



THE RED LETTER



The Official Newsletter of 4th Battalion 27th Field Artillery

Soldiers from Battery B load the first M982 Excalibur round ever fired at Fort Bliss.



Contents

NCO/Soldier of the Quarter, Promotables	3
Colorado Ski Trip	4
Volunteers Recognized	5-6
First Excalibur	7
4-27 Trains the Army	8
Fort Bliss Events	9
Retention	10
Chaplain's Corner - Couples' Training	11
Marriage Retreat	12
HQ Change of Resp.	13-14
Employment Readiness Program	15

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Sgt. John Thomas (Bonecrushers) and Spc. Khano Neal (Grim Reapers) are the winners of the NCO/Soldier of the Quarter Board.

Boards

The best Soldiers and Non-Commissioned Officers of 4-27 FA competed Friday January 25 for the NCO/Soldier of the Quarter Board in a true test of subject-matter expertise and military bearing.

After hours of inspecting dress uniforms and a barrage of warrior and leader task-oriented questions, Command Sgt. Maj. David Osborne and the board of 4-27 FA's First Sergeants unanimously elected Sgt. John Thomas, Battery B "Bonecrushers" and Spc. Khano Neal, Company G "Grim Reapers" to represent the Battalion at the Brigade NCO/Soldier of the Quarter Board held Thursday January 30. A special congratulation to Neal for also winning the Brigade Soldier of the Quarter Board.

"A lot of times people don't want to go to the board because they have to be face to face with their superiors, but how can you receive recognition without being in front of the superiors?" Spoke Neal, a 21-year-old first-term Soldier from Hinesville, Ga.

After spending his first three years of service stationed at Fort Bliss, Texas, Neal shares his wisdom with newcomers, "to the new soldiers, I say go for it. The board is not hard. It's like a normal test taken in school."

"You learn the material, study it, then take a test. Anyone

can do it. If given the opportunity, I believe that it should be taken advantage of. It's always a good thing to represent your unit in a good, positive way. Who knows, you could win the first board and every board that follows," he added.

A special congratulation goes out to the three Soldiers who attended the Promotion Board Tuesday January 22 and earned their "promotable" status.

Spc. Jerome Evans, HHB "Hellraisers" a 25-year-old from Philadelphia, Penn. would like to thank all the NCOs who helped him get to the board.

Spc. Daryl Collins, Jr. Battery B "Bonecrushers" said becoming a Non-Commissioned Officer means training Soldiers and guaranteeing their safety while accomplishing the mission.

Spc. Marquis Roy, Company G "Grim Reapers" shared "it means a lot that...NCOs wanted to help me succeed and thought that I was ready to advance to the next rank of Sgt. and gather more responsibility of leading, motivating, and training Soldiers."

A 21-year-old with three-and-a-half years at Fort Bliss, Roy added, "studying for the board was a way for me to show how disciplined I was by studying and making decisions not to go out but keep my head in my study guide and asking for help when needed. My advice is [to] set a goal and give it 100 percent, even if it means you have to sacrifice a little more time out of your day than you planned."



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Volunteers recognized, encourage others to volunteer



During a volunteer recognition ceremony January 11, Col. Thomas Dorame, Commander, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, presented Certificates of Appreciation to key Family Readiness Group volunteers throughout the 2nd BCT, 1st AD.

Among those recognized were five members of the 4th Battalion 27th Field Artillery Regiment 'Iron Thunder' family: Elizabeth Neumaster, Melissa Leach, Mandy Spraley, Meghan Landry, and Tanya Farmer.

Melissa Leach receives a Certificate of Appreciation from Col. Thomas Dorame.

"We think about our unit as a community and as a family... we couldn't do it without them," Dorame said, noting the importance of the Family Readiness Program.

"The Soldiers couldn't do it without the love and support of their wives, their families, their friends around them," he said.

Mandy Spraley, former treasurer of Battery A, shared her rewarding volunteer ex-

perience organizing the Iron Thunder Ball that took place last December.

"If you're a stay-at-home mom and you want to get out of the house, there are things that you can do to help, [and] you can bring your kids," said Spraley.

"It's fun to volunteer, it gets you out of the house, it gets you to meet people that you can rely on and make friends, plus you're doing it for a good cause," she said.

The Commander of 4th Bn. 27th Field Artillery Rgt. presented awards at the 4-27 Battalion Awards Ceremony held January 15 at Sierra Providence East Medical Center.

