



*Above, Commander 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion 3<sup>rd</sup> Air Defense Artillery (4-3 ADA) Regiment, Lt. Col. Richard W. Wright, and 4-3 ADA Command Sergeant Major, Command Sgt. Maj. Kristopher L. Cook, case the unit colors during the Transfer of Authority (TOA) ceremony on 3 October 2013, signifying the return of 4-3 ADA to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, after completing their one-year mission in Kuwait.*

## **“STRIKE FIRST” BATTALION ASSUMES WATCH OVER THE SKIES**

Article by 1st Lt. David R. Endter with photos by Sgt. Brooke S. Culler, both with  
1-44 ADA, 69th ADA Brigade

**Kuwait** – There is a certain time during a deployment when two units come together to prepare for a transition. For the 4th Battalion, 3rd Air Defense Artillery (4-3 ADA) Regiment, 31st ADA Brigade there is the anticipation of packing up and heading home to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, after a year-long mission. For 1-44 ADA, 69<sup>th</sup> ADA Brigade from Fort Hood, Texas, it is the excitement of assuming the theater mission and continuing to defend the skies over Southwest Asia.

In October after months of training and certifications, 1-44 ADA assumed its role within the United States Central Command (CENTCOM) as part of Operation Enduring Freedom. The battalion’s deployment to Southwest Asia was accelerated due to the ever increasing role of air defense in support of the operation. Through proper training, intense dedication and genuine hard work, the “Strike First” battalion blazed through adversity to ensure their readiness to take on the mission.

At the Transfer of Authority (TOA) ceremony, 1-44 ADA welcomed special guests from the air defense community, who were performing missions across the theater, to witness the transfer between the two battalions. Col. Brian Gibson and Command Sgt. Maj. William Maddox of the 69th ADA Brigade, Col. Michael Morrissey and Command Sgt. Maj. Gerardo Dominguez of 31st ADA Brigade, and Command Sgt. Maj. Darrin Jefferies the Command Sgt. Maj. of 32nd Army Air and Missile Defense Command (AAMDC) oversaw the relief of 4-3 ADA’s area of responsibility and the assumption of the mission by 1-44 ADA.

The theme throughout the ceremony was centered on the transition between the oldest air defense artillery battalion, 4-3 ADA, and the most decorated, 1-44 ADA. The combination of these two spectacular units, each with their own strengths, embodies the full culture that exists within the air defense community.

*Below, Lt. Col. Maurice O. Barnett and Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Sanchez, commander and command sergeant major of 1-44 ADA, 69<sup>th</sup> ADA Brigade, stand after uncasing their battalion colors at the TOA ceremony on 3 October 2013 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Kuwait. 1-44 ADA home-based at Fort Hood, Texas, is replacing 4-3 ADA. The TOA ceremony represents the stand down of one unit and the assumption of mission by the incoming unit.*

