

Bold Quest '15

3rd Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment demonstrates capabilities at multinational exercise Bold Quest

by Sgt. Benjamin Parsons, 18th Field Artillery Brigade

FORT BRAGG, N.C. – Soldiers of Bravo Battery, 3rd Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment, 18th Field Artillery Brigade, participated in the Joint Staff sponsored Bold Quest 15.2 Coalition Live Fire Event at Fort Bliss, Texas from September 28 to October 2.

Bold Quest was a capabilities demonstration between Bravo Battery and several NATO partners and also served as an interoperability training opportunity for the artillery soldiers. The exercise occurs once a year and participating nations included artillerymen from Norway, Britain, Denmark, Germany, France and Italy.

Staff Sgt. Theodore France served as a High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) launcher chief during Bold Quest and oversaw the firing of 24 rockets in just over an hour while receiving consecutive firing missions from each of the NATO countries present for the event.

“Bold Quest proved that HIMARS can play a pivotal role in a NATO task force,” said France. “I heard it said that we weren’t there to train as much as we were there to conduct a mission and support a system that can now integrate NATO systems into HIMARS.”

“Bold Quest was a huge success,” said France. “It proved the capabilities of the systems we have to our NATO allies and civilian organizations that were present for the event.

Artillery for the exercises included two HIMARS launchers from Bravo Battery, 3-27 FAR, along with five Paladin Self-Propelled Howitzers from the 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment based at Fort Bliss, and Paladins from Norway. The remaining



Partner Nations evaluate digital call-for-fires at Bold Quest. U.S. Army photo released.

NATO partners provided fire support and targeting data to the HIMARS and Paladin crews.

A full day was devoted to the HIMARS and Paladins conducting live fires while receiving targeting information from the partner nations. A hot panel mission was also carried out with one of Bravo Battery’s HIMARS and a C-17. The C-17 would land and drop off a HIMARS to carry out a fire mission, and then the HIMARS would load back on the plane. The C-17 would take off and then land again so the HIMARS could execute another fire mission.

Sgt. 1st Class Robert Wilson, the Digital Master Gunner for the 3-27 FAR Fire Direction Control, was responsible for coordinating the communications and call-for-fire between the NATO partners.

“The battalion provided the first ever rocket fire support as part of an Artillery Systems Cooperation Activities, or ASCA, demonstration,” said Wilson. “I

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Photo by Nancy Jones-Bonbrest, Public Communications for U.S. Army PEO C3T, U.S. Army released.

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interacted directly with our partner nations and enabled U.S. Joint Fires Observers, or JFO, to interface with Norwegian Paladins.”

ASCA is a software system that links the artillery systems of partner nations and allows each nation to interact with each other’s artillery systems. ASCA improves their ability to utilize fire support internationally.

“The training was awesome,” said Wilson. “It really drives home coalition partnership and the fact we can accomplish anything and keep moving forward.”

“This really gave our coalition partners the confidence to give rocket call for fire if needed,” continued Wilson.

“It was encouraging to be in that environment, a new place, and have foreign countries working with us,” said Capt. Gene Uhler, the Bravo Battery com-

mander. “We can rely on these guys and they are just as competent as us, and they’re team players. We got to share our different experiences.”

“They definitely sent their best and brightest soldiers to train with us,” added Uhler. “Regardless of who we support or what environment we’re in, it is important to recognize the value of being able to interact with others.”

“Missions like Bold Quest should be done more often,” said France. “It is more realistic with the time constraints and us rapidly receiving firing missions and being able to reload and fire. Bold Quest helped create strong bonds with the NATO countries that were there and opened dialogue and showed similarities with countries around the world.” 