

## Headline: Move, Shoot and Communicate – Patriot Style

Capt. Corey W. Robertson, 31<sup>st</sup> ADA BDE PAO

FORT SILL, Okla.- 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion 3rd Air Defense Artillery Regiment, 31<sup>st</sup> ADA Brigade, recently conducted their Table VIII certification as they continue with their training in preparation to assuming the Contingency Expeditionary Force, or CEF, mission later this year.

The certification required the unit to complete site reconnaissance, tactically and safely emplace the Patriot Missile System, establish communications, conduct engagement and force operations, maintain equipment and conduct air battle management.

Air defense units typically conduct certifications semi-annually, but this particular training exercise is vital for this unit and their upcoming CEF mission.

Capt Jessica Perales, Commander A Battery, said, “It ensures that we can maintain our equipment; we can safely emplace our equipment without damaging equipment or to committing any safety violations while emplacing the equipment. If we deploy will be expected to move our equipment from point A to point B safely; and we will be expected to work once we get there, so ensuring our operators know how to correctly emplace their equipment without damage to the equipment or to themselves is extremely important.”

With any mission or training that air defense unit’s conduct teamwork is imperative for mission success.

“Teamwork is essential in a Table VIII, you have to be synchronized from operators to maintainers, and you have to know what’s going on with all pieces of equipment,” said Perales.

There were also other obstacle these Soldiers had to overcome; one of them was the shortage of personnel on Patriot crews.

“The severe lack of personnel for this Table VIII has been one of our greatest obstacles we have made do with what we have, putting key leaders and Soldiers in places they wouldn’t normally be. Our ability to adjust fire and drive on has been the key to making the mission happen,” said Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Jesse Stith, a launcher platoon sergeant with A Battery.

This shortage has only lead to Soldiers being cross-trained in all aspects of Patriot operations, resulting in a better-rounded ADA Soldier.

“This training is putting me in different positions that I haven’t worked before, training me in different areas has taught me a lot. I have learned the signal piece which I have never been

before and also I have been a lot deeper in the maintenance aspect,” said Spc Dominique Johnson an assistant squad leader in A Battery.

For new Soldiers like Pvt. Shane Singletary this training was a great opportunity for him to learn from senior leaders who have done this for years.

“The training is great here, we are going to certify and this will definitely help me if we get deployed down-range. We have great leaders out here, they teach us a lot, they don’t only teach us how it works but also how to maintain it and how everything works together. This training is helping me get a layout of what to expect if we do go down-range and what to expect once we are there,” said Singletary.

Evaluation of crews requires an external inspection team from 31<sup>st</sup> ADA Brigade to be on-site and evaluate these Soldiers step by step to ensure they are proficient and are ready to assume their mission.

Staff Sgt Travis Anderson of the brigade headquarters said, “We are here to evaluate them to ensure they are ready to assume mission, we check everything from establishing communications, emplacing equipment, maintenance and all paperwork associated with these tasks. This ensures that they are prepared and ready to assume mission. This training is a big part of what they do and this will enable them to deploy if called upon.”

The unit continues to train to assume the CEF mission later this year, and they will be ready if their nation calls on them.

*Cutlines:*

*9830v1: Soldiers of 4-3 ADA work on emplacing their equipment in preparation for Table VII certification (Photos by Staff Sgt. Nathan Akridge).*

*9927: Two Soldiers from A Battery, 4-3 ADA begin stabilizing the antennae mast group (Photos by Staff Sgt. Nathan Akridge).*

*9942: Soldiers of 4-3 ADA conduct missile re-load as part of their Table VIII certification (Photos by Staff Sgt. Nathan Akridge).*