

1-7 sets high standard for blood drive

SPC. JASON STADEL

108th ADA Brigade Public Affairs

Although the Fort Bliss Blood Donor Round-Up is a post wide event, the 1st Battalion 7th Air Defense Artillery, 108th ADA Brigade provided a big dose of support for making this year's blood drive a success.

During this year's Blood Donor Round-up, which is in its fourth year, each brigade was required to send at least five eligible donors per day for the blood drive to meet the mission of the Armed Services Blood Program.

Under the guidance of the battalion command sergeant major, 1-7 ADA sent almost every eligible service-

member in the battalion to donate blood.

"I want the Soldiers to go because of the troops overseas," Command Sgt. Maj. James Carr said. "But I also encourage troops to donate for people here. I know a sergeant major that was injured in an accident, and they had to go buy blood for him. We want to take care of each other."

All blood that is donated to the ASBP on post will go to a service-member or family member in need. Most of the blood that is donated goes directly overseas to Iraq or Afghanistan, and the rest of the blood is used at WBAMC.

"When Soldiers donate blood, they are saving another Soldier's life," Carmen Dietrich-Williams, Fort Bliss blood donor recruiter, said.

The quota for Williams to reach her weekly goal is at least 100 pints of blood per week; if that quota isn't met, blood must be purchased from a civilian blood bank.

"We encourage Soldiers, their family members and civilians associated with the Army to donate blood whenever possible. We are always in need of blood products," Williams said.

Williams said some of the problems in reaching her quota are that a lot of Soldiers, family members and Army civilians still donate blood to civilian blood banks.

Criteria for donating blood

- At least 17 years old
- Must weigh at least 110 lbs.
- No tattoos or piercing within the past year
- At least one year removed from service in Iraq or Afghanistan
- At least two years removed from service in Korea, if previously stationed north of Seoul
- Cannot donate if stationed in or traveled in Europe from 1980 to 1996

Contact ASBP at 568-5365, 568-3365 or visit www.militaryblood.dod.mil for more information



The donation chairs were always full while "No Fear" Soldiers took part in the blood drive.

PHOTOS BY SPC. JASON STADEL



Chief Warrant Officer Anson Seebeck waits while his blood is being drawn. The blood drive was a week-long event held at Stout Gym.

"If we had more support, we'd be buying less blood per week," said Williams.

She added that if the weekly quota was made every week, about \$1 million could be saved.

Williams said some of the problems of reaching yearly quotas are so many active-duty Soldiers are not eligible to donate, either due to short-term or indefinite deferral reasons. Soldiers that are not eligible to donate indefinitely are Soldiers that have been in Europe from 1980 to 1996. Troops that have been deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan have to wait one year before they are eligible again, or two years if they have been stationed in South Korea, north of Seoul. Donors must not have had tattoos or body piercing within the past year as well.

"El Paso has about 1.1 million people, in which 5 percent donate for the remaining 95 percent. Fort Bliss only has about 20,000 who are eligible to support the military blood program. But half of that is deferred because of prior duty station. Which leaves 10,000 left to donate; our mission is 10,000 blood products per year."

That means every eligible Soldier would have to donate at least once a year to make quota, which is why Williams encourages families and Army civilians to take the time to donate blood on Fort Bliss.

"When I see a civilian that says they are supporting our troops in Iraq, I ask 'when was the last time you donated blood?' If you want to be a part of a Soldier's lifeline you need to donate a pint of blood."

Even with the problems of reaching weekly and yearly quotas, Williams is excited to see installation leaders take charge and encourage Soldiers to donate blood. "With 1-7, this has been our best turnout in three years. Sergeant Major Carr has been very supportive of the ASBP, and last year, his unit won the Van Horne Trophy for the most support given during the yearly round-ups, and it looks like they will get to hold onto the trophy for another year."

Williams added that it's exciting to see Soldiers waiting in line to donate a pint of blood for another Soldier in need, and with turnouts relative to this year's blood drive, less blood would need to be purchased.

"The war is entering its fourth year, and people tend to forget that we are still in need of blood. We all get caught up in our day-to-day routines. But by breaking that routine a little bit, we can help a Soldier in need."

For more information about the Armed Services Blood Program, call 568-5365 or 568-3365.



Capt. Michele Torne takes her turn during the blood drive. Last year, 1-7 ADA was also the top battalion for Soldiers participating in the blood donation.

Blood facts

- 4.5 million Americans would die each year without life-saving blood transfusions.
- Approximately 32,000 pints of blood are used each day in the U.S.
- Every three seconds someone needs blood.
- One out of every 10 people entering a hospital needs blood.
- Just one pint of donated blood can help save as many as three people's lives.
- The average adult body has 10 pints of blood.
- One unit of blood is roughly the equivalent of one pint.
- Blood makes up about 7 percent of the body's weight.
- A newborn baby's body has about one cup of blood.
- The average red blood cell transfusion is 3.4 pints.
- Blood fights against infection and helps heal wounds.
- There are four main blood types: A, B, AB and O. AB is the universal recipient and O negative is the universal donor.
- Blood centers often run short of type O and B blood.
- Shortages of all types of blood occur during the summer and winter holidays.
- If all blood donors gave 2 to 4 times a year, it would help prevent blood shortages.
- The actual blood donation usually takes less than 10 minutes. The entire process, from signing in to leaving, takes about 45 minutes.

Source: Bloodcenters.org