

Lightning Strike Newsletter



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ADA Soldiers volunteer at Austin soup kitchen



Spc. Casey Veach, a medic and a BOSS representative in 69th ADA, stirs a giant container of soup at the Angel House in Austin Dec. 15. Patrons of the Angel house are entitled to unlimited soup so some eat as much as four or five bowls each visit. **pg. 5.**

Commander's Corner

Welcome to the first issue of the Lightning Strike Newsletter. Please take some time to read the articles, look at the photos, and attend some of the highlighted activities with your Families, and give us feedback on how to improve.

The intent of this news letter is to keep you and your family better informed about some of the happenings in the brigade. In order to do this we need a few things from you. First, we hope that you support this newsletter with your feedback and suggestions-- we want your opinions! Second, we hope that

you share this newsletter with your Families to keep them better informed. Keeping Families informed is a critical element of Family Care.

To the Families in the brigade: thank you for your unwavering support and dedication to your Soldiers. The strong foundation that our Soldiers need begins and ends every day at home with you.

To the Soldiers: keep up the great work! This brigade is only as strong as the Soldiers in it, and your hard work and devotion to the brigade is what makes us as successful as we are.

Lightning Strike!



Col. James Jenkins, 69 ADA Commander

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How you can support your newsletter:

-Do you know an exceptional Soldier who has a story to tell? If so, please contact the PAO using the information to the left. The Soldier will be highlighted in the Lightning Strike Newsletter and may also have an opportunity to be recognized in other papers throughout the surrounding areas and installations.

-We need to know about your units events! Fundraisers, training events, FRG meetings... if you know about it in advance we would love to help you promote your event through this newsletter.

-We would appreciate your suggestions and ideas to make this publication as successful as possible. Please use the contact information to let us know what you think.



Lt. Col. Ron Leininger, 69 ADA Chaplain



Chaplain's Corner



Unit chaplains and assistants:

HBB, 69 ADA: CH Leininger and Sgt. Passetti- 833-2900

1-44 ADA: CH Pena and Pfc. Jaramillo- 833-2994

4-5 ADA: Spc. Henry- 833-1428

The chaplains of the brigade have a lot to offer our brigade's Soldiers including: pastoral counseling, chapel services for several religions, newcomer's briefs and marriage retreats. The chaplains are 100% confidential for all issues.

Upcoming events:

Newcomer's Training- monthly training that is beneficial for every new Soldier coming to the brigade. Training includes: Financial Peace University, resilient families, how not to marry a jerk or jerk-ette and more. The next sessions are Feb. 25 and 26, and March 25 and 26.

Strong Bonds retreats for 4-5 ADA for the up coming months are still to be determined.



St. Barbara's Day Ball, December 2009

NCO strives to educate successful Soldiers

By Pfc. Maria L. Asenbrenner

69th ADA BDE PAO

FORT HOOD, Texas – “People call me a hero, but the ones who died are the heroes. They are the ones who gave the ultimate sacrifice,” said Staff Sgt. Michael L. Graham, a section sergeant from E Battery, 1st Battalion, 44th Air Defense Artillery Regiment.

Graham was sitting in the turret of a Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle while conducting a routine sweep for roadside bombs with six other Soldiers during his 2003-2004 deployment to Iraq when the unexpected happened.

His vehicle was struck by a roadside bomb. The turret was blown off of the vehicle, and Graham, injured but conscious, looked back to see the rest of his vehicle totaled and in flames.

“I didn’t know what happened to me,” Graham said.

After waking up three days later, Graham could not recall the events that had happened in the incident. The details were slowly brought to his attention, but when he asked about the other Soldiers in the vehicle, everyone was hesitant to answer, Graham said.

“This was the darkest day in the Army for me,” Graham said.



One of the worst feelings in the world is finding out that the battle buddies everyone sees from day to day aren’t going to be seen anymore.

Of the seven Soldiers in the vehicle two survived, Graham included.

Graham was awarded a purple heart for his dedication and bravery.

