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THE **ISPATCH**
1ST QTR 2013

THE MAGAZINE OF THE TEXAS MILITARY FORCES

SPC Cynthia Chavez
owns the obstacle course



**Best
Warrior
Competition**
Texas Soldiers and Airmen compete

THE DISPATCH

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Spc. Cynthia Chavez, 56th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, tackles the Obstacle Course at the Texas Military Forces Joint Best Warrior Competition held at Camp Swift, Texas, Feb. 8 - 9, 2013. Soldiers and Airmen competed for the first time in this year's event. (Texas National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Phil Fountain).

The Dispatch, the official magazine of the Texas Military Forces is back. We are now a quarterly publication. ...And we made a few of changes:

New Logo

Unit insignias/logos

Ever see a patch, flash or logo and wonder what unit they represent? Well, so do we. We will try to incorporate these to accompany the stories of the units we publish in here.



Interactive links (for online readers)

Read a story and want to follow the unit, see more pictures, or simply learn more about them? Hover your mouse over the interactive buttons and click. Go ahead! Try the ones below.

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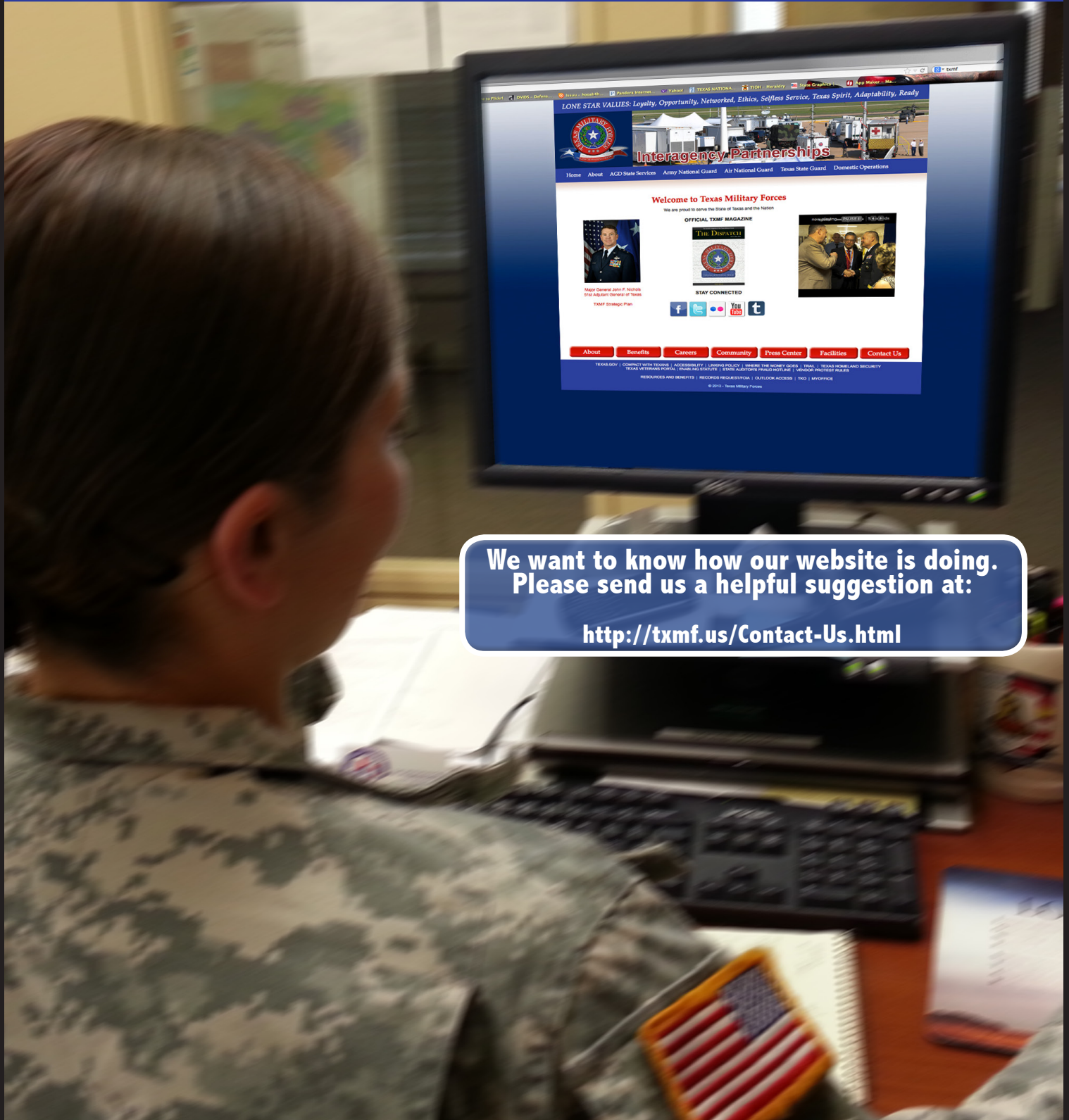
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From the desk of the Public Affairs Officer,

As we wrap up our first edition of the Dispatch for 2013, I want to take a moment to thank all the members of the Texas Military Forces for the service you do for this great state and nation. Without your hard work and dedication, we wouldn't have so many great stories and photos in this magazine.

