



# The Rail Gunner Monthly

VOLUME 4

THE RAIL GUNNER MONTHLY

ISSUE 1

## Inside this issue

Message from RG6/RG9	2
Teens extreme look at Army life	3
Fort Hood Fighter	4
Rail Gunner University	6

## The Rail Gunner



### Monthly Staff

**Commander**  
**COL William E. McRae**  
**Command Sgt. Maj.**  
**CSM Antonio Dunston**  
**Rail Gunner PAO**  
**NCOIC**  
**SGT Garrett Hernandez**



**41st Fires Brigade**  
**"Rail Gunners!!"**



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

## Teens receive extreme look into Army life

Story and photos by  
 Staff Sgt. Kyle J. Richardson  
 41st Fires Brigade, PAO

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 uncustomary 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

# RAIL GUNNER 6 & 9 SEND



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



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



*The "Rail Gunner Monthly" is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. Army. Contents of the "Rail Gunner Monthly" are not necessarily official views of or endorsed by the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army or the 41st Fires Brigade. All editorial content of this publication is prepared, edited, provided and approved by the 41st Fires Brigade Public Affairs Office. If you have any questions, comments, concerns or suggestions contact the 41st Fires Brigade PAO office at 254-287-0739 or email [kyle.richardson@conus.army.mil](mailto:kyle.richardson@conus.army.mil). Check out the unit's Website at <http://www.hood.army.mil/41stFires> or on Facebook for additional information.*



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

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 non-commissioned 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 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 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.”

# Fort Hood fighter no lightweight in heaviest division

Story by  
Staff Sgt. Kyle J. Richardson  
41st Fires Brigade, PAO

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 kick for



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. Nathaniel Freeman. Daniel Cernero, Sentinel Sports Editor

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 Freeman'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-weight division with a fourth-place

# Fort Hood fighter continued

Story by  
Staff Sgt. Kyle J. Richardson  
41st Fires Brigade, PAO

finish.

Reyes started increasing his body-weight in March to fight in the light heavyweight division. The team lost its heavyweight, 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 purple belt in jiu-jitsu, so I’m always going to



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

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 outdoing 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

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.

he

# Rail Gunner University



The third class of 15 students completed a course on Critical and Creative Thinking class held at Rail Gunner University, Aug. 21- 23.

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

Soldiers from the 41st Fires Brigade have a valuable tool at their unit. The Soldiers have the opportunity to attend a college class within the brigade's headquarters. The courses are taught at the Soldier Development Center but a unit can request courses be taught within a given location.

The Noncommissioned Officer Leadership Education and Development Program is offered to enlisted Soldiers of all ranks. The courses are taught by instructors of Central Texas College and Soldiers receive one college credit per a course, explains Eileen Houck NCO LEAD instructor.

The NCO LEAD program offers management type courses in such subjects as military writing, critical and creative thinking improving work performance, and also computer classes in Microsoft PowerPoint, Excel and Desktop Publishing.

The Rail Gunner Soldiers,

in the class, reported for physical training every morning like normal but then would go to class by 9:00 a.m. and would stay in class unit 4:30 p.m.

"When I was coming up, we didn't have classes like this. What we received was hands on training...some people don't learn through hands on training, they learn better by getting classroom instructions," 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Darryl Davis, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 41st Fires Brigade.

Holding the classes within the brigade's headquarters has many advantages, explains 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Darryl Davis, HHB, 41st Fires Bde. The instructor can explain the concept in a new way, after class the Soldiers can seek help not only from the instructor but also his or her supervisor, and the Soldiers can receive guidance as to which classes will be more beneficial to the Soldier, Davis added.

Other courses that have previously been offered within the confines of Charles B. Allen Hall are Military Writing I and II.

"This is the third one [class] I have taken, and they were all pretty cool," said Pfc. Dakota Maddux a geospatial engineer in Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 41st Fires Brigade.

The latest class held at Rail Gunner University, from August 21 to 23, was Critical and Creative Thinking.

"It's a course that helps the individual polish or helps them with their critical thinking process; it is so important for Soldiers to have," said Houck

"Being junior enlisted, it gives you the opportunity to use your brain and to think about things you don't normally get to think about," said Maddux, a native of Seadrift, Texas. "You see these NCO's making decisions or these officers making decisions and this helps you understand why they are making that decision and how they came up with that decision."

"With the classes being here, it shows the Soldiers that the unit cares about their development," said Davis.

# Throughout the Brigade



Headquarters and Headquarters Battery competed for the title of best softball team on Ft. Hood, July 31. The team ended the softball season by taking first place in the West and second overall.



## ***Rail Gunners***



# RE-ENLISTMENTS

This month 23 Rail Gunners are staying Army Strong:

SPC Grippin, SPC Mcclanahan, SPC Dion, SPC Bolden, SGT Torresperez, SPC Clayborn, SPC Carpenter, SGT Bornowski, SPC Guajardo, SPC Proehl, SPC Panyard, SPC Rodriguez, SGT Neyman, SPC Burce, SFC Delgado, SPC Vandervegt, SPC Valentine, SGT Elam, SGT Taborda, SPC Smith, SPC Marshall, SPC Hale, and SPC Kahane.

# PROMOTIONS

We would like to congratulate all of the Rail Gunners that were promoted during the month of August: SFC Avinger, SFC Delgado, SSG Branum, SSG Coleman, SSG Hill, SSG Miller, SSG Pirez, SGT Garrett, SGT Johnson, SGT Falts, SGT Fischer, SGT Fritz, SGT Mendoza, SGT Mendoza, SGT Montgomery, SGT Nelson, SGT Neyman, SPC Crouthamel, SPC Kinsey, and SPC Orand.

Want more news and information, become a Facebook fan of the 41st Fires BDE



**I WANT YOU**

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

SGT Garrett Hernandez: [garett.m.hernandez.mil@mail.mil](mailto:garett.m.hernandez.mil@mail.mil)