



The I STRIKE Battalion celebrates Saint Barbra's Day in a conquered dictator's palace

Story by MSG (P) Lawrence
MacDonald / 3rd Battalion, 3rd
Air Defense Artillery / Courtesy
Photo / December 2009

CAMP Victory, Iraq –
The 3rd Battalion, 3rd

Air Defense Artillery Regiment celebrated Saint Barbara's Day in the palace of an evil conquered dictator. The celebration of Saint Barbara's Day is a time-honored tradition shared among all Air Defense Artillery and Field Artillery units around the world. St. Barbara has been held as the Patron Saint of Artillerymen and women everywhere for many of years.

The host for the evening was LTC Randy McIntire, Task Force Commander, and during his opening comments he stated, "Tonight's event is symbolic of the relationship between the Air Defense Artillery and Field Artillery community in Iraq. As the two branches determine the skills necessary to fight and win in a distributed fires environment at the Fire Center of Excellence we've found at least two things that our branches have in common: 1) St. Barbara and 2) Counter-Rocket Artillery and Mortar (C-RAM) operations." These two communities have come together and rolled their sleeves up to provide Indirect Fire Protection for Coalition Forces. This relationship was forged between the two branches in 2005 in production of what is now known as Counter Rocket Artillery and Mortar and commonly referred to as C-RAM. The C-RAM program currently serves as the foundation for the Fires Center of Excellence shared between Red Legs at Fort Sill, OK.

St. Barbara was honored in fine fashion in the Al Faw Palace Ballroom as Soldiers and Sailors traveled from all corners of Iraq to attend the special event. The event began as any other St. Barbara with the pageantry of toasting honor guests, a special memorial to fallen comrades and a make shift Grog Ceremony (without alcohol). This event, however, was made unique by its simplistic, yet elegant atmosphere. There were no \$40 per plate meals served here, no champagne glasses as keepsakes, but merely a group of dedicated Soldiers gathered together to enjoy each other's company, all the while honoring a bit of Artillery tradition.

The guest speaker for the evening was COL David McCauley, the Multi-National Corps-Iraq Effect Coordinator, who in his speech spoke of the many accomplishment of Task

Force 3-3 ADA (C-RAM) over the past 10 months. Under the steadfast leadership of Colonel McCauley the C-RAM program has made huge strides in the performance of the system. Colonel McCauley stated, "Now it normally takes the Army 15-20 years of deliberate planning, testing, and production to develop a system with those capabilities. But in an amazing display of teamwork, experts from the defense industry, The C-RAM TEAM comprised of the United States Army, primarily with the Air Defense and the Field Artillery Branches, United States Navy along with the Program Office came together to field a C-RAM system in less than a year, using existing off the shelf technology. From the start, then, this has truly been a joint and inter-service effort to protect our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines. C-RAM is combat tested and proven, both against mortars and rockets, and it continues to save lives."

The night culminated with the induction of STRIKE 7, Command Sergeant Major Paris Williams into the prestigious Ancient Order of Saint Barbra along with nine other leaders which were inducted into the Honorable order of Saint Barbra. "I appreciate the hard work our staff put into this event. They have spent the last three months putting this event together while simultaneously conducting combat operations. Congratulations to our newest Saint Barbra inductee's, well deserved" said CSM Williams