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## V CORPS TANKERS PUT THEIR FAITH IN 'ADAM'S REVENGE,' THE ABRAMS THAT GOT THEM THROUGH IRAQ

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**HEIDELBERG, Germany** — Among the military vehicles on display at this week's U.S. Army Europe Land Combat Expo here sat "Adam's Revenge," an M1A1 Abrams tank that stole the show, drawing crowds to its scrapes, dents, and even a hole, earned during 15 months of duty in Iraq.



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Sgt. Phillip Beasley (left) and Staff Sgt. Eric Quesnel, tankers with V Corps' A Company, 1st Battalion, 37th Armor Regiment, 1st Armored Division, based in Friedberg, Germany, sit atop "Adam's Revenge," the M1A1 Abrams tank that carried them safely through Iraq. The unit's traditional "Bandits" skull logo on the tank wears an eye patch in further honor of the tank's namesake, the team's former loader, Sgt. Adam Replogle, whose battlefield injuries included the loss of his left eye.

With dusty tracks and bullet-chipped paint, the tank may have looked scruffy -- especially parked next to an identical Abrams in mint condition -- but the Soldiers who make up the Revenge's four-man crew say their tank earned its battle scars and the right to be proud of them.

"She took care of us," said Sgt. Phillip Beasley, a gunner with V Corps' A Company, 1st Battalion, 37th Armor, 1st Armored Division, as he slid a hand over the thick plating covering the machine's side.

Named after Sgt. Adam Replogle, the team's former loader, who was severely injured in Iraq, "Adam's Revenge" did indeed take care of its crew. Its deepest scar, a hole about an inch in diameter, gave the entire crew something to remember, said Beasley.

On May 21, 2004, during their deployment to Operation Iraqi Freedom, the team was sent on a mission to an area near in Karbala, Iraq where it was believed members of the insurgent Mahdi militia were being harbored. As the Revenge and its crew were headed toward a suspected militia stronghold, bullets and rocket-propelled grenades fired from nearby buildings simply bounced off the tank's thick skin. Then, in a moment none of the crew is likely to forget, the tank rocked with an explosion.

"It was a scary feeling. The whole tank rocked," said A Company's Staff Sgt. Eric Quesnel, tank commander for the Revenge. "Normally you don't feel much once you're inside. It's like a big rock going down the street, so you don't feel anything. I could actually go over a car and not feel it, so when the tank rocked like that, with such force, it was scary."

The RPG round, believed to have had a depleted uranium tip, blasted a hole in the Revenge, sending a hail of metal shrapnel into the machine's engine.

"At the time, we didn't know what hit us, and the engine went off instantly. The shrapnel just killed it," said Quesnel.

"This kind of thing doesn't happen very often. They got lucky and hit a sweet spot. It went straight through the engine," added Beasley.

The team was stuck in the middle of a battle, sitting like a duck, he said.

"We got hit with RPGs like 12 or 13 more times before we were pulled out, but those rounds bounced right off," said Beasley, pointing to a patch of missing paint. "They barely chipped the paint."

"Sure, we were nervous sitting out there," admits Quesnel, "but at the same time we were confident in both our abilities and hers (the tank)."

Though they were immobile, the tank crew didn't give up, and continued to fire back at the enemy until a rescue and recovery team arrived.

"We continued to fight in manual mode for the next 20 minutes, just continuously firing, until they could get somebody to come get us," said Beasley. "Then the (1st Armored Division's) 1/36th Infantry guys came and laid down suppressive fire while another tank pulled us out."

Though its engine was shot out from underneath them, the crew didn't give up on the Revenge. After a visit to the maintenance shed, the Abrams was ready to go back to work, said Beasley.

"She held up the whole time we were out there," he said. "We used the same tank from start to finish. Even after the hit, we got a new engine, and 24 hours after that we were back out there."

The Revenge crewmembers say they participated in more than 300 combat patrols in Iraq, a fact they attribute in part to the excellence of their machine and others like her.

“We’re very confident in the Abrams,” said Quesnel. “Out of our whole battalion, this is the only tank that was penetrated. I think that says something about them.”

