Hood.

The group was weaned from the refreshing feel of air-conditioning for a day and met face-to-face with the Central Texas heat. The Teen Extreme event provided them with an opportunity to experience life as “Rail Gunners.”

They began the day as an unorganized group, but the cluster of disorganized youths was quickly reorganized by Master Sgt. Theodore Durand, Teen Extreme noncommissioned officer-in-charge. The gruff NCO with more than his fair share of years and experience, called the group to attention having the teens create a tight traditional rectangular formation.

Throughout the day, Durand – with the help of several NCOs and junior-enlisted Soldiers – shaped, molded and conditioned the teens into fine artillery Soldiers.

“We didn’t want to come out barking, yelling or beat them down with the training, because none of them are in the Army,” said Durand, who is assigned to the Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Regiment, 41st Fires Bde. “We wanted to provide



Sgt. 1st Class Andrew Land, HHB, 1-21 FA Regt., 41st Fires Bde., explains the functioning of the squad automatic weapon to his son, Andrew, 14, during the Teen Extreme summer event hosted by the 41st Fires Bde. Tuesday. Parents were allowed to attend and participate in the training with their children. Staff Sgt. Kyle Richardson, 41st Fires Bde. Public Affairs

them with exposure and just show them how much fun their parents can have doing our jobs, and also provide the children some mentorship along the way.”

The teens picked partners and created battle-buddy teams to assist each other throughout the day. Then they were transported to the engagement skills training center to receive weapons familiarization and convoy training.

At the EST center, the teens trained on an M9 pistol, M4 semi-automatic rifle, squad automatic weapon and an M2 .50-caliber machine gun. During the simulation portion of the training, the teens were able to work in squad-sized elements, use their honed first-person-shooter video games skills, eliminate enemy threats and move tactically from one point to another. Enthusiastic smiles spread across the mini-Soldiers faces as they laughed and joked after each scenario.

The weapons familiarization may not have taught the teens how to handle a .50-caliber machine gun like the movie character John Rambo, but they were able to visualize the reality and potential behind the weapon.

“I play Call of Duty, and when I got out here, I found out that this was nothing like my video game,” Daniel Nunez, 15, Teen Extreme participant, said. “I usually beat everyone in the game. I think I only hit one target out here. I understand what Soldiers do, and it’s tough. That .50-cal was pretty heavy, the marching was hard, and it’s hot. This experience has changed my whole perspective of Soldiers.”

After weapon’s training, the next point was learning how to call for fire on an enemy position. The vehicles were parked and they prepared themselves for the walk ahead. Most of the teens donned their parents’ body armor, rucksacks and Kevlar helmets and went on a grueling half-mile foot

Extreme Look into Army continued



Kelly Padilla, 16, receives some guidance on the M2 .50-caliber machine gun from Sgt. Michael Smith, instructor, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 589th Brigade Support Battalion, 41st Fires Bde., during the Teen Extreme summer event hosted by the 41st Fires Bde. Tuesday. Staff Sgt. Kyle Richardson, 41st Fires Bde. Public Affairs

march, with a tormenting mid-day sun overhead.

"I'm very proud of my son," said Sgt. 1st Class Andrew Land, HHB, 1st Battalion, 21st Field Artillery Regiment, 41st Fires Bde. "It shows that he has the physical and mental strength to push himself to great limits. He learned that Army life isn't as easy as the video games."

From the call for fire center, the group headed back to the Rail Gunners' footprint for some precision drill and ceremony training, physical readiness training and a push-up competition. And no Army gathering is complete without the customary tug-of-war competition.

As the training subsided, the teens fell into formation – standing tall like proud Soldiers. The top performers excelling in the various areas were presented with certificates of achievements and everyone received coins of

excellence from the commander.

"Teen Extreme was very fun and a great way to spend the day," Kevin Padilla, 16, said. "This changes the way I view my dad. I didn't know that he did all of this. I can respect him for going through all of this for me – for supporting us and giving us a house, what he does is really extraordinary."



Twenty-five teens participated in a foot march during the Teen Extreme summer event hosted by the 41st Fires Brigade at Fort Hood, Texas, July 24.

