

Staff Sergeant Justin Ashley Gage Bio  
By: Katie Hamm

On Wednesday October 7<sup>th</sup> I met one of the soldiers our class would be sponsoring throughout his tour in Iraq. Our class is taking part in the Adopt-a-Platoon program at Fort Drum, NY. I myself am very proud to be a part of this soldier's deployment and sending him a piece of home while he's protecting our country. I feel a great sense of pride that I have the chance to return the favor of protection. His name is Staff Sergeant Justin Ashley Gage born on August 23, 1975 (which makes him 34 years old). He is married and has one son who is the age of six.

Justin first joined the Army because "there was nothing going on." He said it was a way to get away and become a productive member of society. Before he enlisted he was a concrete worker. Justin did not enjoy high school. He said in fact "the only thing that kept him in school was football and gym class." He has served a total of 13 years in the United States military.

This is his second tour to Iraq. He has also spent time deployed in Egypt and Russia. He was first stationed in Ft. Brag in North Carolina then moved to Hawaii. After leaving Hawaii he and his family were uprooted and moved here to Ft. Drum New York. Justin was originally from San Diego California but moved to Oregon as a young child. His favorite weapon is the M240 BRAVO machine gun. And on this tour to Iraq he will fulfill his job as a light wheeled vehicle mechanic.

While not on deployment Justin studies Japan's Jujitsu (he's a purple belt) and MMA (Mixed martial arts). He also loves to play the military based game "Call of Duty 4." It is a hugely popular game in the United States. While deployed, Justin learned to speak Arabic and is now trying to learn Portuguese. His favorite color is Infantry Blue and LOVES FOOD! Justin spent a few years in Russia and loved their food. He says he will eat anything willing to be eaten, with a smile on his face. He also said that American food does not compare to any other food in the world. He loves music but hates country. Justin says "I listen to anything that gets your blood pumping!" His favorite movie is "Boondocks Saints." Justin and his family celebrate Christmas, "what true American doesn't."

I wish all troops well and pray that our entire platoon return safely one year from now. I promise to send Justin the goods and comfort items he needs to live his life while in Iraq.