



The Rail Gunner Weekly

41st Fires Brigade



1-21 FA



2-20 FA



589th BSB



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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <i>Comic Soldier performs</i> | 2 |
| <i>Safety corner</i> | 2 |
| <i>MPs expand training</i> | 3 |
| <i>Surgeon's section</i> | 3 |
| <i>TC holds memorial</i> | 4 |
| <i>Army v. Navy rivalry</i> | 4 |
| <i>El Sal MoD visits</i> | 5 |

Shocker receives MEGS

By Sgt. Allison Churchill
41st Fires Bde. PAO

Patrons of the Combat Outpost Shocker Morale, Welfare and Recreation Center have a new game system to take their minds off being deployed this holiday season.

Representatives of the United Service Organization, Multi-National Division – Center and 41st Fires Brigade delivered a Mobile Electronic Gaming System to the COP Dec. 1.

“We wanted to bring (the Soldiers’) living room to them,” said Jeff Hill, U.S. Regional Vice President, U.S.O.

The \$6,000 system includes Xbox 360, four games, Guitar Hero, a projector, screen, speakers and is DVD compatible.

Upon delivering the case containing the system, Kevin Meade, Vice President of Operations for Southwest Asia, U.S.O., challenged the Soldiers in the MWR tent to beat the Air Force set-up time of 15 minutes.

The team of Soldiers quickly had the system up and running and began playing “Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare.”

“Kind of ironic, isn’t it? We’re at war and they’re playing a war game,” joked 1st Lt. Nick Albini, of Tampa, Fla., 1st Platoon leader, Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Regiment, 41st Fires Brigade.

Before the leadership and USO representatives left, the Soldiers took the opportunity to show off their Guitar Hero skills. Noncommissioned officers said they were glad Soldiers would have another reason to get out of their contained housing units and socialize.

“This should be a stress reliever,” said Sgt. Larry Mellette, Visalia, Calif., medic, Company C, 589th Brigade Support Battalion, 41st Fires Bde., attached to Btry. B.

“This is available to everyone, not just the people who have systems in their rooms,” added Mellette.

The systems were created by Blackwater, funded by Lockheed Martin and delivered with military assistance. Command Sgt. Maj. Kelvin Hughes, 41st Fires Bde.’s senior enlisted leader, who escorted the team to COP Shocker, where almost 30 of the brigade’s Soldiers have been working since August.

“It’s an honor to take individuals out... so they can see the excitement in the Soldiers’ eyes – it gives them the feeling of being cared for,” said Hughes. “Anytime we have Soldiers out there at remote locations it’s the leaders’ responsibility to check on them and provide whatever we can provide.”

The 41st Fires Brigade leadership received three MEGS – one of the remaining two will remain at the FOB Delta MWR and the other will go to one of the joint security stations.



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Fans hold up lighters as Sgt. 1st Class Bryan Matthews, quick reaction force platoon sergeant, Btry. B, 2-20 FA, plays “Hit Me With Your Best Shot” on Guitar Hero at the COP Shocker MWR Center Dec. 1.

Photo by Sgt. Allison Churchill, 41st Fires Bde. PAO

Comic performs for full house of fellow Soldiers



Brooklyn, N.Y., native Sgt. Ben Downing, communications noncommissioned officer, 3-142nd Assault Helicopter Battalion, poses with friends from his unit after performing to a packed Pavilion on FOB Delta Dec. 6.

Photo by Sgt. Allison Churchill, 41st Fires Bde. PAO

By Sgt. Allison Churchill
41st Fires Bde. PAO

Nearly 300 Soldiers and civilians packed into the Pavilion on FOB Delta Dec. 6 for an evening of comedy.

The comic, Sgt. Ben Downing of 3-142nd Assault Helicopter Battalion, 42nd Infantry Division, New York National Guard, has been building his stand-up comedy career since leaving active duty in 2000 and hopes to use his skills to entertain his comrades around Iraq.

During his nearly hour long show, Downing made light of life on FOB

Delta. The Brooklyn, N.Y., native and the rest of his battalion have been in country for less than a month, but his take on several facts of life earned loud laughter and applause.

"Being able to find common ground – that's the art of stand-up comedy," said Downing, a communications noncommissioned officer.

His first attempt at stand-up wasn't so successful, Downing said. While stationed in South Korea, Downing participated in a talent show. "I got booed off the stage," he admits. "Looking back, I was horrible."

As he was in the process of leaving active duty, several buddies encouraged Downing to try again. His girlfriend at the time knew people in the comedy business and helped him get a two-minute spot at a club.

"It wasn't that bad," said Downing. He kept going, and started getting to know other comics.

He eventually became friends with a group of comics including D.L. Hughley, Tracey Morgan and Dave Chappell, earning opening spots on their shows and spots on Comic View in 2003 and 2004.