The Dispatch will be changing from a monthly publication to a quarterly. We also made a few changes to the magazine, including a new cover logo and interactive options to the online version. Having said that, you will notice that in this first edition we wrapped up the 1st and 2nd quarters in one. This is because we wanted to make sure everything was good to go on the new, revamped Dispatch.

In order to make sure we are reaching out to all four corners of the state, we've decided to focus each edition of the Dispatch on a different part of Texas. This edition is focused northwest of Austin, on Brownwood, Abilene, Camp Bowie, and the surrounding units.

We got to meet the Soldiers who work in the armories every day, supporting the mission and making sure the TXMF are ready, willing and able to meet any challenges coming our way. We hope the stories and photos in the Dispatch do those folks credit.

As we begin summer, we would like to bid Maj. Gen. Joyce L. Stevens, former Assistant Texas Adjutant General (ATAG)-Army, the best of luck on her retirement. She served well and faithfully, and her steady presence will be missed.

In turn, we also welcome Maj. Gen. William Smith as the incoming ATAG-Army. He brings a fresh set of eyes to the command group and we look forward to working with him to highlight the great work our Soldiers and Airmen do all across the state and nation.

Staying ready to perform the Defense Support of Civilian Authorities mission is, as always, a top priority. Make sure you are taking care of yourself and your families, so that you are ready to focus on the mission at hand, especially as we get deeper into storm season. With pervasive heat and dry weather, fires are always a possibility too, and we need to make sure we are all in top shape, physically and mentally, to serve our fellow Texans in times of need.

Although there are always challenges and uncertainties down the road, we know TXMF members and their families will be standing tall - Texans defending Texas.

Thank you for allowing the Texas Military Forces Office to tell your stories. We are honored by the trust you have in us.

Col. Amy Cook





"It's a great experience to be able to lead a group of VIPs from the United States to meet their counterparts from Mexico."

For more pictures visit:
<http://flic.kr/s/aHsjE8dJn8>

Staff Sgt. Pedro Villareal (2nd from left), along with the color guard detail from 3rd Battalion, 141st Infantry Regiment, Texas Army National Guard, participate at the 2013 George Washington Birthday Celebration Parade.

3-141 Soldiers



*Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Malcolm McClendon
Texas Military Forces Public Affairs Office*

represent

LAREDO, Texas – Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, 141st Infantry Regiment, Texas Army National Guard, unfurled their flags, shouldered arms, and marched towards Mexico. The Guardsmen, from the unit's color guard, presented the colors in the Washington's Birthday Celebration - International Bridge Ceremony held in Laredo, Texas, Feb. 23, 2013.

The event serves as the “official welcome” between officials and dignitaries from Mexico and the United States by exchanging “abrazos” or embraces, symbolizing goodwill between the two nations. Staff Sgt. Pedro Villarreal, color guard detail non-commissioned officer in charge, considered it an honor to be part of this binational ceremony.

“It’s a great experience to be able to lead a group of VIPs from the United States to meet their counterparts from Mexico in the center of the bridge where the two countries meet,” Villarreal said. “I grew up here and have seen how both countries contribute to each other’s culture. This ceremony allows us to celebrate and embrace that.”

The “abrazos” are exchanged between U.S. and Mexican counterparts on the international bridge, close to where the boundary lies. Mayors from the cities of Laredo, Texas and Nuevo Laredo, Tamps., Mexico, led the exchange, followed by state, federal and military representatives from both countries.

Brig. Gen. Kenneth W. Wisian, Assistant Adjutant General – Air and Commander of the Texas Air National Guard, represented the U.S. Military exchanging his “abrazo” with Mexican General, Antonio Solorzano Ortega. Brig. Gen. Sean A. Ryan, also present, said hosting the gesture on the bridge itself is symbolic of the solidarity between U.S. and Mexican militaries.

“The bridge we’re on is not just a physical structure that connects both countries, it’s also a conduit that allows us to foster relationships with our military counterparts in Mexico,” Ryan said. “I’m proud the Texas National Guard represented the U.S. Military, and that we were able to provide the color guard detail for the ceremony.”

This is the second year Villarreal and his detail supported the event.

“They were so impressed by our performance last year that they asked us out again,” Villarreal said. “It’s a very important occasion, dignitaries from both countries are out there, and all eyes are on us to kick off this event. My detail was proud to not only represent our country but Texas as well.”

The ceremony was followed by the Washington’s Birthday Celebration Parade, wrapping up two-weeks of events celebrating the life of the first president.

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Brigadier General Kenneth W. Wisian, Assistant Texas Adjutant General - Air (right), and General Antonio Solorzano Ortega, representing the Mexican Military, exchange flags at the 2013 International Bridge Ceremony.



Forecasting

for the force

Texas Air National Guard's 209th Weather Flight provides weather planning and forecasting for state and federal missions.

*Story by Staff Sgt. Phil Fountain
149th Fighter Wing Public Affairs Office*



Ten members of the Texas Air National Guard's 209th Weather Flight, based at Camp Mabry, in Austin, conducted training at Camp Swift, near Bastrop, March 2-3, 2013.

