

Lightning Strike Newsletter



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ADA Soldiers win 2nd place in esteemed culinary contest



Several Soldiers from 69th ADA were recognized for their 2nd place finish in the Department of the Army, Philip A. Connelly Competition at III Corps, Feb. 2. In addition to being runner-up in the DA portion on the competition, this team of Soldiers also claimed a first place victory in the FORSCOM area of the competition.

E Btry., 1-44 Soldiers say goodbye to Families, head to Iraq



A Family from E Btry., 1-44 ADA spends their last moments together on Fort Hood Feb. 1, before the Soldier departs on a scheduled 12 month deployment to Iraq. About 30 Soldiers from 1-44 ADA deployed along with troops from other units on post.

Commander's Corner

The month of February was a busy one for the Soldiers and Families of the Lightning Brigade.

We had a visit from Brig. Gen. Mann and field training exercises throughout the Brigade. Our field training exercises were a great success due to the hard work of our Soldiers and the support of our Families who were without their loved ones for the duration of the training.

There is a lot coming up in the month of March as well. On March 14th don't forget to turn your clocks an hour ahead. You will lose an hour of sleep; I just

hope that you don't make it up by accidentally sleeping through PT or an hour of work. March 17 is St. Patrick's Day. If you plan on going out for a good time, I encourage all of you to be responsible and take care of your battle buddies and your Family members. One bad decision has the potential to cause a lot of harm to those around you.

I hope that you enjoy this month's Lightning Strike Newsletter, and we encourage any feedback you may have. The newsletter is only as good as the information you provide for it.

Lightning Strike!



Col. James Jenkins, 69 ADA Commander

Lightning Strike Newsletter contact information:

69th ADA Brigade PAO:

Pfc. Maria Asenbrener

Phone: (254)553-3243

Email: maria.asenbrener@us.army.mil

69th ADA Brigade FRSA:

Susan Ulsamer

Phone: (254)287-9646

Email: susan.ulsamer@us.army.mil

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- 618-8027

4-5 ADA: CH Sink and Spc. Henry- 287-4316

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:

New Family and Soldier training-monthly training that is beneficial for every new Soldier and Family member coming to the brigade. The next sessions are March 25-26 and April 29-30

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

1-44 Soldiers say goodbye to Families, head out to Iraq

By Pfc. Maria L. Asenbrener
69 ADA BDE

About 30 Soldiers from E Battery, 1st Battalion, 44th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, 69th ADA Brigade, along with Soldiers from III Corps, made their last preparations for their 12 month deployment to Iraq Feb. 1 at Fort Hood.

At first glance, any person walking into Kieschnick Gym would have been expecting to find a booming party, but behind the thunderous music being pumped through the gym, there was a room full of Family members and Soldiers anxiously awaiting their last hugs and kisses for months to come from their loved ones.

Going through a deployment away from Family is the hardest part of being a Soldier, said Lt. Gen. Robert Cone, the III Corps commanding general.

Deployments are something that most Soldiers and their Families have to endure at one point or another to ensure the safety and freedom of this great country.

While some Soldiers are trying to overcome the heartache of leaving their Families behind, for other Soldiers the deployment to Baghdad is a new and exciting experience. This is the case for Pfc. Ryan Sieverding, a native of St. Albans, Vt., and an Avenger crew member from E Btry., 1-44 ADA.

Sieverding has only 14 months of Army service under his belt, but he is eager to get this deployment started, he said.

"I signed up to go," Sieverding said.

Cone challenges Soldiers and Family members alike to set goals and achieve them throughout the deployment.

Any goal, whether it be taking the next step in bettering one's education, becoming more physically fit, or taking better control of finances, can help to pass the



Lt. Gen. Robert Cone, the commanding general of III Corps at Fort Hood, gives a speech to Soldiers and Family members about the deployment to Iraq Feb. 1.

time of a seemingly never ending deployment, Cone said.

Sieverding said that he would like to explore and travel to new places. This deployment may give him an opportunity to achieve one of his goals.

As the loud music in the gym disappeared, the Families were given their last minutes with their Soldiers before it was time to go. Fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, husbands and wives shared their final 'I love you's, and within moments, the Soldiers were lined up and marching out of the gym.

"In order to get home, you gotta say bye," Cone said.

Saying goodbye is a sacrifice that every military Family has to make at one point or another, and for the Families in E Btry., 1-44 ADA, Feb. 1 was one of those days. However, now that the hard part of saying goodbye is over, the Families can look forward to saying hello in a few months time.



69th ADA says farewell to great leader

By Pfc. Maria L. Asenbrener
69 ADA BDE

On the morning of Jan. 25, the 69th Air Defense Artillery Brigade held a change of responsibility ceremony at the Phantom Warrior Center, bidding farewell to Command Sgt. Maj. Tedd J. Pritchard and welcoming Sgt. Maj. Jesse Santos, who will be taking over acting as the brigade command sergeant major.

When Pritchard became the command sergeant major of 69th ADA, he found himself, along with only about a dozen other Soldiers, at Fort Hood.

In addition to having a huge deficit of man-power, the brigade also had no equipment and no offices to work out of, Pritchard said.