He also earned a small part in the movie "I Am Legend," starring Will Smith. Downing joked about his very small part and the difference between "rich thinking" and "broke thinking" during his FOB Delta performance.

After building up to performing almost nightly, when his battalion mobilized to deploy at Fort Sill, Okla., he put together a show – partly to keep his skills fresh and partly to give his battle buddies something to do.

"They need comedy," said Downing.

Downing said he plans to capture one of his shows in theater and send it to networks in the U.S., so he can share his "skewed sense of humor" and life as a Soldier with a larger audience.

"There's no other comic who's been a Soldier in Iraq before," said Downing.

So far Downing's command has been supportive of his comedy efforts.

"As long as I do my job well, they let me do this," he said.

Safety Corner: Why should I report an accident?

By Kenneth Dickerson
41st Fires Bde. Safety Officer

On FOB Delta we live in a small area. We all go to the same chow hall. So it is easy for me to spot someone wearing a cast, walking on crutches or anything else that marks an accident. When I see a Soldier with a cast or crutches I normally will walk up him and ask two very important questions: How did that happen? When did that happen?

The Soldier might think it's not a big deal. But yes, it is a big deal! Anytime that you are hurt or become ill from work you need to report it.

Later in life you might want medical assistance or money from the Veteran's Affairs for an old injury. All injury reports are kept on file, so if the injury is not in your medical records you will have another verification source if needed.

Plus, all accident information is compiled so we can learn how to prevent further ones from happening.

So what is an accident according to the Army? Army Regulation 385-10, the Army Safety Program, defines what an accident is and what needs to be reported.

An Army accident is defined as an unplanned event, or series of events, which results in one or more of the following:

a. Occupational illness to Army military or

Army civilian personnel. For example, if you get sick from inhaling paint fumes.

- b. Injury to on-duty Army civilian personnel.
- c. Injury to Army military personnel, on-duty or off-duty.
- d. Damage to Army property.
- e. Damage to public or private property, and/or injury or illness to non-Army personnel caused by Army operations.

After deciding that the accident needs to be reported, it is also important to know which class the accident falls into. I have abbreviated the terms so that they pertain to us here on FOB Delta and our mission. If you have more questions please review the regulation.

Class A: An Army accident resulting in property damages costing \$1 million or more; or an injury or occupational illness resulting in a fatality or permanent total disability.

Class B: An accident resulting in property damage costing between \$200,000 and \$999,999; an injury or occupational illness resulting in permanent partial disability; or three or more Soldiers hospitalized as the result of a single accident. An example would be if three Soldiers were involved in a rollover, went to the hospital and stayed overnight.

The above accidents normally require an official accident board appointed by a general and sometimes an accident team from Fort Rucker, the Combat Readiness Center, is assigned to perform the investigation. Below

are classes of accidents I regularly see here on FOB Delta.

Class C: An accident resulting in total property damage of \$20,000 to \$199,999 (an Estimated Cost of Damage Report is required); or a nonfatal injury or occupational illness that causes one or more days away from work or training. The victim will stay in the hospital or get quarters.

Class D: An accident resulting in total damage of \$2,000 to \$19,999 according to the ECOD; injury or illness resulting in a profile or other work restriction. For example, the victim couldn't take the Army Physical Fitness Test.

If the victim's injury requires more than basic first aid, such as stitches, a report must be filed. If the victim only needs a band-aid, no report is due.

Class D accidents are the only accidents that will not prevent a unit from receiving a safety award.

Finally, FOB Delta policy is that all accidents need to be reported to the FOB Safety Officer as soon as possible between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Take the time to file the report in case no one else does.

You should always let your chain of command know if you've been injured. This keeps everyone in the know and you out of trouble. We owe it to our command to inform them if we are not 100 percent capable to do our mission.

With better security, police training expands in Wasit

By Sgt. Daniel T. West
41st Fires Bde. PAO

Police training operations in Wasit province have expanded their focus from al Kut to include stations in outlying areas, taking advantage of improved security and Iraqi police capability.

Soldiers of the 511th Military Police Company, of Fort Drum, N.Y., have resumed their partnership with stations in the towns of Numaniyah, al Hayy and Shay'k Sa'ad and the outlying stations in each district.

Following outbreaks of violence in late March, 2008, the training operations shifted to focus almost solely on al Kut, the largest city in the province and the center for IP operations. Since Wasit transitioned to Provincial Iraqi Control in October, increased security and a focus on training operations led to the broadening of the 511th's focus.

"Since PIC, with the improved security, we are able to branch out to other stations," said 1st Lt. Matthew Porter to Brig. Gen. Mahdi Humood Dawood, commander of the al Hayy district. "We can help you with any training you need and can provide some limited assistance with supplies."

The IP's at the stations in al Hayy and Shay'k Sa'ad said the situation in their cities is generally good, but said they welcomed the opportunity for their IP's to train with the Americans.

"This partnership is good for the station," said Mahdi. "It will definitely empower us."