The flight is a geographically separated unit of the Texas Air Guard's 149th Fighter Wing, headquartered at Joint Base San Antonio - Lackland, and provides weather planning and forecasting services for state and federal missions.

"We support the [Texas Army National Guard's] 36th Infantry Division, and their subordinate brigades and battalions, but we also do work as part of the Texas Military Forces All-Hazards Plan," said Maj. Paul E. Buschow of Hutto, the flight's commander and the staff weather officer for the division. "We provide the Joint Operations Center with meteorological planning and support, which also includes sending teams downrange to wherever the civil disaster may be."

"It's a unique situation," Major Buschow said. "The Army doesn't have their own weather folks."

Since 9/11, Major Buschow said members of the flight have deployed about every other year in support of Army operations, including service in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

This two-daylong training is being conducted to fulfill quarterly and annual requirements, Major Buschow said. Further, the training is helping prepare members of the flight that are scheduled to deploy to Southwest Asia later this year to support the Texas Army National Guard's 36th Combat Aviation Brigade, which began deploying assets to the region in February.

"We give pilots and command current weather and forecasted weather in the combat environment," said Tech. Sgt. Omar Lopez of San Angelo, one of the flight's weather forecast-

ers and observers. "We do the same thing for hurricane support or any kind of civil emergency."

Among other things, the flight set up a tactical meteorological observing system, and used laser range finders and pocket weather trackers during daytime and nighttime operations.

"This equipment measures all the environmental terrain, all the meteorology that's on the surface of the earth," Major Buschow said. "We have the temperature, dew point,



Staff Sgt. Angel Franco (left) and Tech. Sgt. Omar Lopez, gather and prepare weather reports. Photo by Staff Sgt. Eric Wilson.

Pictured here is a wind vane on a tactical meteorological observing system.



1st Lt. Christopher L. Drye, uses a pocket weather tracker to help forecast weather patterns.



Maj. Paul E. Buschow, commander of the 209th Weather Flight, checks the unit's equipment.

cloud heights, visibility, [and] wind speed direction."

The flight's equipment is rugged and durable, Sergeant Lopez said, and is able to withstand all types of weather, from extreme cold to blistering heat and all forms of precipitation.

"With a little tender, love and care, it will last for a long, long time," Sergeant Lopez said.

The scientific data they provide can

be used to develop a tailored weather report for senior leaders to have when planning missions for air and ground operations in a specific area, Sergeant Lopez said.

"We train with the same equipment that the active duty force trains with," Major Buschow said. "So, we can go shoulder-to-shoulder with our active duty counterparts when we're deployed."

Additionally, the weather career field blends academic challenges in a

bivouac environment.

The typical weather troop has an interest in math and science, as well as the outdoors, they said. Members of the flight have to be ready for anything, and have to be adaptable to meet the Army's requirements and needs.

"Weather is fun," Sergeant Lopez said. "Doing Army support is something different, it's not the typical Air Force job." - **149th FW PAO**



Texas Airmen join annual **BEST WARRIOR COMPETITION**

*Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Phil Fountain
Texas Military Forces Public Affairs Office*

CAMP SWIFT, Texas — The Texas Military Forces hosted the first joint-service “Best Warrior Competition” at the Texas Army National Guard’s Camp Swift, near Bastrop, Texas, Feb. 8-10.

The three-day long competition consisted of numerous events to challenge the Army and Air Guard participants — physically and mentally, said Command Chief Master Sgt. Kevin O’Gorman, with the Texas Air National Guard’s headquarters at Camp Mabry, in Austin.

In recent years, senior leaders have been laying the groundwork for this event to be a joint-service competition, but care has been taken “to ensure it was going to be compatible, a level-playing field,” said O’Gorman.

“For the past two years, we’ve had some of our command chiefs sit on the boards,” O’Gorman said. “This year, we’re fully integrated. We ensured they are in the cadre, and we have eight [Air Guard] competitors running.”



Chief Master Sgt. Denise Jelinski-Hall, Senior Enlisted Leader to the Chief, National Guard Bureau, visits with Sgt. 1st Class Kyle York, a grader at the event.



Chief Master Sgt. Denise Jelinski-Hall, senior enlisted adviser to the chief of the National Guard Bureau, located at the Pentagon in Arlington, Va., was on-hand to view the joint-service activities.

“One of the many benefits that I’m seeing is soldiers and airmen competing side-by-side, getting to know one another,” said Jelinski-Hall. “This is important, so when there’s a state natural disaster, a flood, fire or a tornado, they already know each other.”

The competition’s challenges included: a 6-mile road march; an obstacle course; the use of combat arms; a land navigation exercise; proficiency in various warrior tasks; writing an essay; and appearing before a board that reviewed their personal appearance, military bearing and knowledge.

O’Gorman said the Air Guard members came from “all different backgrounds and specialties.”



Senior Airman Nicholas Martin, a member of the Texas Air National Guard’s 147th Air Support Operations Squadron, 147th Air Reconnaissance Wing, competes for a chance at the title.

