

From Rubble to Recreation

By Capt. Corey Robertson 31st ADA PAO



When the Soldiers of 3-2 Air Defense Artillery Regiment deployed to Turkey as part of a NATO requested mission the unknowns were in great supply. Will we have running water, a roof over our heads? Will we have latrines and where will we be able to work-out? These were just a few of the obstacles that had to be overcome by the leadership of 3-2 ADA. Just a few months into their deployment, the Soldiers have overcome most of the obstacles and then some. The Soldiers took over some very old barracks that had been neglected for years, and with host-nation cooperation, the facilities are now in a much better state. "We have settled into the barracks and life is good. Save for a few leaky faucets and toilets here and there, we are smooth sailing with our living conditions," said Lt. Col Branson, the 3-2 ADA commander. With continued support from the Turkish 5th Armor Brigade, commanded by Brig. Gen. Kahramas Gunes', 3-2 ADA has received and installed their first shipment of gym equipment.

The original gym site was crumbling and unusable. The Soldiers established an interim tent-gym to keep as physically fit as possible until their new gym was ready. Although only opened for a short time the new gym has been a popular stop both before and after their shifts at the Patriot site. The battalion also established the "Holy Grounds Coffee Shop" during their brief stay at Incirlik Air base in Turkey. And it was moved forward with the battalion as they occupied their positions near the town of Gaziantep. The coffee shop boasts fresh-ground coffee beans and rivals most commercial coffee shops in the U.S. The coffee shop provides the Soldiers a chance to enjoy a fresh cup of coffee, a warm bag of popcorn and the chance to utilize the makeshift internet café the battalion has established as well. The café offers the Soldiers the chance to use a telephone and the internet to communicate with loved ones and to watch some Armed Forces Network Television. In addition to all the upgrades and strides made the command team also authorized the first "Local Flavor" trip so that their hard-working Soldiers can get out and visit a bit of Turkish culture.

The tour will highlight the Turkish culture and give the Soldiers a better understanding of local life and culture. Although the Soldiers have a very demanding mission ahead of them the leadership has taken great strides to ensure they are both mentally and physically fit for the duration of the deployment.