

## 3-43 takes on enemy, dirt road

story and photos by SGT William Bolderson / 11th ADA Bde / Public Affairs



Photo above: Soldiers made their way down seven miles of dirt road in troop carriers fitted with M-2 .50 caliber machine guns and Mk-19 40-mm grenade machine gun. This was all a part of the 3rd Battalion, 43rd Air Defense Artillery, convoy live fire exercise conducted at McGregor Range, N.M.

MCGREGOR, N.M. - Convoy live fire exercises enable Soldiers to react to enemy aggression by protecting personnel, equipment and supplies in any given situation. It gives Soldiers greater confidence in their weapons while leaders gain increased assurance in command and control of direct and indirect fires. The 3rd Battalion, 43rd Air Defense Artillery conducted such training at McGregor Range, N.M., October 20 and 21.

B Battery Soldiers were in charge of the range with 1LT Christopher Shaw, and SSG Johnson, the range officer and noncommissioned officer in charge, giving the safety briefs. Soldiers were the given weapon's status of red, amber or green, indicating the weapons readiness state.

Soldiers were issued two armored vest plates and five live-round magazines and began loading the vehicles. Battery Soldiers driving three five-ton vehicles, fitted with M-2 .50 caliber machine guns and Mk-19 40-mm grenade machine guns, made their way down rugged dirt-road terrain.

Enemy targets emerged, flanking the passing vehicles. Range safety NCOs immediately began communicating directing Soldiers where to fire. Machine gunners, M-16 semi-automatic rifle and M-249 squad automatic rifle firers responded instantly quickly filling the cargo beds with brass-shell casings. They fired focused shots towards specially designed targets while the M-2 fired devastating rounds into billboard-sized targets. After Soldiers eliminated hostile targets, they switched their weapons to safe.



Photo left: Soldiers of E Battery, 3rd Battalion, 43rd Air Defense Artillery unload rounds from transport carriers firing M-2 .50 caliber machine guns, Mk-19 40-mm grenade machine guns and M-16 semi-automatic and M-249 squad automatic rifles.

Upon returning from the dirt-infested, bullet-flying range, the Soldiers cleared the enormous amount of brass casings from the vehicles, a remnant of the event's training. Individuals were cleared from having any brass on them or their equipment and participated in an after action review.