For more pictures visit:
<http://flic.kr/s/aHsjDYTz6b>

The Awards Ceremony

*Photos by Staff Sgt. Malcolm McClendon
Texas Military Forces Public Affairs Office*



Texas National Guardsmen, along with family, friends and supporters at the Texas Military Forces Joint Best Warrior Banquet held inside the Texas Military Forces Museum.



Maj. Gen. Joyce L. Stevens (left), Assistant Adjutant General - Army and the Commander, Texas Army National Guard, and Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Milford, Senior Enlisted Leader, Texas Army National Guard, present Spc. Cynthia Chavez with the Texas Adjutant General's Individual Award.



Staff Sgt. Dominic Gonzales (right) and Senior Airman Nicholas Martin with their Texas Military Forces Joint Best Warrior Trophy.



Maj. Gen. Joyce L. Stevens (left), Assistant Adjutant General - Army and the Commander, Texas Army National Guard, and Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Milford, Senior Enlisted Leader, Texas Army National Guard, pose for a picture with all the Army competitors.



Maj. Gen. John F. Nichols (center), The Adjutant General of Texas, and Command Sgt. Maj. Bradley Brandt, Senior Enlisted Leader, Texas Military Forces, pose for a picture with the winners and runners up.



Close up of the Texas Military Forces Joint Best Warrior Trophy.

"So far, we've seen some great competitiveness," O'Gorman said. "We've also started seeing the camaraderie that we knew would foster out of this event. We're all one."

The Texas Air Guard chief's assessment was affirmed by an Army Guard participant.

The joint-service nature "benefits the competitors, because you all come along together," said Spc. Cynthia Chavez, a member of the Texas Army National Guard's 949th Brigade Support Battalion in El Paso. "I've learned a lot from the Air Force that I did not know — we're all 'one fight, one team.' It's motivating."

O'Gorman said he sees the joint-service training continuing to build in the future.

"This is what we want to do, this is more of what we want to showcase in our state," O'Gorman said. "It's the Texas Military Forces theme, that we're all one in the uniform."

- DISPATCH

For more ceremony pictures visit:
<http://flic.kr/s/aHsjEL1ady>

Tech. Sgt. David Escamilla, a member of the Texas Air National Guard's 149th Security Forces Squadron at Joint Base San Antonio - Lackland, competing for a chance at the title.



ERADICATION FROM ABOVE

Texas State Guardsmen team up with State agencies to eradicate rabies

by Staff Sgt Malcolm McClendon

Texas Military Forces Public Affairs Office

ZAPATA, Texas – Members of the Texas State Guard and the Texas Wildlife Services, joined forces with the Texas Department of State Health Services to participate in the Oral Rabies Vaccination Program along the Texas/Mexico Border, Jan. 8-17, 2013.

The annual program drops baited vaccines from an aircraft over high-risk wildlife areas to help control rabies.

“We have been dropping baited vaccines in to reduce rabies in domestic dogs and coyotes in south Texas since 1995, and the gray fox in west Texas since 1996,” said Dr. Ernest Oertli, director ORVP, DSHS.

Oertli states that the number of rabies cases in south Texas has dropped from around 150 cases in 1995 to zero in 2000, and only one known report since then. Similarly in West Texas, 240 cases were reported in 1996, with the number dropping to zero in recent years.

The program’s success hits home for Alamo, Texas resident, Sgt. 1st Class Gary Vanderpool, 3rd Battalion, 1st Regiment, Texas State Guard, who has participated in the program for two years.

“I live about 1.5 miles from the border, pretty much an area where we drop the vaccines,” said Vanderpool. “I was around when a rabies outbreak hit the local community years back.”

Vanderpool remembers hearing about the initiation of ORVP to combat the epidemic.

“I recall seeing the planes flying overhead and dropping baits,” Vanderpool continued. “I had no idea the State Guard was involved and much less that I would someday be up there myself.”

Up in the air, Vanderpool, along with fellow State Guardsmen, 1st Lt. Stephen Walker, Sgt. Joel Hernandez, Sgt. Ignacio Vega and Cpl. Ariel Lim, rotated in two-man crews to help distribute the vaccines.

“One person is the navigator and one person is a baiter,” Vanderpool said. “The navigator helps the pilot watch for hazards such as flocks of birds, wires, or other aircraft. He also keeps watch on the distance of each bait line dropped and relays that information to the baiter. The baiter then takes that info and prepares the proper amount of baits to be dropped accordingly.”

The baits are delivered from as far south as Zapata to the west near Alpine, across a 25-mile wide “barrier zone” every January. Oertli said the cooler weather helps with the effectiveness of the vaccines.

“There are three main reasons we drop in January,” Oertli said. “One, is that food is scarce in the area, so the animals at risk are more likely to come out to eat the bait; two, the

cooler weather helps keep the vaccines viable longer; and three, fire ants. Fire ants are less active in the winter, so less likely to devour the baits.”

Oertli said in addition to the weather, the program’s success is due to the hard work of all the agencies involved, and gave a particular mention to the Texas State Guard.

“The State Guard is a valuable asset to this program,” Oertli continues. “Their flexibility and determination to get the job done, absolutely contributes to the ORVP’s accomplishments. Most of these Soldiers are from the areas affected, so they can see the benefits of their efforts firsthand.”