Although Graham's deployment to Iraq had its bad days, it had its good ones as well, he said. Some of the highlights of his deployment to Iraq were the training that he received and being able to watch his Soldiers grow, he said.

Graham has also been deployed to Korea, Thailand and Panama.

“Panama was my favorite deployment,” Graham said.

Since the deployment to Panama was just before the invasion of Panama “we were always expecting to go live” and fight a good fight, he said.

Graham joined the Army in 1986 at the age of 18. After serving seven years in the reserves, Graham decided to go active, and he still plans to work at least 10 more years.

One of his goals is to train his young soldiers to be strong leaders, with the intention of strengthening the noncommissioned officer corps, he said.

On a day to day basis Graham works with Soldiers to help them prepare and adjust to “life inside the Army”, and he also trains them on how to work certain equipment.

He likes to consider himself a life-coach in addition to being an NCO.

One piece of advice that Graham would give to all Soldiers is to always take care of business first and to set goals, he said.

Graham is married to his wife, Shermayne, and has three children, Taylor, 21, Morgan, 18, Marcus, 17.



Soldiers take part in the firing of the volleys (left) at the memorial ceremony for Pvt. Richard Houston, Jr., at the Comanche Chapel here Jan. 8. Houston was a food service specialist in the 1st Battalion, 44th Air Defense Artillery Regiment. Houston died on Jan. 5 of the new year.

ADA Soldiers battle hunger at soup kitchen

By Pfc. Maria Asenbrenner
69th ADA BDE PAO

AUSTIN, Texas-- Soldiers from the 69th Air Defense Artillery Brigade volunteered at the Angel House, the soup kitchen that is part of the Austin Baptist Church, in Austin Dec. 15.

The Angel House is a soup kitchen where everyone eats free. It serves many of the less fortunate people in the Austin area who need a little help throughout troubling times. The Angel House also tries to encourage its patrons by giving them hope, direction, and, of course, a hot meal.

The volunteers from 69th ADA consisted of several Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers representatives from the 1st Battalion, 44th ADA Regiment, and the 4th Battalion, 5th ADA Regt., as well as the 69th ADA BOSS president and vice president.

This was the first time that 69th ADA Soldiers volunteered at the Angel House, said Spc. Jennifer Lam, a medic and the BOSS president from HHB, 69th ADA.

"It is a worthwhile project, and it's great to be able to do this, especially around Christmas," Lam said.

People of all different ages and races come to the Angel House, including veterans from the Vietnam War and World War II, said one of the regular volunteers.

Since the soup kitchen opened in the mid 1980s, they have served over 1,831, 551 meals.

During the year of 2008, the kitchen served 115, 411 meals, which was more meals than any other year before.

Some days the Angel House can serve up to 450 people a day, said Marc, a volunteer at the shelter.

The kitchen serves doughnuts and coffee at 9:30 a.m., and then a hot lunch from 11 a.m. until 12:30 p.m.

The day that 69th ADA Soldiers came to volunteer, the trays had a lot of extra goodies such as chips and soda due to several recent donations, said Marcus, an



Volunteers from the BOSS program of 69th ADA prepare a meal for the patrons of the Angel House, a soup kitchen in Austin Dec. 25. employee of the soup kitchen. But the lunch usually consists of a sandwich, chicken or fish, a drink, a fruit cup, bread, and all the soup a person can eat.

Some of the kitchen's visitors eat as much as 4 or 5 cups of soup a day. The Angel House has "the best soup in Austin", said Richard, an employee there.

Volunteers like the Soldiers from 69th ADA, and people and businesses who are willing to donate help to make the soup kitchen a success.

The Angel House often receives food donations from several restaurants in the area such as Long John Silver's, Richard said.

Some people come to the Angel House just to share their inspirational stories and words of wisdom to its patrons and volunteers. One of those people is a man who goes by the name Brother Jack.

"You may not be able to change your circumstances, but you have control over your attitude," Brother Jack said.

People have no limits, he added. If a person sets his mind to do something, with time, hard work and dedication, he or she can achieve anything.