Safety Corner

From the Safety Corner:
Rail Gunner Super Bowl Party
Suggestion's for Hosts

From the Command Team of the 41st Fires Brigade to the National Football League (NFL), TEAM Coalition, the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and the HERO Campaign all have one clear and loud message: "REAL Football Fans Don't Let Fans Drive Drunk."

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Super Bowl Sunday has become one of the nation's most dangerous days on the roadways due to impaired driving. NHTSA statistics show nationally on Super Bowl Sunday (which runs from 12:01 a.m., Sunday, to 5:59 a.m., Monday), 48% of the fatalities occurred in crashes where a driver or motorcycle rider

had a blood alcohol concentration level of .08 percent or higher.

Here are some tips to think for your Super Bowl Party:

- Make sure all of your guests designate their sober drivers before kick-off or help arrange ride-sharing with other sober drivers.
- Find unique ways to recognize the designated drivers at your party.
- Give them a great spot to watch the game.
- Whatever non-alcoholic beverage they are drinking, make sure their glass is always full.
- Let them have the first pass at the buffet table.
- Make sure their cars are easy to access when it is time to start driving people home .
- Serve plenty of food.
- Offer a variety of non-alcoholic choices like soft drinks, juice, and water.

- Serve one drink at a time and serve measured drinks.
- Only serve alcohol to guests over 21 years of age.
- Determine ahead of time when you'll stop serving alcohol, such as one hour before the party ends or at the end of the third quarter (just like NFL stadiums) and begin serving coffee and dessert.
- Add the numbers of local cab companies into your phone so they are just one touch away.
- Take appropriate steps to prevent anyone from driving while impaired.
- Be prepared for guests to spend the night if an alternative way home is not available.
- Be prepared to call your guest's OIC/ NCOIC or the staff duty officer should your guest insist they are sober (when they are not) to drive home. Do not let them drive drunk!

Fort Hood Fighter No Lightweight in Heaviest Division

Story by
Staff Sgt. Kyle J. Richardson

It was the final fight of the night and one of the most anticipated matches of the tournament. Sgt. Jason Reyes, in a calm but focused manner, crossed the platform to the cage. The referee inspected him from head to toe. He then applied a thin layer of petroleum jelly to Reyes' face. He slowly walked through the open cage door. In a volcanic roar, the crowd erupted with cheers.

Spc. Nathaniel Freeman, a stout but massive competitor, stood in the blue corner patiently awaiting the only sound that matters – the starting bell.

At the sound of the ding, the two fighters ran toward each other. Out of respect for one another, they touched gloves and quickly separated during the championship heavyweight match of the 2012 U.S. Army Combatives Championship held at Fort Hood's Abrams Physical Fitness Center Saturday.

Freeman, standing at 5-feet, 8-inches tall and 286 pounds, fighting for, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart Ga., wasted no time to pin Reyes, the taller fighter at 6-feet, 1-inch, to the steel fence.

Reyes, assigned to the Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 41st Fires Brigade and fighting for the III Corps and Fort Hood combatives team, lacked the body weight like the other heavyweight contenders. He weighed in at 220 pounds, and although he put up a good fight and traded



Sgt. Jason Reyes (blue), Fort Hood, and Staff Sgt. Lonnie Kincaid (red), Fort Riley, go toe-to-toe on the mats in the semi-final rounds in the heavyweight division during the 2012 U.S. Army Combatives Championship Friday at Fort Hood. Reyes won the match with an arm-bar submission and moved on to the finals, where he finished as the runner-up to Fort Stewart's Spc.

kick for kick and head shot for head shot, the heavier fighter took him to the ground for the advantage.

Out of the blue corner, Freeman's coach yelled "Kisa Katame, Kisa Katame" and the fighter reacted. He positioned the majority of his weight on Reyes' rib cage and went to isolate an arm. Reyes fought bravely from his back, attempting a well-needed submission, but Freeman was able to isolate his arm and began methodically delivering punches to Reyes' head.

As the heavy hits connected like a hammer to a nail, Reyes showed his never-quit attitude and strong chin to hold out until the end of the round. The corner break only gave Reyes a reprieve from Free-

man's ground-and-pound session before he found himself on his back again in the second round.

The two fighters maneuvered their way around the cage, battled for the upper hand, but the referee called a stop to the energy-packed match. In the end, only one hand was raised. Freeman won the match by technical knock-out and was the new All-Army heavyweight champion.