Lt. Col Ronnie F. Brown presented Sharon Griego, wife of Sfc. Waldo Griego, Golf Company, the Team Bliss Achievement Pin and certificate for reaching the 750 volunteer hours milestone.

Other recipients of the Team Bliss Achievement Pin include Carolyn Sittenhauer at 500 hours, Holly Meraz at 250 hours, Mandy Spraley at 250 hours, and Meghan Landry at 250 hours.

A pin and certificate are awarded at 250 hours and additional pins are given at every 250-hour interval. Volunteer hours are tracked through the Volunteer Management Information System and are transfereed from installation to installation.

Caroline Burt received a Certificate of Appreciation for Patriotic Civilian Service “for exceptionally meritorious service to the families, Soldiers, Non-commissioned Officers, and Officers” of the Iron Thunder Battalion.

She would like to encourage others to get involved with the Family Readiness Group and explains how much of a difference volunteering can make on the organization.



Sharon Griego Is awarded the Team Bliss Achievement Pin for volunteering over 750 hours.

“I think the only difficult part might be not having enough help,” said Mrs. Burt.

“The ladies we have are really good but I think if we had more spouses that were involved it would be a little easier,” she added.

Ceritificate of Appreciation	Certificate of Appreciation
Dorothy Brown	for Patriotic Service
Jenifer Osborne	Nicole Hunter
Allyson Mather	Elizabeth Neumaster
Melissa Leach	Alice Hussey
Kelsie Smith	Sarah Bailes
Norma Castellow	Melissa Leach
	Gabby Ryan
Team Bliss Achievement	Caroline Burt
Pin	Mandy Spraley
Sharon Griego (750 hrs)	Meghan Landry
Carolyn Sittenauer (500 hrs)	Tonya Farmer
Holly Meraz (250 hrs)	
Mandy Spraley (250 hrs)	Brigade Awards
Meghan Landry (250 hrs)	Carolyn Sittenauer
	Sarah Bailes
Helping Hand Award	Nicole Hunter
Auguste Warde	
Carolyn Sittenauer	

First Excalibur

Two M982 Excalibur Precision Guided Munitions were fired by 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery regt. December 5, 2012 at White Sands Missile Range, Fort Bliss, Texas in support of a 1st Armored Division and 212th Fires Brigade mission.

In a training scenario, 4-27 FA live-fired the first two Excalibur rounds fired at Fort Bliss in order to “destroy the Division’s number 1 and 2 High Value Targets within the country of Attica.”

“It has been shot outside theater at NTC, [but] this is the first time that it’s been shot in a training environment...in the continental United States,” said 1st Lt. Richard Miller, 2nd platoon leader of Battery B.

“Our purpose is so that Fort Bliss is put on the map as a high-level training facility,” Miller explained.

“The Excalibur...is proven in combat to be effective at six meters at all ranges,” explains George French, a member of the Excalibur Net Team Lead, Department of Defense, for over six years.

French stated that as a satellite-guided munition, “Excalibur has a top-down angle of attack of 85 to 90 degrees...[it] can shoot over a building and come down on



the other side.”

“It was rushed into theater ahead of schedule just for that and it was used in Iraq, initially, with great success and now they’re using it in Afghanistan and it’s really paying off,” French stated.

The M982 Excalibur is made to get extended ranges and still destroy a target by hitting within ten meters, where as conventional rounds can come within 260 meters of the target.

Soldiers received a knowl-

edge-base that most other Artillerymen will never experience by getting to train on the Excalibur without being in a combat situation.

Before Fort Bliss, the M982 Excalibur has only been fired at 29 palms and NTC, Fort Irwin, Calif.



Spc. Rigoberto Mendez and Pfc. Jose Cabrera fuse the round using the Enhanced Portable Inductive Artillery Fuze Setter (EPIAFS).

Mr. George French explains crew drill safety, inspection, interrogation, and fusing of the M982 Excalibur round.



4-27 trains the Army

Sgt. Jack Rodriguez and Spc. Kevin Callan are equipped with tactical cameras that recorded live feed of live Excalibur fire missions.

The cameras recorded live-action crew drills as well as the interrogation and fusing of the M982 Excalibur. The training video will then be used to educate Soldiers about the M982 all throughout the Army.

Maj. Francisco Jaume, S-7 from 212th Fires Bde., confirmed the footage will

be used to create a training video that will be “passed on to future artillerymen that are not able to be here conducting this training with everybody else.”

Jaume added, “This video is going to be packaged so you can see from the observer to the [Fire Direction Control], to the gun line [and] back to the target.”