This success came full circle for Vanderpool.

“I joined the State Guard three years ago, because I wanted to be a Soldier again and serve my community,” Vanderpool said. “Working on ORVP gives me the opportunity to use my soldier skills to plan and execute the mission. The success of my team’s hard work is evident, almost literally, in our own backyard.”

ORVP’s success in south and west Texas, and communities similar to Vanderpool’s has prompted DSHS to begin assessing the possibility of expanding the program in areas in east Texas. ■ **DISPATCH**



Sgt. 1st Class Gary Vanderpool (right) and 1st Lt. Stephen Walker, look over the day's distribution checklist.

"The State Guard is a valuable asset to this program. Their flexibility and determination to get the job done."



Cpl. Paul Petit unloads a bag of bait to be dropped over the South Texas Zapata area. Photo by Laura Lopez.



Cpl. Ariel Lim (right), helps unpack a truck loaded with oral rabies vaccines.



Members of the 3rd Battalion, 1st Regiment, Texas State Guard.



For more on the Texas State Guard visit:
<https://www.facebook.com/TexasStateGuard>



Mobile Kitchen

feeds 500

*Story and photos by Airman Cory Witsaman
136th Airlift Wing Public Affairs*

NAS FORT WORTH JRB, Texas - Members of the 136th Force Support Squadron, Services Flight has been hand-picked by the National Guard Bureau as the fourth unit to acquire a Babington Disaster Relief Mobile Kitchen Trailer (DRMKT) which arrived here, February 22.

The reputation of the 136th Services Flight as upholding high standards of excellence was a deciding factor in the decision to assign the Babington DRMKT here. As a result of receiving this asset they will now be able to rapidly deploy in support of disaster relief.

"This is an asset we are able to use at any time for disaster relief," said Senior Master Sgt. Edward Walden, 136th Force Support Squadron Services Superintendent. "If the governor calls up and says, there is a forest fire here and we needed to feed a thousand people, then we get the call, and we take it."

The trailer is very effective at deploying quickly and includes many features that allow it to stand out from other disaster relief options on the market.

"The Babington DRMKT represents the state of the art in disaster release support and is the most energy efficient product of its kind on the market," said Bill Hague, Senior Military Advisor for Babington Technology.

"Fully loaded with gasoline and water, the trailer is able to drive down to a location and be ready to serve people within 90 minutes," said Walden. What makes the Babington DRMKT so efficient is the technology behind it allowing it to feed more than 500 people per hour.

"Babington airtronic burners are the most fuel efficient, clean combustion burners on the market," said Austin Bachmann, director of sales for Babington Technology, Inc. "The airtronic burners inside the trailer are able to burn any fuel."

The Services Squadron was able to serve food to members of the 136th Airlift Wing Feb. 23, 2013 during a

UTA weekend. Two civilian Babington representatives were present helping with the initial set-up process. Not only were they there to supervise, but to work with the Services Squadron to set up a training program for future use.

"This is true to perishable rations, there is no difference between this and what you would find in a dining facility," said Walden.

The different foods served ranged from pancakes to ribs,



Members of the 136th Airlift Wing line up to get chow.

and was quickly welcomed by the 136th members that happened to spend lunch near the trailer. The capabilities of such an asset is a huge step up from other disaster relief options in the market allowing the Services Squadron such a large variety of foods to cook.

“The difference between the Babington DRMKT and a Single Pallet Expeditionary Kitchen is that a SPEK can only serve heat-to-serve meals,” said Walden. “With the Babington DRMKT we can serve perishable foods such as baked chicken. If you want ribs, we can make ribs, if you want eggs to order, we can make eggs to order.”

The quality of the Babington DRMKT is very clear. What it is able to provide to disaster stricken areas can be life-saving; if the technology the trailer comes equipped with doesn’t immediately uncover its effectiveness in the field, the food itself will convince anyone that happens to take a bite. - **136th AW PAO**



For more on the 136th AW visit:
<https://www.facebook.com/136AW>



Senior Airman Shawna Fowler, engineering and installation journeyman, stands by ready to install fiber-optic cables, as the trenches are dug.

"It will be pretty cool to come back years from now and know that I helped build this camp's communications."



Digging deeper

Texas Air Guardsmen lay foundation for permanent communications at Afghanistan base

*Story by Senior Airman Chris Willis
455th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs*

Camp Marmal, Mazar-E-Sharif, Afghanistan (Feb. 2, 2013) - Most Airmen don't think of communications as the guys who get dirty using shovels and digging ditches.

However, members of the 272nd Engineering and Installation Squadron, based out of LaPort, Texas, are digging the first trenches before laying down the fiber optic backbone for Camp John Pratt in Afghanistan.

The 272nd E&I team are tasked with constructing the communications infrastructure that will be used by thousands of service members and military contractors at military camps near the city of Mazar-e-Sharif.

Currently, there is not a permanent fiber optic setup for Camp John Pratt, a new development located near Camp Marmal. The \$1.7 million engineering project to build the camp has the E&I team building a sustainable structure for running the cable networks.