The tiny brigade that arrived at Fort Hood in the summer of 2008



has grown to around 2,000 Soldiers.

"This is a bitter-sweet moment," Pritchard said. "I am proud to have been part of this great brigade," he added.

One of Pritchard's life-long goals is to become a commandant, and now he has been given the chance at the NCO Academy, said Col. James Jenkins, the commander of 69th ADA.

Pritchard is a great leader and a great mentor, and he shows this every day with his perseverance and

his will to better any Soldier—no matter their rank. He is willing to give advice to anyone who comes to his door; especially those who strive to be leaders or noncommissioned officers, Jenkins added.

"We are better people and better Soldiers because of him," said Lt. Col. Ron Leininger, the chaplain of the 69th ADA Brigade.

A Soldier should always try to make his or her unit a better place to be, Pritchard said. He tried to accomplish that in 69th ADA by always working together as a team, he added.

"The brigade represents with pride, honor, and dignity on Fort Hood," Pritchard said.

69th ADA's success wouldn't be possible without the Soldiers, the supporting Families, and, of course, great leaders.

"Strike First" Battalion trains Soldiers to standard

By Pfc. Scott Rubin
1-44 AMD

The 1st Battalion, 44th Air Defense Artillery Regiment of the 69th ADA Brigade has successfully conducted a broad range of field exercises at Fort Hood from Jan. 25 to Feb. 5.

During the 13 day field training exercise weapons were tested, Soldier tactics were put to the test, and there was a great emphasis on meeting operational objectives for deployment readiness.

The battalion was greeted by Command Sgt. Maj. James Carr, the regimental command sergeant major of the Air Defense branch. 1-44 battalion's senior non-commissioned officer, Command Sgt. Maj. Jerry Faulk, took Carr on a tour of 1-44's battlefield exercises. The visiting command sergeant major expressed his belief that the unit was fully mission capable.

"It was great to see highly motivated troopers. I was getting detailed briefings from lower grade NCOs. That was outstanding," Carr said.

Tough weather elements also tested the Soldiers when storms created flooding on their sites, but despite the challenge, 1-44's leadership drove on and continued



Table 8 crew certifications, which test Soldiers on their aptitude for manning the PATRIOT.

Soldiers also conducted range qualifications to include: .50 caliber and M-249 machine guns and the Mk 19 grenade launcher.

At the conclusion of the battalion's field training exercise, Soldiers hand chosen from each battery were awarded Army Commendation Medals and Army Achievement Medals for their unwavering dedication and for standing out amongst their peers during the exercises.

The battalion is on a prepare-to-deploy status and is driving on after this exercise. They continue to prepare themselves for any upcoming deployment.

69th ADA culinary team recognized for food service excellence

By Spc. Christopher Gaylord
13th Public Affairs Detachment

At Fort Hood, a post packed with tankers, cavalry troops and infantry grunts, even cooks have their place.

As the sole providers of hot chow while units train in the field and labor in combat zones, food service specialists uphold a vital mission that helps set the foundation for success on the battlefield. Quite literally, they fuel the Army.

A team of hard-charging food service Soldiers from Fort Hood's own 69th Air Defense Artillery Brigade is certainly no exception to excellence when it comes to serving food. From March to November 2009, the team changed its pace and competed in the 42nd annual, Army-wide Phillip A. Connelly Competition for Excellence in Food Service.

Gen. Charles Campbell, the commander of U.S. Army Forces Command, recognized the seven-man team of Soldiers Feb. 2 at III Corps' headquarters for taking top honors at the FORSCOM level in June 2009 and finishing as the runner-up team for the Department of the Army just four months later.

Culinary teams were placed into specific battlefield scenarios and critiqued on the layout of their kitchen sites; the preparation and service of their food; the

sanitation of their sites and kitchen containment tents; and the basic level of food service knowledge possessed by the team.

Each team maintained its site for more than 100 consecutive days, and the Soldiers are more than pleased with their performance. For this team, there is the satisfaction of a job well done.

"It makes me realize how proud I am to be a food service specialist," said Staff Sgt. Vicente Benites, the team's lead sergeant. "All the hard work we put in really paid off."

"Some of the Soldiers we served said the food was better than at the dining facilities; some of them said the steak we served was better than most restaurants," said Sgt. Donald Davis, a field sanitation sergeant with the team.

Something Soldiers can always use is training, and with this competition, the 69th ADA chefs got more than their fair share.

"The most valuable thing was the training and knowledge of setting up a field site to standard," said Chief Warrant Officer Timothy Hagans, the brigade's food advisor.

The Soldiers will travel to Reno, Nev., in mid April to formally accept their award as the runner-up food services team for the Department of the Army.



Soldiers, NCOs and officers participate in a 69th ADA Brigade run on Jan. 22. (Top left) Lt. Col. Douglas White, the commander of 4-5 ADA leads his battalion during the run. (Top right) Lt. Col. Brian Gibson, the commander of 1-44 ADA, leads his battalion during the run.