Due to the high production-cost of the Excalibur round Jaume predicted the round to be potentially shot only twice a year.



TRADING POST

Bldg 1717 Marshall Rd
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Hours of Operation

Junior Enlisted Family Center:
12pm-5pm Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday

Fort Bliss Thrift Shop:
9am-1pm Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday
10am-1pm 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month

A Little Bit of Bliss Gift Shop:
9am-1pm Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday

Fort Bliss NCO Wives Club:
10am 1st Tuesday of every month

Enlisted Spouse Club:
6pm-8pm Last Thursday of each month

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Ft. Bliss 2013 INTRAMURAL SPORTS CALENDAR

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11th BDE
568-5995

Armor League:
1-1 AD, 3-1AD,
CAB, 2-1 & 4-1 AD
744-5793 or 744-5800

All (General) Intramural Information: 744.5794

Commander's Cup Events

Sport	Begins	Championship
Men's Basketball	16-Jan	18-21 March
Bowling	4-Feb	20-23 May
5k Post Championship		22-Feb
Combatives Tournament		TBD
Outdoor Soccer	25-Mar	20-23 May
Volleyball	1-Apr	29 Apr - 2 May
10k Post Championship		5-Apr
Paintball		20-Apr
Racquetball		23-25 Apr
Ten-Miler Qualifier		10-May
Track Championships		28-30 May
Softball	3-Jun	5-8 Aug
Team Aquathlon		21-Jun
Dodgeball		29-Jun
Individual Aquathlon		12-July
Golf		12-14 July
Mini Golf		13-15 Aug
Flag Football	19-Aug	21-24 Oct
Indoor Soccer	26-Aug	28-31 Oct
2 Mile Training PT Run		4-Oct
Trap and Skeet		21-Oct
Swim Meet		5-7 Nov

January

Fort Bliss 1/2 Marathon 12-Jan
Men's Basketball 16-Jan
Women's Basketball 17-Jan

February

Bowling 4-Feb
Border Rumble Boxing Smoker 8-Feb
5k Post Championship 22-Feb

March

Open Spring Softball 2-Mar
Combatives Tournament TBD
Women's Volleyball 16-Mar
St Patty's Day 6-Mile 16-Mar
Outdoor Soccer 25-Mar
Open Flag Football 28-Mar

April

Volleyball 1-Apr
10k Post Championship 5-Apr
Paintball 20-Apr
Racquetball 23-25 Apr
Open Free Style Wrestling Tournament 27-Apr

May

Ten-Miler Qualifier 10-May
3rd Annual Armed Forces Day Triathlon 18-May
Track Championships 28-30 May

June

Softball 3-Jun
Women's Softball 7-Jun
Open Volleyball 8-Jun
30-Over Basketball League 8-Jun
Open Basketball 8-Jun
Team Aquathlon 21-Jun
Dodgeball 29-Jun

July

Individual Aquathlon 12-July
Golf 12-14 July

August

10-Miler in the Heat 3-Aug
Mini Golf 13-15 Aug
Flag Football 19-Aug
Indoor Soccer 26-Aug

September

Border Rumber Boxing Smoker 6-Sep
German American Night Run 14-Sep
Open Fall Softball 21-Sep
Strongman Competition 21-Sep
Iron Soldier Sprint Triathlon 28-Sep
Combatives Tournament TBD

October

2 Mile Training PT Run 4-Oct
Trap and Skeet 21-Oct
Halloween Classic Basketball Tournament 25-27 Oct

November

Swim Meet 5-7 Nov
1/2 Marathon and 5k Turkey Trot 16-Nov

December

8k Holiday Run 7-Dec



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Retention

As many new Soldiers join the ranks of 4-27, Bravo Battery prepares to part ways with Sgt. Jack Rodriguez.

On January 11, 2013 Sgt. Rodriguez took his oath given him by 1st Lt. Jordan Gibson, who summarized Sgt. Rodriguez in his opening statement as “a phenomenal NCO and a great Chief.”

After serving a 12-month tour in Iraq with Battery C, 2nd Bn. 5th Field Artillery regt., 214th Fires Brigade, Sgt. Rodriguez spent a short time in 5th Brigade, 1st Armored Division, before the unit merged with 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, in early 2011.

A Network Integration Evaluation (NIE) veteran, he has manned every position of the M777A2 howitzer, and earned the position of Chief of Section.

As a chief, he has trained many Soldiers to become gunners and three Specialists have been



promoted to Sergeant under his leadership.