Installation of fiber optic communications line provides for both secure and non-secure telephones as well as the bandwidth required for web-based logistics systems. The fiber optic network will also allow for the recovery and distribution of line-of-site tactical radio equipment.

"Every tactical communication asset installed in theater helps our troops on ground," said Maj. Ari Jimenez, 272nd Engineering and In-

stallation Squadron officer in charge. "We are helping to keep more soldiers out of harm's way through reliable communications."

Jimenez also serves as the Regional Command-North project manager and lead engineer for 22 projects across northern Afghanistan.

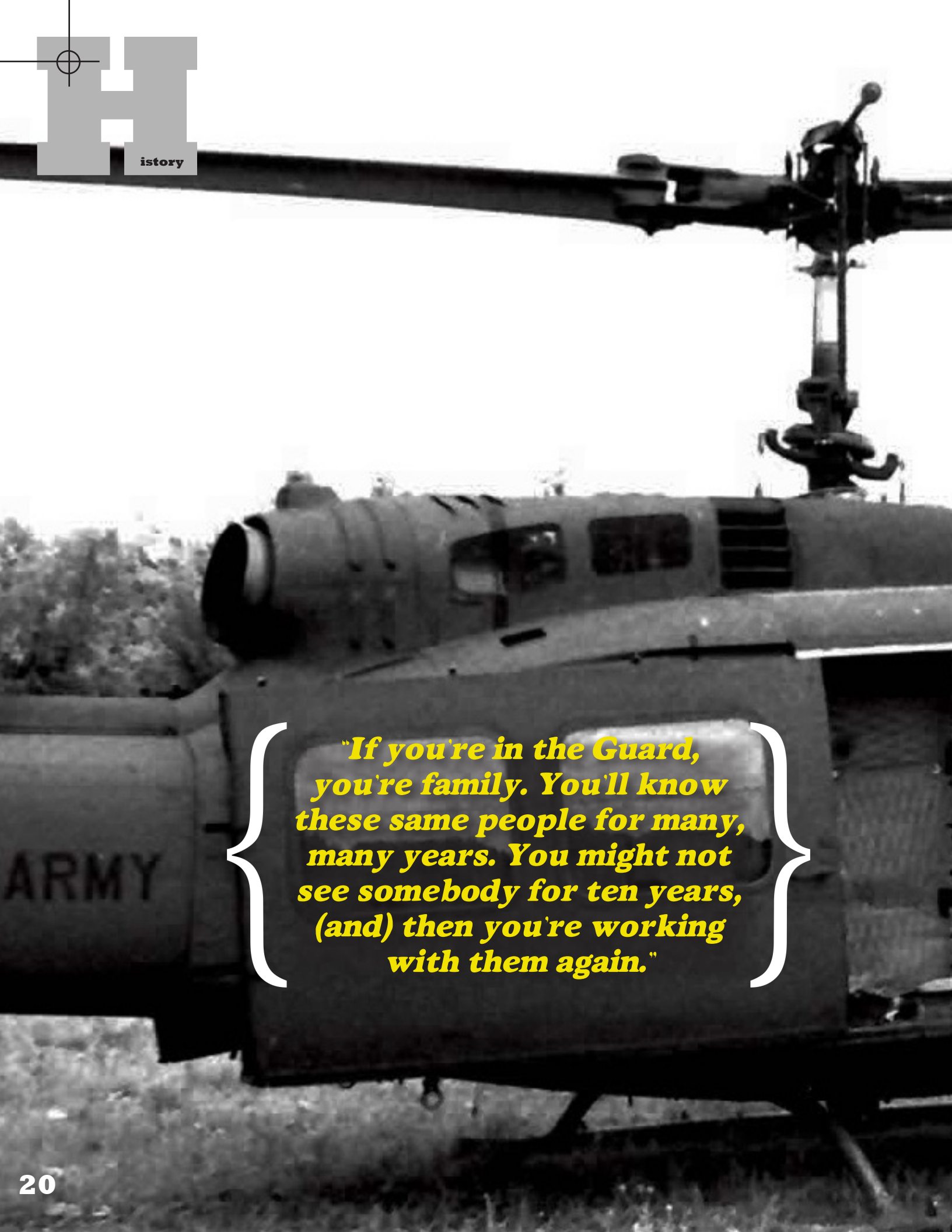
While typical communications Airmen are tasked to fix or update fiber cable problems, the E&I Airmen set the groundwork first.

"We aren't doing the more traditional 'comm' roles like back in the States," said Staff Sgt. Jonathan Baker, 272nd EIS craftsman. "Our job is to get dirty and dig those trenches for the cable infrastructure."

Day in and day out, the E&I team are shoveling and moving dirt to provide the camp's service members the voice lines for strategic communications or the bandwidth to keep in touch with family members back home.

Senior Airman Shawna Fowler, 272nd Engineering and Installation Squadron journeyman, knows the importance of what her team is doing for the future of the Camp.

"It will be pretty cool to come back years from now and know that I helped build this camp's communications," said Fowler, a Houston, Texas, native. "We were the first ones to do it." - **455th AEW PAO**



***"If you're in the Guard,
you're family. You'll know
these same people for many,
many years. You might not
see somebody for ten years,
(and) then you're working
with them again."***

*Story by Staff Sgt. Phil Fountain
Texas Military Forces Public Affairs Office*

Army Aviation Pioneer looks back on career

CAMP MABRY, Texas - The Texas Army National Guard's first female aviator recently retired after more than thirty years of service in the National Guard, achieving the rank of colonel.

