



69TH ADA COMPLETES MISSION IN SOUTHWEST ASIA

Article by Capt. Steven Modugno and photos by Sgt. Maria L. Kappell, both assigned to 69th ADA Brigade Public Affairs

At left, Col. Brian Gibson and Command Sgt. Maj. William Maddox, the brigade command team, uncase the 69th Air Defense Artillery (ADA) Brigade colors during the unit's redeployment ceremony on Soldiers Field at Fort Hood, Texas, on 11 October 2013.

Fort Hood, Texas – After nine months deployed overseas in Southwest Asia, the Soldiers of the 69th Air Defense Artillery (ADA) Brigade Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment (HHD) returned home on 11 October 2013 after successfully “Guarding the Skies” throughout five countries in the US Central Command (CENTCOM) area of operations (AO).

The 69th ADA Brigade was the right unit, at the right place, and at the right time, said Col. Brian W. Gibson, the brigade's commander.

During their deployment, the Soldiers participated in multiple internal training events, aiming to improve their own capabilities and readiness, and the unit also conducted numerous exercises with host nation partners. Many of these exercises focused on increased force protection measures, ensuring all locations were secure and Soldiers were safe while in the deployed environment.

The brigade also had to continuously be vigilant and prepared for crisis, especially as the nation contemplated updated military action within the region.

“There is no doubt the world was watching them. What they accomplished is staggering, and will have lasting positive impact throughout the region,” Gibson said.

Through the missions during the deployment, the Soldiers were able to maintain their focus and drive in achieving goals in fitness, education, and other means of self-improvement. However, while accomplishing their own goals, the Soldiers never placed the unit's objectives on hold, as the headquarters was responsible for over 1,900 Soldiers and civilians, three subordinate battalions, 11 Patriot batteries, and a strategically vital radar site.

“The Lightning team should be rightfully proud of their many successes,” Gibson added.

Among the many friends and Families welcoming the detachment home, Maj. Gen. Anthony Ierardi, the 1st Cavalry Division commanding general, was also there to offer a warm reception and stated the Soldiers “served the country with courage and honor.”

The headquarters detachment returned to Soldiers Field here to find scores of people cheering their arrival. The Soldiers unloaded from the buses, and marched onto the field, ready to see their loved ones for the first time in months. Before the Soldiers were released to their Families, the brigade uncased its colors, officially signifying the Lightning Brigade's return to “The Great Place” (a term of endearment for Fort Hood, Texas).

On 11 October 2013, Staff Sgt. Sherri Killion, an intelligence specialist a member of the returning Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment (HHD), 69th ADA Brigade team, holds her daughter for the first time in nine months at Soldiers Field, Fort Hood.