In November 2011 his section won the Battalion hip-shoot competition, a contest that tests the section’s ability to react to an emergency fire mission.

Although his departure for 3rd Bde., 25th Inf. regt., Hawaii, is March 23, 2013, he promised his Soldiers “I’ll be here to train until I leave.”

COUPLES TRAINING

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emergency you cannot attend the retreat
contact CH (CPT) Brillion @ 915-443-9054 or
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HQ Battery change of responsibility, 1st Sergeant leaves lasting impression.



1ST LT. JAMAL ROBINSON

Outgoing 1st Sgt. Jimmy E. Smith Jr. passed the symbolic NCO sword of leadership to Master Sgt. Gregory A. Caywood as he assumed First Sergeant responsibilities for Headquarters Battery, 4-27 Field Artillery Battalion, January 23 in a traditional ceremony that took place in the 4-27 Field Artillery Battalion motor pool.

HHB, 4-27 Field Artillery Battalion resides within the 2nd Brigade 1st Armored Division, which conducts semi-annual Network Integration Evaluation that is Soldier-led and designed to further integrate and rapidly progress the Army's tactical network. Smith has contributed to all four NIEs during his time in 4-27 Field Artillery.

Smith, who led the battery since

June 2011, said it has been an honor and is grateful he had the opportunity to serve as First Sergeant.

"Leading, guiding, mentoring and motivating soldiers as a first sergeant is probably the most rewarding, - but also challenging thing I have ever done. It has been an absolute honor to lead America's sons and daughters," he said.

He added he will continue to lead Soldiers, just in a different capacity in his new assignment to the University of Memphis ROTC program in Memphis, Tennessee.

“15 years ago I was a corporal in the Army and unfortunately I wasn’t wise financially, I mismanaged my funds.

I was living out of my car and had no clue how I was going to get back on my feet. My section leader back then, Sgt. Monday, who is in attendance today (now Master Sgt. Promotable) helped me with funds out of his own pocket without me asking it of him. It was at that point that I knew that I wanted to do this as long as I physically could,” he said.

1SG Caywood said he is grateful for the opportunity to serve as the HHB first sergeant, and he learned a lot from 1st Sgt.

Smith from his mentorship and leadership as a noncommissioned officer who truly lead from the front and was an example to all noncommissioned officers.

“Working closely with 1SG Smith as the Battalion Opera-

tions Sergeant Major, I watched him and his ways as he mentored soldiers and demanded a higher standard while pushing them to the next level of progression as Soldiers.”

Battery Commander of Headquarters Battery, CPT Charles W. Mather, took command in April 2011 and said he has been impressed with 1SG Smith’s professionalism and leadership since day one.

“The easiest way to describe what 1st Sgt. Smith did for this battery is to take excerpts from the duty description on his NCO-ER, but he is more than just some

simple words on a piece of paper. From the moment that 1SG Smith took over as HHB 1SG, which was before I even took command, there was a visible difference in how the Soldiers acted,” Mather noted.

“His presence brings out the best in anyone who takes the time to listen to him. 1SG Smith is the definition of a leader, a 1SG, an NCO, a Soldier, and most importantly, an American. The motivation that he has provided to the 4- 27 Field Artillery and the Headquarters Battery family has elevated the level that everyone operates on.”





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2013 Class Schedule

**Basic Ten Steps
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(McGregor Room)

9am to 12pm

January 8
February 5
March 5
April 2
May 7
June 4
July 2
August 6
September 10
October 1
November 5
December 3

**Writing a Winning
Résumé**
(Beaumont Room)

9am to 12pm

January 24
March 21
May 23
July 25
September 26
November 21

**Mobilize Your
Home Business**
(McGregor Room)

9:30am to 12pm

January 9
April 3
July 12
October 2

**Ace Your Next
Job Interview**
(Beaumont Room)

9am to 12pm

February 7
April 4
June 6
August 1
October 3
December 5

**Career Exploration
& Planning**
(Beaumont Room)

9am to 12pm

February 21
April 18
June 20
August 15
October 17

ACS Hiring Fairs
(Centennial)

9am to 1pm

February 14
August 15

**Networking for
Job Search**
(Beaumont Room)

9am to 12pm

January 10
March 7
May 9
July 11
September 12
November 7

**Jumpstart Your
Job Search**
(McGregor Room)

9am to 12pm

February 28
April 25
June 13
August 29
October 24

**Working a
Hiring Fair**

1pm to 3pm

January 10
(Patriot Hall)
July 11
(Biggs Room)

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