4-5 ADA Soldiers return from Iraq

By 1LT Gregg Verhoef
4-5 AMD

Soldiers from Echo Battery, 4th Battalion, 5th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, 69th ADA Brigade, returned on Feb. 19 to Fort Hood after an extremely successful year long deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Echo Battery performed a critical Counter Rocket Artillery and Mortar (CRAM) mission, during which they were responsible for protecting thousands of Soldiers on numerous forward operating bases across Iraq from enemy rocket, artillery and mortar attack. During several enemy mortar attacks Echo Battery provided early warning saving countless lives by allowing Soldiers on the FOBs to seek cover before the rounds impacted.

The battery's Soldiers were spread across FOBs, both large and small, at some of the most dangerous locations in Iraq.

The unit developed, tested, and implemented a new system to allow FOBs to share early warning information, thereby speeding response times to enemy mortar attack.

As a result of the battery's outstanding performance and service, the Soldiers of Echo Battery were awarded over 60 Combat Action Badges and more than 20 Bronze Stars.



While their Soldiers were deployed, Echo Battery's Families maintained an extremely successful and supportive Family Readiness Group. The strong network established by the FRG leaders contributed immensely to Soldiers, keeping them able to stay focused on their very important mission.

After the Soldier's return flight was pushed back several days, Echo's anxious and eager Families were excited to reunite with their loved ones at the welcome home ceremony Friday afternoon at the West Fort Hood Physical Fitness Center.

Echo Battery served with great distinction in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, and the 69th ADA Brigade is pleased to welcome these heroes home.

New CSM joins Black Jack team at Fort Bliss

Story and photo by Natalie M. Hinojos

Soldiers, family members and friends gathered for the 32nd Army Air and Missile Defense change of responsibility ceremony held Feb. 10 at the Fort Bliss Museum.

Command Sgt. Maj. Sidney Weatherspoon, who served in the Army for 32 years, assumed responsibility of the 32nd AAMDC in September 2007.

Taking his place is Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Clem. Clem was nominatively selected for this command by the commanding general of the unit, Brig. Gen. David L. Mann. Mann selected Clem out of five nominees.



"Change of responsibility is the traditional ceremony that all Army formations experience starting from first sergeant to command sergeant major," said Weatherspoon.

The passing of the sword takes place to signify the relinquishing of responsibility and authority from the outgoing to the incoming command sergeant major. Command

sergeants major may come and go, but the sword remains razor sharp.

According to globalsecurity.org, the War Department in 1840 adopted the unique noncommissioned officers sword. While no longer part of the Army's inventory, American sergeants wore it for more than 70 years.

"We are saying farewell to a great Soldier and his lovely wife after 32 years of dedication and a lot of sacrifices that were thrown in along the way," said Mann during his speech at the ceremony. "And we are also welcoming another great American and his lovely wife to join the Black Jack team."

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.

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.

EFMP Tutoring

If your child needs help additional help with school work, EFMP offers tutoring for students in 1st through 12th grade. Tutoring is on Thursdays from 5:30-6:30 p.m. For more information call 287-6070.

American Red Cross Volunteer Orientation

If you are interested in volunteering with the American Red Cross the next volunteer orientation will be March 2 at 9 a.m. For more information call 287-0400 or 288-8144.

Fish City Grill Benefit for Fort Hood Fisher House

March 2 from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. in the Markey Heights Shopping Center in Harker Heights, the Fish City Grill will hold a benefit to raise money for Soldiers and Families staying at the Fort Hood Fisher House. For more information contact Julie Shenk at shenkjules@aol.com

Marriage 101

March 3 there will be a workshop designed to prepare pre-marital and newlywed couples for a lifelong marriage by building on their strengths and teaching essential relationship skills. This class is a requirement for anyone getting married on post. It is in bldg. 21007 (53rd Street and Old Ironside) from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Hood Bowhunters 3D Shoot

The Hood Bowhunters will be conducting a 30 target 3D shoot at Camp Arrowhead on March 6. Registration begins at 8 a.m. and all score cards have to be turned in no later than 2 p.m. Registration fees vary- up to \$10. For more information, contact James at 238-9229.

For the Love of Chocolate

March 6 at Meadows Elementary School (corner of Tank Destroyer and 27th St.) from 1-4 p.m. there will be a fundraiser to benefit the Fort Hood Area Volunteer Child Care Fund. Email gpage@aol.com for more info.

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.

Military to Civilian Career Expo

Career Expo for transitioning service members and the families on March 11 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Club Hood. Pre-register at www.civilianjobs.com or call (687)819-4170 for more information.

RSC Yard Sale

The Fort Hood Enlisted Spouses Club Yard Sale is March 13 starting at 7 a.m. You can rent a space and sell your stuff or just come to shop. Proceeds go to the FHAESC general fund and be used primarily to support the Bell of the Ball Gown Closet. For more information contact fhaesc.events@yahoo.com

Health and Fitness Expo

March 24 from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. at the Resiliency Campus (Bldg. 12020, 31st Street and Battalion Avenue). Includes: aerobic demo, health screening, weight loss ideas, free recycle bags, and financial readiness fitness. Door prizes will be given. Military and Family Life Consultants will be on site. RSVP to 287-4471.