

## Directorate of Public Works-Environmental

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### **Fort Hood artillery battalion fires right on environmental compliance target** by Christine Luciano

One of the organizations that has set high standards at Fort Hood, Texas, is the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 1-21 Field Artillery Regiment, 41st Fires Brigade. When 1-21 FA Regt. first arrived at Fort Hood in 2005, the battalion did not have an environmental program in place. In less than eight months, 1-21 FA went from no program to implementing an effective EMS and scored 100 percent on its first formal environmental assessment.

How did they accomplish that feat? To get started, 1-21 FA Regt. contacted its Environmental Compliance Assessment Team member, T.C. Coffman. Coffman worked with 1-21 FA Regt.'s Soldiers and commanders to integrate ECAT's checklist into the battalion's internal auditing system, incorporate environmental procedures into their daily activities and keep leadership informed of the challenges specific to their unit and the installation.

"The basis of success in anything is leadership involvement," said Lt. Col. Paul Hossenlopp, former commander of 1-21 FA Regt. "An effective EMS (Environmental Management System) will continue as long as there is leadership involvement and commitment from the battalion commander and battalion sergeant major down to the junior Soldiers new to the unit."

"From the beginning, the leadership's intent was to perform to high standards not only in the environmental realm but also in every aspect of their operations," Coffman said.

The Battalion's first step to success was establishing a training program to educate its Soldiers and establish routine habits. The leadership used every opportunity to put out environmental information at monthly and quarterly training events and weekly at formation.

"Education is the number one thing," said Command Sgt. Maj. Kelvin Hughes, former command sergeant major of 1-21 FA Regt. "If we, as the leaders, do not make Soldiers aware of how important EMS and environmental compliance are, then what are we here for? We, as the leaders, need to implement change in our organization."

With an effective program in place, 1-21 FA Regt. instilled good environmental habits in every Soldier in its command. When new Soldiers arrive each month, the leadership and Soldiers are involved in educating them about their environmental procedures.

The battalion also identified different environmental sections in the motor pool and assigned batteries (companies) to be responsible for specific areas like the wash rack; recycle containers; dumpsters; petroleum, oils, and lubricants shed; daily use pallets; and areas around the motor pool. Ownership of an area gave the Soldiers a sense of pride. Commanders would conduct weekly EMS inspections on each area to ensure the standards were maintained. Soldiers would

be present at the inspections to gain feedback from commanders on how well they did or how to improve.

“It takes a combination of command emphasis and involvement, instilling ownership and pride, and providing resources to your Soldiers,” said Hossenlopp, “and the next thing you know, you have an effective environmental program.”

Col. Richard Francey, brigade commander of the 41st Fires Brigade, explained that the key components to a successful EMS are leadership, purpose, direction and motivation.

“The leadership has to be involved in a cultural change within the organization, help Soldiers gain the education and embrace the environmental mindset,” Francey said. “This is an investment in our environment, which is going to pay dividends so that we continue to have the resources and training lands over an enduring period.”

The goal of the EMS is to help Soldiers and civilians identify environmental issues, procedures that are in place and how to improve tasks related to the environment. Fort Hood’s continued success in EMS comes down to the Soldiers, like those in the 1-21 FA Regt., who incorporate environmental compliance into their daily activities and the ECAT that provides the Soldiers with knowledge and resources.

The ECAT helps Soldiers and civilians find solutions and achieve environmental success by ensuring its customers are informed of Fort Hood’s environmental regulations and policies, and receive required training. Each ECAT member works individually, with command support, to increase leadership involvement and environmental awareness. Semiannually, ECAT audits each organization’s EMS. The organizations are scored on a 0-100 percentile scale and on a status of red, amber or green.

In the past year, 1-21 FA Regt. has scored 100 percent on their last two formal assessments and has set high benchmarks for the rest of the installation. The battalion is sharing its lessons learned and helping other organizations learn how to implement a successful EMS.

“Overall, the key to success is leadership commitment, keeping everyone involved in the mission and maintaining a working relationship with the Environmental Division,” Coffman said.