



STORY BY KEITH PANNELL

A Soldier from 6th battalion, 52nd Air Defense Artillery, directs a support vehicle off a flatbed railcar during unloading operations at Fort Sill, Okla.

## Home sweet home: 6-52 ADA arrives at Fort Sill

KEITH PANNELL

Fort Sill Cannoneer Staff

FORT SILL, Okla. – A new chapter in Fort Sill's history began when the first trainload of air defense artillery equipment was unloaded June 28.

About 116 Soldiers of 6th Battalion, 52nd Air Defense Artillery Regiment have recently been calling Fort Sill home, but their equipment hadn't arrived yet. That day, they started unloading about 102 railcars worth of missile launchers, radar trailers and other support vehicles and equipment.

For the first time, Lawton-Fort Sill

residents can clearly see changes brought by the Base Realignment and Closure Committee decisions a year ago.

"This is really the first part of the transformation process that Fort Sill is undergoing over the next five years," said Col. Sonny Uberti, garrison commander. "This is the start of the growth of the community. About 430, give or take, Soldiers and family members are coming with this first arrival."

The new unit is coming from Ansbach, Germany. The ADA Soldiers found out only about four months ago where their new home would be. They

were told they were going to Fort Lewis, Wash., or Fort Bliss, Texas. Finally, they were told their new home would be Fort Sill, and they had 90 days to make the move.

The unit's arrival is a part of the subtle transformation of one of III Corps' brigades.

The 6-52 ADA now falls under 31st ADA Bde. out of Fort Bliss. They will be the second of 31st ADA's distant battalions, the other being 4-5 ADA out of Fort Hood.

"The people who shipped us out of Germany deserve a huge amount of credit," said Maj. John Labadini, 6-52 ADA operations officer. "They put all other unit movement in the country on hold so we could load our equipment up there, get it here, and meet our timeline."

The equipment left Germany and arrived at a port in Houston, before being put on railcars and brought to Fort Sill, where they were unloaded by the Soldiers.

"This move involved at least four major Army commands, as well as the individual unit itself," said Uberti. "It took the Directorate of Logistics in Europe and here at Fort Sill. It took U.S. Army-Europe Forces Command, III Corps Headquarters, 214th Field Artillery Bde. to sponsor the unit, and the post garrison, so it was a very com-

plex operation."

The arrival of the various weapons systems will create some new dynamics for Fort Sill planners, Uberti said. Trainers and range controllers have begun figuring out how to allocate training space for the presence of the Patriot weapon system.

The Soldiers who control the weapons said, although they cannot live-fire at Fort Sill, because the ranges are too small, it will not affect their training at all.

"To train, we don't necessarily need to live-fire," said Maj. John Wanat, 6-52 ADA executive officer. "A lot of times we'll fire once a year. Firing a live missile is not mandatory for us to be a fully trained unit."

Wanat said the unit usually fires live missiles once a year and they can do that when they go to the National Training Center.

For the time being, the 6-52 ADA is being headquartered in Building 4700. Uberti said they will move into what is now the corps artillery area until maintenance is completed in some buildings.

"They'll be down in the corps artillery area by about the first quarter of the fiscal year," said Uberti.

While the ADA unit arriving means additional people at Fort Sill, the gain in numbers will eventually level out by other moves.



Spc. William Shuler, 6-52 ADA, breaks down chains holding a Patriot missile launcher before unloading the equipment at the unit's new home, Fort Sill, Okla., June 28.



Pfc. William Moylan, D Battery, 6-52 ADA, indicates everything is safe as an ADA support vehicle unloads from a railcar after the unit's move to Fort Sill from Ansbach, Germany, June 28.