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U.S. Army Air Defense Artillery  
School commandant

## The State of the Air Defense Artillery

As the year comes to a close, we are reminded of air defense artillery's rich history and the exciting direction our branch is headed. This year we celebrated the 50th anniversary of air defense artillery becoming a branch of the U.S. Army as well as the first Anti-Aircraft Artillery engagement during WWI by Brig. Gen. James A. Ship-ton's 1st Regiment on May 18, 1918. We also celebrated the activation this year of two storied units: 5th Battalion, 4th Air Defense Artillery Regiment in Germany, and the 38th Air Defense Brigade on Camp Zama, Japan.

Cheryl, the boys, and I are honored to be a part of the Fires Center of Excellence team here at Fort Sill, Okla. On July 26, I had the privilege to assume the role as the U.S. Army Air Defense Artillery School commandant and the chief of our branch. As your chief, I have focused on three priorities; holistic short range air defense strategy, ADA Branch transformation, and Air and Missile Defense modernization.

As we look to the future, it is these priorities that will keep our branch relevant and strong. Our first priority, holistic short-range air defense (SHORAD) strategy began in May 2017 when the Chief of Staff of the Army directed a Maneuver Stinger pilot program to train non-ADA Soldiers to operate the Stinger, filling a much needed gap in air defense coverage at the tactical level. We have trained and certified 62 Stinger teams over the past year. Simultaneously, we will field four Maneuver Short-Range Air Defense (M-SHORAD) battalions by Fiscal Year 2022, with the activation of the first battalion, 5th Battalion, 4th Air Defense Artillery in October of this year. The M-SHORAD platform will use an existing mix of guns, missiles and onboard sensors integrated onto

the Stryker A1 platform. The first prototype of this weapon system is currently in manufacturing and is expected to be completed in the third quarter of Fiscal Year 2019.

Our second priority, ADA Branch transformation, will change the way we man, train and equip the ADA force. The goal to organize the ADA force in a manner allowing more flexibility to provide an array of ADA weapon systems at echelon. This drives the continuing effort to field a system-of-systems to integrate Air and Missile Defense operations known as Army Integrated Air and Missile Defense (AIAMD). To achieve AIAMD, it is crucial we continue efforts with the command and control material solution that will give us this flexibility, the Integrated Battle Command System (IBCS). IBCS is designed to replace the current mission command systems at all echelons and integrate onto a single common operating picture.

Lastly, our final priority is the continuous modernization of the Air and Missile Defense (AMD) force. ADA forces must continue to modernize and upgrade to keep pace with an ever evolving threat. The Patriot force is receiving Configuration 3+, which includes Modern Man Station, Patriot Post Deployment Build-8, and Radar Digital Processor-Configuration, the Missile Segment Enhanced interceptor, and the associated Patriot launcher upgrade to the M903. Sentinel radars are being upgraded to a Family of Medium Tactical Vehicle variant, and Integrated Air and Missile Defense Battle Command System will replace all of our current mission command systems. Finally, we will field a new system along with the M-SHORAD Stryker fleet to replace our Avenger fleet.

Our National Guard ADA Sol-



*Soldiers with the 3rd Battalion, 265th Air Defense Artillery, practice scanning their sector and target engagement utilizing a Man-Portable Air Defense System during their annual training at Camp Blanding Joint Training Center, Fla. (2nd Lt. Valeria M. Pete/U.S. Army)*

diers are equally engaged around the globe. In 2018, over 2,300 Soldiers have participated in numerous hurricane relief efforts, most notably, Hurricane Florence in North Carolina and Hurricane Michael in Florida. With over 400 Soldiers deployed or forward-deployed, these ADA Soldiers have also participated in numerous multi component and joint exercises: Tabruq Legacy, Saber Guardian, Saber Strike and Juniper Cobra. Currently, Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 174th Ohio National

Guard are forward-deployed to the National Capital Region and Europe providing ground-based SHORAD capabilities to Washington, D.C. and to Maneuver Command ADA element in Europe. Also in support of the NCR mission is 164th ADA Brigade, Florida National Guard, who is providing the Command and Control, air-space integration, management and protection.

