

A Battery 5-5 ADA NTC Rotation

By 1st Lt. Donald Anneser



JOINT BASE LEWIS McCHORD, Wash. – The Soldiers of A Battery, 5-5th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, 31st ADA Brigade, deployed to the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Cali. in support of 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, stationed at Fort Hood, Texas. A Battery Soldiers were responsible for performing maintenance checks on their Avenger weapons systems, packing all equipment needed for the deployment, and coordinating logistical support for the NTC rotation. During the rotation, the ADA crews were quickly able to adapt to the standard operating procedures of 3-1st Cavalry and develop an understanding of how cavalry units operate.

The platoon leaders were responsible for briefing battalion commanders on the air and missile defense capabilities that the crews and their Avenger weapons systems could provide to the brigade combat team. Sgt. First Class Robert King, A Battery first sergeant, stated, “NTC was a phenomenal opportunity for A Battery to train with our Avengers and learn how to integrate them with higher echelons.” The environment also produced challenges for A Battery because the conditions are significantly different than Joint Base Lewis McChord. The Avenger crew teams slept in their vehicles during the rotation, even through the cold winter nights.

The crews were constantly on the move and conducted emplacement operations to meet the demands of the mission. 5-5th ADA’s observer controller/trainers (OCT) were able to provide constructive feedback on how their Avenger teams were functioning. Staff Sgt. Leander Yazzie, an OCT said, “NTC provided excellent day and night navigation opportunities. Our crews had to navigate through the night

without any light. The crews changed locations at all hours of the day; it was not a 9 to 5 work schedule." 1st Lt. David Degenhardt, battery executive officer stated that, "NTC was a real opportunity for our Soldiers to put their training to the test by working in an austere environment, and provided a great chance to work with other branches in the Army and see how they do business."