



The Rail Gunner Monthly

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THE RAIL GUNNER MONTHLY

ISSUE 2

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The Rail Gunner



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Command Sgt. Maj.
CSM Antonio Dunston
Rail Gunner PAO
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41st Fires Brigade
"Rail Gunners!!"



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.

Rail Gunners Return Home

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

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, a mo-

RAIL GUNNER 6 & 9 SEND



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

Dear Rail Gunner Family,

It has been a great month so far. November will be here shortly and with it the election, so don't forget to register and go vote. Be careful this election season there are things that you can and things you cannot do.

Let's start with the things you can do this election. You can and should vote; join a political club and attended partisan or non-partisan political meetings, as long as you are not in uniform. You can make a monetary donation to a candidate or political party. It is ok to display a bumper sticker on your personal vehicle. Also, you may write a letter to the editor of the local paper or post a blog stating your personal opinion. You can do all of this as long as you do it out of uniform and do not pass your opinion as the opinion of the

Department of Defense.

Now let's go over things you cannot do this election cycle. You may not participate in partisan activities. Now attending does not mean participation. Do not serve as an official of a political club; display large political banners or signs or their cars or on post housing; speak at a partisan political gathering to include any radio, television and live blog event; or attend political events as an official representative of the Armed Forces. Again you can voice your opinion as long as you make it clear that it is your opinion and not that of the DoD.

I would like to take time to once again thank all of the volunteers take help keep this brigade going. On October 4, we recognized 39 individuals along with the Military Order of the Purple Hart Chapter 1876 and the Shilo Inn and Suites for making a world of difference within this brigade.

Also this month we hosted our fourth golf tournament that helped raise money for the United States Field Artillery Association Rail Gunner Chapter. The chapter has pledged that the money raised will go to help offset the cost of the upcoming St. Barbara's Day Ball. We had a great turn out for this tournament, in all 33 teams participated.

Finally, thank you for all that you do to support our goal of making the 41st Fires Brigade the best unit it can possibly be! I expect



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

all Rail Gunners to continue their relentless pursuit of excellence. Your efforts are critical, and will determine if we are to be a part of the type of elite unit that others aspire to emulate.

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Rail Gunners Return continued



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.

tor transport operator in 575th Field Support Company, 1-21st Field Artillery Battalion, 41st Fires Brigade, marriage proposal to his girlfriend, Mariaya Santiago.

Sdelamora 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



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
41st Fires Brigade, PAO

MORGANS POINT RESORT, Texas – Despite the cloud-cover and the threat of rain, 22 Soldiers from 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, sergeants, 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, an executive officer for the 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 out side 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.

Soldiers get finically ready

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



Chaplain Rob Cook, III Corps, passes out a personality test to Soldiers that will help them understand why they have the spending habits that they have, at the Spirit of Fort Hood Chapel, Aug. 28.

Soldiers sometimes joining the Army without having ever made any finical choices before this point in their life and this can lead to hardships down the road.

Rail Gunner Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Regiment and A Battery, 26th Field Artillery Regiment (Target Acquisition Battery), were given a chance to attend a financial work shop, at the Spirit of Fort Hood Chapel, Aug. 28.

"If we can get to them before they have a finical crisis, that would be the best way to handle it," said Staff Sgt. Danny Bishop, the financial

At the beginning of the day long class many Soldiers acknowledged that they did not have a budget.

Chaplain Rob Cook, III Corps, administered a personality test that helped shed some light on

each Soldier's financial habits. The Chaplain explained that each personality differs in the way a person will choose to spend money.

"Our workshops are a one day training event per quarter to increase Soldier financial readiness and resiliency that gives the servicemembers and spouses all the tools and variety of training in subject areas so they can be more successful financially," said Bishop.

Along with the main classes every Soldier attended the Soldiers were given a choice between six different breakout classes during the day, ranging from budgeting, investing, savings to buying a house.

"The budgeting classes were very informative and they give you a baseline to start from especially if you don't know where to start," said Spc. Thomas Adgate, a medic

with 2-20th Field Artillery Battalion, 41st Fires Brigade.

Guest speakers were also on hand to brief the Rail Gunners about various topic such as how to read a Leave and Earnings Statement, how your personality affects your spending habits, and how to pick an electricity provider.

The State of Texas has a deregulated power system which means that electricity companies compete for your business, explained Michele Gregg, Director of External Relations for the Office of Public Utility Counsel. The rate you pay for electricity will change depending on the company and the plan you chose, she added.

"If you're finically stable you can concentrate on being a Soldier," said Bishop



Michele Gregg, Director of External Relations for the Office of Public Utility Counsel explains to Pfc. John Harten, a wheeled mechanic with 2nd Battalion, 20 Field Artillery Regiment that he could pay a lower price for electricity if he looks at other companies' prices.

Throughout the Brigade



Rail Gunners



RE-ENLISTMENTS

This month 23 Rail Gunners are staying Army Strong:
October

PROMOTIONS

We would like to congratulate all of the Rail Gunners that were promoted during the month of August:



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To send your story ideas and pictures to the 41st Fires Brigade
Public Affairs Office!

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