"It was a good fight," Reyes said, tired but not defeated in spirit. "I was the lightest heavyweight in the tournament. In the end, my weight counted against me. Now, that's not to take away from Freeman's abilities. He's a really good guy and a tough opponent."

At last year's All-Army tournament, Reyes weighed-in at 185 pounds to fight in the cruiser-

Fort Hood fighter continued

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weight division with a fourth-place finish.

Reyes started increasing his body-weight in March to fight in the light heavyweight division. The team lost its heavy-weight, so he was asked to put on more weight to accommodate the team.

“There are no individuals on the team,” Reyes said. “I did what the team needed me to do. Most importantly, we’re here to get the trophy together, and that’s exactly what we did.”

As the smallest heavy-weight, Reyes entered the tournament as the dark horse defeating his first two opponents in a stature like David against Goliath.

“A lot of people bow down to bigger opponents,” Reyes said. “I had to let them know that I wasn’t one to go out so easily.”

In his semi-final bout to advance to the championship bout, Reyes sent the gym into a frenzy with his improbable defeat of Staff Sgt. Lonnie Kincaid, on the team from Fort Riley, Kan.

With a slap that echoed through the gym setting the tone to start the match, Reyes quickly worked for a submission once on the ground.

Reyes found that submission in the form of an arm-bar.

In the finals, Freeman paid his respect to Reyes and was thankful for the opportunity to fight.

“I have a black belt in judo and a blue belt in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu,” the heavyweight champion said. “Reyes has a pur-



Sgt. Jason Reyes, Fort Hood, secures an arm-bar from the bottom position while working to submit Staff Sgt. Lonnie Kincaid, Fort Riley, in the semi-finals of the heavyweight division during the 2012 U.S. Army Combatives Championship Friday. Reyes won the match to move on to the championship bout. Daniel Cernero, Sentinel Sports Editor

ple belt in jiu-jitsu, so I’m always going to respect that, but the great thing about this sport is that anybody can be tapped out at any given time. It doesn’t matter if you’re a white belt or a black belt.”

Reyes’ combatives career began seven years ago when he joined the Army. As his experiences increase in combatives and martial arts, he considers it a way of life rather than a sport.

“I’ve been around the mats for a long time,” Reyes said, with his lean physique showing off his years of hard training. “To me, combatives and martial arts is more than just doing it, it’s a lifestyle. It’s about taking care of yourself and out-doing yourself from the last time. You have to be respectful and keep your head. You have to learn when to fight and when to shut off your aggression.”

Reyes has dedicated himself to his Family, God and his

training. He said it didn’t matter if he won or lost but that he did his best and made his Family proud. He plans on continuing to work with the Fort Hood combatives team and coaches and train for some of the upcoming amateur fights.

“Jason has grown through the years that I’ve worked with him,” said Jarrod Clontz, III Corps head coach.

“I used to be able to submit him when I wanted,” the coach said in a raspy voice from yelling instructions over the cheering crowd. “Now, I rarely submit him. His technical ability has blown through the roof, as well as his conditioning.”

While Reyes took second place in the heavyweight division, his fights during the tournament added to the Fort Hood combatives team overall score of 441 points for the first-place finish. The Fort Hood combatives team is the only post to win the tournament three years in a row.