Soldiers hold food drive during the holiday season

By Pfc. Scott Rubin
1-44 AMD

FORT HOOD, Texas-- The 1st Battalion, 44th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, 69th ADA Brigade's Family Readiness Group, along with many of the unit's Soldiers and Family members, hosted a food drive on Fort Hood for Soldiers and Families in the unit who could use a little extra help over the holidays.

The battalion commander, Lt. Col. Brian W. Gibson, and his wife, Cher-

yl, started off the event by providing a huge amount of support through the Family's generous contributions.

Mrs. Gibson's sisters, Catherine Gaither and Laura Wesoloski, flew in from Pennsylvania to help out with the food drive as well.

1-44 ADA's FRG responded by organizing a battalion-wide food drive and getting each Soldier to do their part in helping this compassionate cause.

Spc. Jessica Gagean, the Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers rep-

resentative for the unit, said she was really impressed with the turnout of Soldiers who were looking to help.

Many Soldiers and Families walked away with happy faces after being given one of many gift baskets and turkeys that were assembled by 1-44 ADA's leadership.

Thanks to 1-44 ADA's contributions, Soldiers on and around Fort Hood are able to have a warmer and more care free holiday season.

Fort Hood Activities and Events

Apache Arts and Crafts Classes

Apache Arts and Crafts offers classes on ceramics, wood shop, basic framing, mat cutting, scrap booking, and pottery. Times and costs vary depending upon the chosen class. Apache Arts and Crafts is located on the corner of 761st Tank Battalion and 62nd St. For more information call: (254)287-5623.

Prayers for Tragedy in Haiti

The Spiritual Fitness Center is open 24/7 for those who need a place to pray or meditate for those affected by the recent earthquake and tragedy in Haiti. Located at 33rd St. and Battalion Ave. on the Resiliency Campus. Please call 553-1195 for more information.

CYSS Edge Program

Experience, develop, grow and excel is an art, life, fitness and adventure package including culinary arts, fashioning design, video production and rock climbing classes. The program is available to 1st-12th grade youth registered with CYSS. For more information call 532-5073.

Family Pasta Night

Every Thursday Club Hood hosts Family Night with pasta dinners served in the Mesquite Dining Room. Call 532-5073 for more information.

Tax Center Open!

The tax center is open from Jan. 19- April 16. Hours of operation: 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday- Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday. Thursday from 9:30 a.m.- 7 p.m. For more info call 288-7995, 288-7995, 288-5040. Walk-ins welcome, for appointment call 287-3294. Co-located with Cleer Creek Commissary, bldg. 50001.

'Dear John' Books-to-Movies Promotion

Through February 14 Casey Memorial Library patrons can check out the novel "Dear John", by Nicholas Sparks, and enter to win posters, t-shirts and other prizes. The library is located at 72nd St. and 761st Tank Battalion.

Recruit the Recruiter

Feb. 2 at 1:30 p.m. the Recruit the Recruiter Team will brief specialists through sergeants first class regarding the benefits, challenges and qualifications of recruiting duty at the Soldier Development Center in room D-109.

Job Fair

Feb. 3: ACAP is hosting a job fair at Club Hood from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Texas A&M Central Texas GRE Workshop

Feb. 20 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Texas A&M will hold a workshop. Sign up by Feb. 17 at 5 p.m. at tamuct.org/studentaffairs and send payment of \$20 (includes lunch and light breakfast) to: Student Affairs, 1901 S. Clear Creek Rd. Suite 114, Killeen, TX 76549.

Parenting Order Legal Clinic

Free. Ask an attorney about legal info concerning your parenting rights and responsibilities. Feb. 23, bldg. 18000 on Battalion from 3-5 p.m. Call 287-3199/7901 for more info.

Hood Howdy Career Fair

Career fair Feb. 25 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Club Hood in the Patton Lounge. For more info call 553-2214/3167.

American Red Cross Open House

March 11 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. learn about volunteer opportunities and the American Red Cross programs. Call 287-0400 or 288-8144 for more information.

