

94TH AAMDC HOLDS FIRST TURKEY BOWL

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ALIAMANU MILITARY RESERVE, HAWAII – There weren't any fancy "Super Bowl" ads, but for the officers, noncommissioned officers (NCOs) and enlisted soldiers of the 94th Army Air and Missile Defense Command (AAMDC), the Turkey Bowl held on 27 November 2013, was the football game of the year.

Bragging rights for the year were at stake for both the enlisted soldiers' team and the officers' team, as they battled it out to claim the title of "94th AAMDC Turkey Bowl Champions."

It was the enlisted soldiers' team that brought their "A-Game," quickly scoring the first touchdown.

"It was easy, it only took us about 15 seconds to score," said Staff Sgt. Kenneth Kirby, a member of the enlisted team and the 94th AAMDC's Property Book noncommissioned officer-in-charge (NCOIC).

However, the officers' team proved they were a force to be reckoned with, when they scored an amazing touchdown just minutes before half time. The first half of the game ended with a close score of 8-5, with the officers trailing by three.

"It's all about strategy and the way you play the game. We have a secret weapon that we are waiting to use," said Lt. Col. Bull Bovee, a member of the officers' team and 94th AAMDC's inspector general.

In a grueling grid-iron battle the enlisted team defeated the officers, winning 17-14 and obtaining bragging rights for the next year as Turkey Bowl champs. Despite their loss both teams gave a vigorous show of strength, speed and endurance throughout the game.

"94th was excited about coming out and building unit cohesion through a competitive spirit on the fields of friendly strife," said team coordinator and the 94th AAMDC's, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery (HHB) Commander Capt. Peter Bier.

Coming together and working together is what really set the enlisted team apart from the officers' team.

"We had some underrated players who showed up and played really, really well," said Spc. Willie Merrill, the enlisted team quarterback and 94th AAMDC generator mechanic. "There was no one player; it was a collective effort and we pulled off the win."

The Turkey Bowl is an Air Defense Artillery (ADA) tradition, started on the fields of Fort Bliss, Texas, and intended to build unity in the face of an enlisted versus officer competition. The football game, usually played close to Thanksgiving, has traveled the world as it was adopted by each ADA brigade/battalion and played on the fields of their home stations.

November 2013 marks the first 94th AAMDC Turkey Bowl, and starts the new annual tradition of ADA enlisted soldiers, NCOs and officers engaging on the field of battle in the ultimate football game of the year. Barring any unforeseen changes, the 94th AAMDC Turkey Bowl will traditionally be played the week of Thanksgiving. Each team is allowed up to 15 players, all of whom must be assigned or attached to the unit. Additionally, each team must have a female player on the field at all times.



"It was a lot of fun," said 1st Sgt. Joseph Collins, 94th AAMDC's HHB first sergeant.

Football in any form is usually an enjoyable event. Traditionally, football season is a confirmation of the approaching holidays.

This year [2013], the officers, NCOs and enlisted members of the 94th AAMDC kicked off their upcoming holiday season in friendly competition. Blowing off pent up stress and momentarily releasing the day-to-day pressure associated with military life. Each team member on the field identified not only with their teammates, but also with each team member standing face-to-face with them on the other side of the scrimmage line.

It is the association, identification and solidarity that build a team on and off the field. It is what builds unit esprit de corps, cohesion and team spirit, game or mission oriented. This is the importance of the Turkey Bowl and the inherent tradition it passes from player-to-player and spectator-to-spectator. For those few moments, everyone is in the game regardless of team, position or role.

However, that being said, there is a satisfaction that comes with earning bragging right and the winners' title. The first annual 94th AAMDC Turkey Bowl championship title went to the NCO/enlisted team. The officers now have a full year to plan their comeback for the next encounter on the field of battle.

