

'Eagles Dare' Battalion gets **VALIDATED**



Pfc. Thomas Cool monitors radio communication between the battalion and the batteries.

PHOTOS BY SPC. BROOKS FLETCHER

SPC. BROOKS FLETCHER

31st Brigade Public Affairs Office

"This exercise validates our ability to go to war," said Lt. Col. Herman Gooden, commander 3rd Battalion, 2nd Air Defense Artillery, on the battalion's validation exercise executed from May 14 through 18 at Dona Ana Range, N.M.

With every one of its batteries Table VIII certified, the 'Eagles Dare' Battalion carried out the mission essential validation in preparation for any possible deployment orders.

"This validates us as a competent and capable AMD battalion," said Capt. Todd Daniels, commander, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery.

Capt. Lisa Northup, commander, B Btry., said the validation encompassed all of the battalion's previous training, a culmination of the situational training exercise, which focused on force protection properties, including ground attacks and convoy live fires; as well as air defense operations, such as air battle through use of an electronic control station.

"The exercise postures the battalion for readiness," Northup said.

As the unit's batteries staged their sites throughout the vast desert landscape with

launchers

bearing in their primary target line, the 31st ADA Bde.'s tactical operation center disseminated fictitious scenarios to each of the batteries as they defended their assigned assets.

"The exercise allows us to evaluate how the batteries track the battle and communicate with one another," said 1st Sgt. Jonathan Holmes, C. Btry.

Through strategic site layout, the individual batteries ensure that the 'Big 4' – antenna mass group, electric power plant, radar, and the ECS – are fully operational at all times.

Daniels explained the importance of site defense, like ensuring the 'Big 4' and other resources at the site are optimally positioned.

Among everything else, Soldier training remains an important aspect of the validation as the battalion's influx of new Soldiers need to be trained proficiently in order to become mission capable, Northup said.

"The validation helps build crew depth and crew rotation," Northup said, "which is important with Soldier ETSing and PCSing."

First Sgt. Luther Smalls, B Btry., said participation played a key factor in the unit's field exercise as they set-up site, tear down, jumped locations, and set-up again.

"Soldiers play an integral part," said Smalls. "You have to give them credit; they maintained high levels of motivation and a can-do attitude."



Pvt. Allen Brown operates a .50-caliber weapon as a part of the validation's force protection. Batteries were on alert at all times as opposition forces attacked at random.

Paso del Norte School, EPISD recognize PIE

Representatives from 1st Battalion, 44th Air and Missile Defense, El Paso Police Department, El Paso Employees Federal Credit Union, Papa John's Pizza and Customs Quick Signs were recognized as 2007 Partners In Education by the Paso del Norte School and the Socorro Independent School District May 17. The PIE Program supports schools by developing activities and programs that encourage and maintain student participation.



SPC. BROOKS FLETCHER