Throughout the Brigade



Rail Gunners

REENLISTMENTS

During the months of October, November and December 95 Rail Gunners reenlisted: From 1st Bn., 20th FAR; Spc. Abad Jonas Carino Jr, Spc. Alexius Ren Andrew, Spc. Alviar Christopher Lee, Spc. Axtell Brennan D, Spc. Barnes Corey Alan, Spc. Bergan Anthony Francis, Spc. Bitz Jesse Douglas, Spc. Dubois Seth Gabriel, Spc. Groves Adrian Lamar, Spc. Harris Shawn Temple, Spc. Hoyt Michael Robert, Spc. Hubbard Dominique Chavez, Spc. Linares Elsa, Spc. Lopez Adrian Manuel, Spc. Martinez Eric Frank, Spc. Mckinney Kyarra Chanta, Spc. Ralston Jared Coley, Spc. Seely Richard Guy, Spc. Sorm Dalyson Lee, Spc. Stewart Kevin Nicholas, Spc. Tribble Johnathan Randall J, Spc. Wallace John Darrin, Spc. Wichman Sarah Michelle, Spc. Williams James Matthew, Sgt. Davis Antonio Darius, Sgt. Felts Christopher Michael, Sgt. Ferguson Jacob Darin, Sgt. Jackson Dalmar Patterson, Sgt. Lamb Bo Austin, Sgt. Patterson Joseph Alan, Sgt. Pennington Joshua Downey, Sgt. Poveda Erik J, Sgt. Rodriguez Nelson Jr, Sgt. Southwick Daniel Parr, Sgt. Towns Cassius Devonta Derea, Sgt. Young Travais Warren, Staff Sgt. Borja Travis Ivan Stol, Staff Sgt. Fuller Noah Tremayne, Staff Sgt. Gehrke Joshua Allen, Staff Sgt. Jackson Anthony Ray, Staff Sgt. Mack Casey Benjamin, Staff Sgt. Salazar Johnboyd Faisao, Staff Sgt. Starling Thomas Norman Jr.

From 2nd Bn., 21st FAR; Spc. Arredondo Chad Eric, Spc. Brisell Brandon Matthew, Spc. Carlton Kyle Wade, Spc. Garza Matthew Eugene, Spc. Halona Jeffery Pete, Spc. Hughes Marvin Fitzgerald, Spc. Pape Andrew Thomas, Spc. Schaefer Eugene Jon, Spc. Valentine Sheryl Annette, Spc. Whatley Dennis Lamar Jr, Spc. Winemiller Justin Brett, Sgt. Buffum James Erickrobert, Sgt. Conwell Keith Dontay, Sgt. Jean Gersone, Sgt. Laplace Jeremy Joseph, Sgt. Nelson Wykeese Jamal, Sgt. Willis Shane Wesley, Staff Sgt. Thiers Ryan Francis, Staff Sgt. Waycaster Dennis Robert, Staff Sgt. Young Alex Lee, Sgt. 1st Class Moody April Tamara.

From the 589th Bde. Support Bn.; Spc. Dunbar Joseph Nathaniel II, Spc. Hall Nicole Michele, Spc. Miller Christina Marlena, Spc. Prich Jessica Marie, Sgt. Barreto Gadiel, Sgt. Dean Casey Lee, Sgt. Ford Rashad Andre, Sgt. Gonzalez Emily Selena, Sgt. Kopakowski Michael David, Sgt. Maza Reyes Manuel III, Sgt. Pettigrew Chermack Joseph, Sgt. Robinski Shawn Michael, Sgt. Villafane Luis A, Staff Sgt. Carter Byron Lee Smith, Staff Sgt. Hagler Felisha Juvole.

From HHB and A Battery, 26th FAR; Spc. Derrington Melanie Jeannine, Spc. Parker Keisha Monique, Spc. Pilling Thomas Jon, Spc. Priester Marquis Davon, Spc. Bennett Robert Donato, Spc. Frauenfeld Edwin Bennett, Spc. Jeterperry Terrance Montrel, Spc. Kinsey Tylor Patrick, Spc. Lattner Steven Andrew, Spc. Moore Tia Jene, Spc. Rivas Samuel, Sgt. Guardado Raul Jr, Sgt. Jackson Yolanda Marie, Staff Sgt. Anderson Fernandez Dominic, Staff Sgt. Stjoy Alex, Sgt. 1st Class Oros Israel Perez

PROMOTIONS

We would like to congratulate all of the Rail Gunners that were promoted during the months of October, November and December:

OCTOBER

Sgt. Tamara M. Becker
Sgt. Jeremy J. Laplace

NOVEMBER

Sgt. Keith D. Conwell
Sgt. James L. Hill Jr
Sgt. John M. Houck
Sgt. Bo A. Lamb
Sgt. Allan L. McDaniel III
Sgt. Jonathan E. Nelson
Sgt. Orlando S. A. Smith

DECEMBER

Sgt. George Galvan
Sgt. Joel A.
Gonzalezmercado
Sgt. Alexandra S. Long
Sgt. Keineth A. Scaggs
Sgt. Brent A. Schmidt
Staff Sgt. Kyle V. Lewis
Staff Sgt. Luis A. Villafane

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Public Affairs Office!

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