

SOLDIERS AND FAMILIES SURVIVE UNIT'S ZOMBIE RUN

Article and photos by Sgt. Maria L. Kappell, 69th ADA Brigade
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Fort Hood, Texas — Soldiers and families outran the zombie apocalypse that plagued the Lightning Ranch here on 26 October 2013.

The 4th Battalion, 5th Air Defense Artillery (4-5 ADA) Regiment hosted the unit's first ever Zombie Run to help replenish the Family Readiness Group (FRG) funds for the upcoming holiday season. The event was open to soldiers and families throughout the 69th ADA Brigade.

The event had a large turnout, and the fact that it was for all ages and all ranks made it a great family event, said Lt. Col. Bill Dowling, the 4-5 ADA commander.



Above, soldiers from the 4th Battalion, 5th Air Defense Artillery (4-5 ADA) Regiment practice their zombie walking skills during the unit's zombie run at the Lightning Ranch (Fort Hood, Texas) on 26 October 2013.

The participants were faced with the challenge of navigating their way through a course just over a mile long, dodging zombies and obstacles along the way. Each team running through the course was able to purchase ammunition, in the form of foam darts, to throw at their zombie foes to better their chances of being dubbed a survivor when they reached the finish line.

Staff Sgt. Justin Herburger, a platoon sergeant from Charlie Battery, 4-5 ADA (C/4-5 ADA), and a veteran zombie race runner, was one of the few who finished of the race as a survivor.

"It was shorter than the races I'm used to, but it was long enough to have fun with. It was intense," he said.

In comparison to the normal slow moving zombies people have become accustomed to seeing on television, the zombies in this race were out for blood — or brains — and sprinted toward potential meal targets.

"The zombies were fast, and they gave no leeway," said Sarah Herburger, Justin's wife and teammate in the race.



At left, soldiers assigned to 4-5 ADA practice their zombie walking skills during the unit's Zombie Run.

At right, Staff Sgt. Justin Herburger, a platoon sergeant from C/4-5 ADA, outruns a zombie at the unit's Zombie Run here at the Lightning Ranch on 26 October 2013.



In addition to the zombies, runners encountered some other characters along the course. Sgt. 1st Class Anthony Hopkins, the first sergeant of D/4-5 ADA, hid in the tree line, revving up his weed eater's engine and shaking the trees as unsuspecting runners raced past.

The teams ran through the course one at a time, and over 200 people participated either as a survivor or zombie.

Even the battalion's command sergeant major, Command Sgt. Maj. Dennis Phifer, who had never experienced a zombie run before, went through the course. Phifer, expecting to survive, was ambushed by a group of zombies who were able to swipe the flags from around his waist, signifying his defeat.

Many participants, including the Herburgers, look forward to doing something like this again in the future. It was a blast and fun for all of the adults and children involved, the couple said.

"It was great to see the soldiers and their families get into the spirit of Halloween and show their support for the unit and the FRGs," Dowling said.



At left, soldiers and families from the 69th ADA Brigade participate in the Zombie Run held at the Lightning Ranch at Fort Hood, Texas, on 26 October 2013.

At right, one of the obstacles encountered by the "wanna be survivor" runners was the Zombie children zone, staged by the children of soldiers assigned to the 69th ADA Brigade.