Deanne E. "Dea" Lins of Austin was the Army National Guard's first female aviator in three different states - Connecticut, Massachusetts and Texas. During her career, she flew UH-1 Iroquois, also known as Huey, and UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, from the mid-1980s into the late '90s.



During the second half of her career, she held various positions, including service as an airspace management officer on deployments to the South Korea and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Later she served in logistics, personnel and human resources specialties, and deployed to Iraq in support of Operation New Dawn. She concluded her career at the Texas Military Forces' Joint Force Headquarters here.

Lins began her military career through the Reserve Officer Training Corps program at the University of Bridgeport, in Bridgeport, Conn., where she was a distinguished graduate in 1983. After serving in Connecticut, then Massachusetts, Lins joined the Texas Army National Guard in 1986.

She moved to Texas with her husband, Tony, a fellow aviator that was serving in the active-duty Army, she said. At the time, he was stationed at Fort Hood, near Killeen, and then later joined the Texas National Guard.

At one point, they served together in the 49th Aviation Brigade, which later became the 36th Combat Aviation Brigade, headquartered in Austin. Tony, a retired major, concluded his military service as the resource manager for the Texas Army National Guard's 36th Infantry Division, headquartered here.

Lins described her transition to Texas from the Northeast.

"Coming into Texas wasn't hard for me," Lins said. "But I do know it was difficult for some of the men."

There were cultural adjustments that had to be worked through, she said, but added that her fellow pilots were generally welcoming.

"Some of the men were Vietnam era pilots," Lins said. "They were wonderful, [and I] had some wonderful mentors. They took everyone - all the new people - and really tried making them the best they could be."



While proud, Lins downplayed the perception of her being a pioneer.

"I was the first female aviator (in Texas)," she said, but noted that there were two other females working their way into Army aviation at the time, including now Cols. Jeanne (Buschow) Arnold, director of the Texas Military Forces Red Team Support Group here, and Lisa Hines, director of support for the Joint Force here.

She said they all flew during the same period.

From her experience, Lins said some of the greatest hurdles she faced being an early female aviator involved living in field conditions, a challenge she later tackled as a company commander, then as a battalion commander.

"It doesn't really matter which sex you are, both sides have their own issues," Lins said. "How do you balance being close enough to hear and know what's going on in the unit, in an informal chain-of-command way, without having to break modesty?"



Lins found it to be important for all Soldiers to be in close proximity in field conditions, because important discussions can take place and decisions can be made impacting the unit.

“The next day, you might miss a meeting because you didn’t know,” she said. “You didn’t know what was going on.”

As a commander, she worked through these complexities with her noncommissioned officers, some of whom said their spouses had concerns with mixed gender cohabitation. But they found a way to address the issue.



“We set up bivouac when we got home for the Family Day activities,” Lins said. “We set it all up as if we were in the field, with all of the curtains and all the different things that we do. I think that really helped.”

Further, she said she enjoyed building close-knit relationships in the National Guard. Many she has had for decades.

One such relationship is with Col. Patrick M. Hamilton, the adjutant general’s chief of staff, who said he met Lins and her husband two decades ago, when he was an armored cavalry officer assigned to the aviation brigade.

“In the early ‘90s we got to know each other,” Hamilton said. “Dea was a well respected pilot, and she was competent - and everybody liked her.”

Hamilton discussed another barrier Lins broke during her career, when they deployed to Bosnia-Herzegovina

with the 49th Armored Division in support of Operation Joint Forge.

“In 1999, we prepared for and deployed together,” he said. “Dea was on the division staff with me, she was our G3-Air (air battlefield manager), a first (for a female Army Guard officer) that I know of. We were the first Guard division to go and command active duty troops in Bosnia.”

“Everything was on the other foot with them,” Hamilton said of the deployment. “He (Tony) had the kids at home, and Dea and I were deployed together.” Beyond the challenges, Lins said there were many benefits to serving in the National Guard.

Lins said her military service proved to be a stabilizing force in her life, particularly when balancing her life commitments.

“I don’t know if it’s a lot different from anyone else,” Lins said. “Being a mom and having a career in the National Guard, I think is a huge benefit.”

“I didn’t have to suffer much in that career. I could continue that career, in my case almost 32 years,” she said. “I was able to continue a National Guard career all this time.”

“If you’re in the Guard, you’re family,” she said.

“Through the years, you’re going to go in-and-out of each other’s career. You’ll know these same people for many, many years. You might not see somebody for ten years, (and) then you’re working with them again.”

She looked back on an exceptional career with pride.

“I wouldn’t trade a thing,” Lins said. “I wouldn’t trade any of it.” - **DISPATCH**





*Story by Staff Sgt. Phil Fountain
Texas Military Forces Public Affairs Office*

CAMP MABRY, Texas – Senior National Guard leaders are making their voices heard on a new parade ground, in the online auditorium of social media. State and federal military officials have taken to the Internet to send messages directly to their troops and the public.

