

11th, 69th ADA representatives visit USMA

Story by Captain Tamara Gonzales, 11th ADA Bde, Public Affairs

Commissioned and noncommissioned officers of the 11th Air Defense Artillery "Imperial" Brigade and the 69th ADA Bde visited the United States Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., Sept. 14 through 22.



Capt. John Barlow, a battle captain with the 11th Air Defense Artillery Brigade, stands beside a Patriot launcher with Cub Scouts from Carmel, N.Y., of Pack 1, West Chester Putnam Council, at the United States Military Academy at West Point, N.Y. Sept. 14 through 22.

The purpose of the visit was to explain to the academy's graduating senior class, or first class cadets, about the responsibilities of an air defense artillery officer and to share experiences of a company officer.

This is an important time in a cadet's career when they rank order what branch they want to commission into, such as ADA or infantry, said 1st Lt. Peter Bier, a launcher platoon leader from A Battery, 3rd Battalion, 43rd ADA.

One of the main forums used to accomplish this was a junior leader panel made up of junior leaders from every

Army branch who stood ready to answer cadets' questions. The subjects varied from how to address different Soldier issues, the first experiences of a junior leader and how to prepare for and what to expect from a deployment. Branch-specific questions included everything about a particular branch, for example, possible ADA duty locations, specific equipment, opportunities, cutting-edge information about the ADA world and different leader experiences. The forum also provided the panel members an opportunity to dispel myths and clarify rumors.

"The panel gave cadets a better understanding of what ADA entails," said Bier. "There was a wide range of experiences so the cadets could become better informed."

Throughout the forum the 11th ADA Bde displayed a Patriot Advanced Capability III launcher from 3rd Bn., 43rd ADA, at the center of the campus where cadets pass to and from class. Toward the end of the visit, the launcher was moved to the main entrance of Michie Stadium where Army challenged Ball State in a football game. This location attracted a wide range of visitors from children and their parents to retired air defenders who had never before seen a PAC III.

"My favorite part of the trip was showing off the launcher," said Staff Sgt. Courtney Torres, a Headquarters platoon sergeant with C Btry., 3-43 ADA. "It directly reflects me and what I do in my career." During the football game, the air defenders had an opportunity to speak with Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts from New York. Some of the discussions included Boy Scout opportunities, the Scouts' impact through history and the determination required to become an Eagle Scout.

After the game, various branches held a combined arms tailgate party where cadets asked junior leaders questions individually and in a less formal environment. Senior leaders from all across ADA were also present, such as the commandant of the Air Defense Artillery School, Brig. Gen. Roger Matthews, and Col. John Rossi, the deputy commanding general (Fires and Effects) of III Corps. There was also brigade- and battalion-level leadership, including 11th ADA Bde Commander Col. Joseph DeAntona, 69th ADA Bde Commander Col. Jimmy Jenkins, 6th ADA Bde Commander, Col. Don Fryc and 3rd Bn, 2nd ADA Bn Commander Lt. Col. Shauna Peck.

“It was a very rewarding and enriching time to share my own experiences with the future leaders of today’s Army, especially in the world of air defense,” said Capt. John Barlow, a battle captain with the 11th ADA Bde.