The 100th Missile Defense Brigade Ground-based Midcourse Defense and 49th Missile Defense Battalion also continue to provide for the nation's defense in support of U.S. Northern Command. The 100th MDB, known as the "300 protecting 300 million," celebrated 15 years as a brigade in 2018. In 2017, its GMD operators participated in the first successful exo-atmospheric intercept of an ICBM-class target (Flight Test Ground-based Interceptor-15). In 2019, they will participate in another first - a test incorporating a salvo of two ground-based interceptors against an ICBM-class target.

It has also been a busy and productive year for the Office of the Chief of Air Defense Artillery team as we work to manage career life-cycle functions for our Soldiers and integrate the personnel domain with rapid changes in the branch. Career managers continue to travel extensively, supporting our personnel with unit outreach visits conducted in conjunction with Human Resources Command professionals. These noncommissioned officers provide critical career advice to active, Guard and Reserve units while updating our population on the latest developments in our branch. At the same time, OCADA personnel support the NCO Education System Academy and Sergeants Major Academy to improve our leaders' awareness of branch initiatives. This communication is key to establishing realistic expectations and maintaining a healthy force.

Deliberately continuing to build momentum for officer accessions has also paid dividends this year. OCADA's branch marketing ac-

tivities, along with the Army's increased prioritization of air defense and the imminent return of SHORAD to the maneuver force, have significantly improved cadet interest in our branch. OCADA briefed cadets at more than 30 universities last year resulting in 3,260 cadets choosing to visit the air defense display at Cadet Summer Training, marking a significant increase over previous years.

Likewise, we incorporated air defense into U.S. Military Academy's Cadet Field Training this past summer with an emphasis on the third dimension threat and air defense capabilities. During CFT, cadets received hands-on MANPADS training, consciously accounted for passive air defense in the planning and orders production process, and carried Stingers in the platoon defense lanes. Building on this work, 22 air defense leaders participated in USMA's Branch Week in September, answering questions and educating cadets on the tremendous opportunities our branch offers. Two brigades provided static displays, and a Virtual Stinger Trainer was employed to increase cadet interest.

Cadet excitement for the branch is the result of a number of factors. The clear relevance of our mission appeals to cadets, along with the variety of overseas stationing and deployments, the great levels of responsibility entrusted to our junior officers, and the immediate leadership opportunities for them in our branch. Likewise, the expansion of SHORAD is compelling, increasing the variety of our missions and resulting in Ranger school slots, for example, as we move back into the maneuver force.

Our investment in the accessions process will pay long-term dividends for our branch. Cadets who want to be in the branch will stay longer and be more effective air defense leaders for our Soldiers. For the upcoming summer, we are working to include Avengers in the USMA combined arms live-fire exercise and make progress on air defense-related training in ROTC

curricula and summer training.

OCADA continues to aggressively work other numerous personnel domain issues with substantial potential impact on our Soldiers. For example, we created the A5 Stinger additional skill identifier for the brigade combat team MANPADS teams, have fought to shield our Soldiers from the grade plate roll downs that are significantly impacting other branches, created structure for new air defense formations, and are developing the requirements which will drive a permanent allocation of Ranger School slots for air defenders. OCADA is vigorously developing sustainable SHORAD growth models and safeguarding Career Management Field 14 progression from the impact of dynamics from outside the branch.

This is an exciting and dynamic time to be an air defender and the future is bright! I would like to congratulate and send my highest regards to the 2018 recipients of the James A. Shipton, Henry A. Knox, and Hamilton Awards, who together epitomize the excellence that our branch promotes. Respectively, the awards went to Chief Warrant Officer 3 Lucas Watterson, Headquarters, Headquarters Battery, 32nd Army Air and Missile Defense Command; B Battery, 2nd Battalion, 44th Air Defense Artillery Regiment; and C Battery, 2nd Battalion, 263rd Air Defense Artillery Regiment.

I look forward to the next year and the exciting opportunities air defense will embrace around the globe! I remain amazed that our branch, for its size, continues to be the most sought out and deployed force in our Army. I sincerely appreciate the hard work that you have done to maintain the global presence of Air and Missile Defense in the service of our nation and its allies. Your efforts to deter our enemies and reassure our allies plays a vital role in our National Defense. I look forward to continuing the transformation of the branch and facing the challenges 2019 will bring.

First to Fire!