

ARMY WEEK: THE SOLDIER BEHIND THE UNIFORM

Article by 1st Lt. Andrew S. Agnoli, 1-1 ADA

Army Week allows Soldiers to interact with one another outside of the conventional workspace. The informal atmosphere affords leaders the opportunity to better know their Soldiers on a more personal level. What are their likes and dislikes? How did they end up where they are now? What are their hobbies, passions, and motivations? Utilizing recreational functions such as Army Week to get to know Soldiers allows engaged leaders to better understand, inspire, and motivate Soldiers. One such Soldier was 1st Battalion, 1st Air Defense Artillery (1-1 ADA) Regiment's basketball team captain, Sgt. Kendall J. Carter.

During the 2013 Army Week basketball playoff games, 1-1 ADA was represented by their very own Delta Battery (D/1-1 ADA). Even though the battalion would ultimately finish third in the competition, love for the sport was undoubtedly evident amongst the team members, and was particularly apparent within Sgt. Carter.

Carter's love for basketball began at a young age while growing up in Louisiana. Initially, playing the sport with friends and family for recreation, he quickly progressed to varsity-level basketball and would eventually play "All State Basketball" during his sophomore, junior, and senior years of high school. Carter's rise to the top continued when he was spotted by a scout and offered a scholarship to play for Texas Southern University, a college of roughly 10,000 students located in Houston. He accepted the offer; however, as often occurs in the world of athletics, Carter's dream of a professional basketball career came to an abrupt end when he severely injured his knee, by tearing his anterior cruciate ligament (ACL), medial collateral ligament (MCL), and meniscus. Ten months later, with his scholarship revoked and no way to pay for his college education, Carter enlisted in the United States Marine Corps (USMC).



Sgt. Kendall Carter assigned to Delta Battery, 1st Battalion, 1st Air Defense Artillery (D/1-1 ADA), drives on opposing defense during the "Army Week" basketball playoffs.

Shortly after joining the Marines and moving to Camp Pendleton, Calif., Carter was once again drawn back into basketball. Playing pick-up games with friends and fellow Marines would ultimately lead him to playing basketball for the "All Marine Corps Team" at Camp Pendleton. Off and on, between various deployments and exercises, Carter would play with the team for a total of four years, from 2003 until 2007.

By this time, Carter was a married man and wanting the best for his growing family, made the transition from the Marine Corps to the Army. , and found himself stationed at Fort Bliss, Texas. As easily as he found basketball in

the Marine Corps, he found it in the Army after being assigned to Fort Bliss, Texas. Carter played on the Fort Bliss Post Basketball Team from 2008 until his arrival in Okinawa, Japan, and his assignment to 1-1 ADA in 2012.

Gunnery training, Table VIII certifications, and mission cycle tasks often find their way into Army Week and seem to prevent one or more batteries or companies that make up 1-1 ADA from participating

in the events. However, 2013 was the first year in many that all of 1-1 ADA's batteries and companies were able to compete in the sporting events, especially in basketball.

For Army Week Basketball, a day one forfeiture by Alpha Battery and a big win over Echo Company allowed Team Captain Carter to quickly establish Delta Battery as 1-1 ADA's representative in the playoffs. Leading his team of seven noncommissioned officers (NCOs) and soldiers, Carter saw to the defeat of the 78th Signal Battalion in the final seconds of their first game match-up. The next two games would not fare as well for D/1-1 ADA as the games with the 10th Regional Support Group and 78th Signal would end in losses for the air defense battalion.

But, as Carter well knows, first place isn't the only trophy teams walk away with.

"It's about relaxing, having fun, and getting to know people better. We hardly ever get to talk with the units on Torii, so competitions like this bring people with [similar] interests together," he mused.

Carter's story and its connection to basketball is captivating, but it is in no way unique.

"I don't want this story to be about me – there were six other people on the team, and plenty of other sports were played too," Carter said.

Carter's words are entirely true. Events such as Army Week provide us with the opportunity to become better acquainted with our fellow Soldiers and to truly begin to know each of them. Behind each uniform is an individual Soldier with an individual story worth knowing.



Fans from both the 10th RSG and 1-1 ADA watch the playoff game with great anticipation of the outcome.