



U.S. Navy "Desert Hawk" aviators on approach to a Patriot air defense site carrying a platoon of U.S. Fleet Antiterrorism Security Team (FAST) Marines in U. S. Central Command's (CENTCOM's) Southwest Asia area of responsibility (AOR) during a November 2013 Joint air insertion exercise.

JOINT AIR INSERTION EXERCISE ON FORWARD DEPLOYED PATRIOT SITE

Article by 1st Lt. Adam L. Chunn, C/1-43 ADA
Photos by Staff Sgt. Jesse L. Ervin

SOUTHWEST ASIA (November 2013) – Cohesion was the word of the day when Joint forces in the U.S. Central Command's (CENTCOM's) area of responsibility (AOR) conducted a joint air insertion exercise. Members of Charlie Battery, 1st Battalion, 43rd Air Defense Artillery (C/1-43 ADA) Regiment also known as "Cold Steel," executed the joint-exercise with U.S. Sailors and Marines increasing combat effectiveness across branches.

Navy "Desert Hawk" aviators conducted a flawless air insertion of the Marine Fleet Antiterrorism Security Team, commonly called Marine FAST, into an Army Patriot air defense site in the AOR. This opportunity allowed Navy pilots the unique training opportunity of landing on an Army site in rough terrain as compared to a naval vessel.

The FAST platoon, manned by more than 50 Marines, landed on the Patriot site and were immediately received and integrated into the site's base defense plan under Capt. Dary M. Antonetty's, commander of C/1-43 ADA, tactical control.

The Marines are trained to respond to counterterrorism with the use of small unit tactics and close quarters combat. The troops were transported by Army tactical vehicles to fighting positions across the site. Once they arrived at their fighting position and while working alongside their Cold Steel force protection counterparts, the Marines received an updated threat brief and were informed of key tasks they were responsible for. The FAST team also provided the Patriot site with an additional quick reaction force that could rapidly maneuver anywhere on the site as potential hostilities were identified or actively in progress.



At left, Navy Desert Hawk lands on Patriot site, Marine FAST Soldiers are received by C Battery Commander Capt. Dary Antonetty.

Cold Steel soldiers and leaders know the importance of rapid integration of defense assets into their base defense plan. This training exercise was the first of its kind in the AOR and multiple rehearsal and communication tests were conducted to ensure that the different military forms of communication could be configured to work together. Future exercises are already in the planning stages with the intent to build upon lessons learned

during this exercise, further expanding the joint capability and cooperation needed for this kind of operational environment.

In regards to future planning, Antonetty said, "The intent behind this exercise is to establish a clear 'way ahead' for the establishment of a Joint emergency action plan that will withstand time and unit turnover."

After the exercise was completed all forces gathered for an after action review (AAR) in order to capture things that went well, and identify areas in need of improvement for future operations. Marines, Sailors and Soldiers then gathered together for a meet and greet to share experiences and converse about a job well done.

At right, soldiers meet and greet members of the Marine FAST platoon at the conclusion of the exercise.