The initial visits to the stations did not involve training, besides building a list of desired training from commanders, but were mainly fact-finding missions. The Soldiers assessed the state of the stations'

1st Lt. Daniel Merritt, 511th MP Co., speaks with the head of intelligence at the Shay'k Sa'ad IP station Dec. 4.

Photo by Sgt. Daniel T. West, 41st Fires Bde. PAO



Surgeon's Section

By Col. Italo Bastianelli
41st Fires Bde. Surgeon

The old adage of "an apple a day keeps the doctor away" does have merit.

Apples contain antioxidants, substances that protect the body from the damage of free radicals. Free radicals are substances produced from normal body processes, stress, exercise and external factors (air and water pollution, UV light and chemicals) which cause cell damage. Prolonged exposure leads to loss of energy, pain, tissue damage, disease, aging and eventually death.

Substances known as antioxidants found in vitamins and minerals are capable of reducing and repairing the damage from free radicals. These substances can be found in fruits, vegetables, red wine or can be obtained from supplements.

So remember to get your daily dose of antioxidants from your favorite fruit or vegetable to ward off those pesky free radicals.

operations and established a relationship with the leadership.

"For now, we're just gathering information about the situation here so we can pass it on to our replacements," said 1st Lt. Daniel Merritt in his visit to the Shay'k Sa'ad station. "When they get here, they will begin the intensive training program."

Iraqi Policemen watch 1st Lt. Matthew Porter and Staff Sgt. Ronald Brennan, of the 511th MP Co., climb stairs to the roof of the al Basheer IP station near al Hayy Dec. 1.

Photo by Sgt. Daniel T. West, 41st Fires Bde. PAO



Chapel Services

Chapel 1

| | |
|-----------------------|------|
| Sunday | |
| General Protestant | 0900 |
| Latter-day Saints | 1030 |
| Gospel Service | 1315 |
| Tuesday and Wednesday | |
| Bible Study | 2000 |

El Sal Chapel

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| Sunday | |
| Catholic Mass (Spanish) | 0900 |
| Protestant (Spanish) (Building 12B) | 1000 |
| Catholic Mass (English) | 1630 |
| Thursday | |
| Bible Study | 1930 |
| Saturday | |
| Catholic Mass (Spanish) | 1900 |

TMC

| | |
|-------------|------|
| Thursday | |
| Bible Study | 1930 |

Triple Canopy guards celebrate friend's life



Top: Earl Hoffman, Ben Kabigabwa's supervisor, pays his last respects following a memorial service on FOB Delta Dec. 3. Kabigabwa died of complications of surgery Nov. 30 in Baghdad.

Right: Joseph Okodoi, a Triple Canopy guard, leads the group in a song at a memorial service for Ben Kabigabwa on FOB Delta, Nov. 3.



Photos by Sgt. Daniel T. West, 41st Fires Bde. PAO

Pre-Army vs. Navy game spirits high



Spc. Todd McMahan, command driver, 41st Fires Brigade, poses next to a sign decorated by SeaBees with Amphibious Construction Battalion-2 and Soldiers working in the 41st Fires Brigade tactical operations center. McMahan served in the Navy before joining the Army. The Naval Academy's Mids beat the United States Military Academy's Black Knights 34-0.

Photo by 1st Lt. Christopher Smith, 41st Fires Bde. IO

SALVADORAN MOD VISITS FOB DELTA



Top left: Salvadoran soldiers perform a skit based on their humanitarian aid drops throughout al-Kut during a talent show performed for the El Salvador Minister of Defense Gen. Jorge Alberto Molina Dec. 5.

Photo by Sgt. Allison Churchill, 41st Fires Bde. PAO

Bottom left: A Soldier of El Salvador's Battalion Cuscatlán passes humanitarian aid packets to an Iraqi policeman to take into the al Kut theater for distribution Dec. 6. El Salvador's Minister of Defense visited the al Kut theater for an HA distribution to members of the al Rhama handicapped association during his visit to FOB Delta and Battalion Cuscatlán.

Top right: Gen. Jorge Alberto Molina, El Salvador's Minister of Defense, presents a medal to Maj. Gen. Michael Oates, 10th Mountain Division and Multi-National Division Center commander, at the Battalion Cuscatlán headquarters on FOB Delta Dec. 6.

Middle right: Gen. Jorge Alberto Molina, El Salvador's Minister of Defense, and Maj. Gen. Abd al-Hanen Hammood Faisal perform a ceremonial ribbon cutting before a humanitarian aid distribution to members of the al Rhama handicapped association at the al Kut theater Dec. 6.

Photos by Sgt. Daniel T. West, 41st Fires Bde. PAO

Bottom right: Gen. Jorge Alberto Molina, El Salvador's Minister of Defense, meets with Romanian troops after a talent show put on by Salvadoran troops Dec. 5.

Photo by Sgt. Allison Churchill, 41st Fires Bde. PAO

