

Air defenders attend Burgess High festival

PFC. JESSIKA MALOTT

11th ADA Bde.

Two of Fort Bliss' air defense artillery units attended the Burgess High School community festival Friday at the school's football stadium.

The 5th Battalion, 52nd Air Defense Artillery is the high school's Partner in Education. The Soldiers of 5-52 ADA had assistance from the 1st Bn., 44th Air and Missile Defense Avenger battery to fully give the students and area supporters an idea of the spectrum of air defense systems.

"We asked them if they would be able to bring some of their equipment out here for the students and families to see," said Carol Jarman, Burgess High School student activities manager.

This is the second year the battalion has been involved with the school's annual festivities.

"We are here for two reasons," said Lt. Col. Joseph Simonelli, 5-52 battalion commander. "We are here to build a better relationship between the city of El Paso and the Fort Bliss community. We are also giving the students an opportunity to talk with the Soldiers so they have a better idea of what we do on a daily basis and [find out] if they are interested in serving in today's Army."



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Spc. Ian Duffy demonstrates the remote system for the Avenger to two students at Burgess festival Friday.

This is the first time students were able to look and touch the equipment, but it was also the first time for some of the Soldiers to explain their jobs to civilians.

"This gives the students an idea of what we do every day. Maybe they will be so interested and decide this is

what they want to do when they finish their education," said Sgt. Rene Plata, a 1-44 AMD Soldier.

The festival had many attractions such as games and dancing, but the Soldiers reached out to several students and let them play with the equipment, hopefully leaving an

impression on both the students and the participants.

"The military is a part of the community," said Jarman. "The idea of this festival is to fully represent the students and families of our community and bring them closer together."

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