The Adjutant General of Texas, Air Force Maj. Gen. John F. Nichols, recently launched an official Facebook page, and has been posting behind-the-scenes photographs and informal guidance on a range of issues. He is currently one of six adjutants general to have a registered Facebook page with the National Guard Bureau at the Pentagon, in Arlington, Va.

“The idea is to reach out to our people in another, unique way,” Nichols said. “The vast majority of our service members are younger than 30 [years of age] – and this is a way to reach them in a familiar forum. And many are traditional members of the Guard and can sometimes be hard to regularly reach, by nature of their part-time service.”

This can be a daunting task, particularly for a Guard organization with more than 25,000, actively serving citizen-soldiers and airmen performing disparate missions across a geographically expansive state and in overseas operations.

“In many ways, social media is a modern version of our

traditional office bulletin boards,” he said. “The only difference is the Internet has the ability to reach people almost anywhere in the world.”

For example, the Texas Army National Guard’s 136th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, headquartered in Round Rock, Texas, is currently deployed to Afghanistan as part of Task Force Centurion, and they have been able to share photographs and videos of their soldiers and the positive things they are doing for the nation on their Facebook page.

At the national level, Army Gen. Frank J. Grass, the 27th Chief of the National Guard Bureau, is active on Facebook, as is his senior enlisted adviser, Chief Master Sgt. Denise Jelinski-Hall. Grass is also on Twitter as @ChiefNGB. The adjutant general of Pennsylvania, Army Maj. Gen. Wesley Craig, is also on Twitter as @TAGPNG, the only adjutant general with an NGB-registered account.

Grass and Jelinski-Hall tend to post photographs and comments from events they attend, and give updates on their current activities and projects.

It’s a way for the leaders to interact with service members and the public in a less formal setting.

Facebook and Twitter have been ranked the first and



Major General John F. Nichols

[Like](#)


Government Official

Welcome to the official Facebook of Major General John F. Nichols, the 51st Adjutant General of Texas.

You can also keep up with the Texas Military Forces on Facebook at

[About](#) - [Suggest an Edit](#)



Photos



Likes

Create Page

Now

2013

2011

2009

1999

1994

1990

1983

1981

Started

second most popular social networking sites, respectively, according to an eBizMBA analysis of global Internet traffic, dated March 18, 2013.

“It’s important to actively engage people where they are,” said Rick E. Breitenfeldt, the bureau’s public information branch chief, who advises leadership on developing their social media presence. “It’s the way people are communicating today.”

Beyond typical organization pages, he said it can be helpful for leaders to communicate directly with service members and their families.

“Sometimes, it’s important for the force to hear – in first-person – from the leadership,” Breitenfeldt said. “This way, they are able to share messages they think are important, but also behind-the-scenes items that you typically wouldn’t put on an organizational page.”

Their posts range in formality.

Grass has posted official press statements, as well as informal videos of his testimony before a congressional committee, discussing major issues like the current federal budget sequester.

Jelinski-Hall uploads casual, weekly “Mentorship Mo-

ment” videos, where she has shared advice on issues ranging from resiliency, core values and ethics to money management.

On Twitter, the micro-blogging site that limits posts to 140 characters, Grass has been known to tweet similar messages that he puts onto Facebook, and to “retweet” messages from accounts he follows, such as the National Guard (@USNationalGuard), the Joint Chiefs of Staff’s account (@thejointstaff) and its chairman, Army Gen. Martin Dempsey (@Martin_Dempsey). Craig of Pennsylvania’s activity on Twitter is very similar.

Additionally, the National Guard’s senior ranking officer frequently uses the hashtag #NationalGuard in his messages, which allows Twitter users to quickly find all posts with that term included.

The use of unique hashtags can be helpful in aggregating information during a crisis or emergency management situation, said Breitenfeldt. It also helps you reach the group of people that would be most interested in hearing your message.

“Hurricane Sandy is a prime example,” Breitenfeldt said. “We operated on high-tempo for an 18-day, straight period of time.”

Breitenfeldt said they used not only #NationalGuard, but also other unique hashtags, including #Sandy, to get word

out about the National Guard response to that hurricane last fall.

Beyond sharing information, the effective use of social media for leaders is about finding ways to make connections and share personal insights, Breitenfeldt said.

To date, one of the Texas Adjutant General's most popular posts was about leaders taking calculated risks.

"Don't be afraid of failure – it means you're trying," Nichols posted, March 19, 2013. "If leaders are afraid to make mistakes, we won't improve as an organization. Do the risk analysis; assess the variables; but be prepared to underwrite the mistakes of your people and take responsibility for them."

Social media has the ability to spread a message exponentially.

Nearly 50 people "liked" Nichols' post and it has been shared numerous times, which Facebook reports has been seen by nearly 850 people, more than three times the number of people that currently follow the general's page.

Among those who "liked" and commented on the post, in his personal capacity, was Air Force Staff Sgt. David Porcelle, a noncommissioned officer assigned to the Texas Military Forces' Joint Operations Center in Austin, Texas. He wrote, "Sir, a great philosophy... I make mistakes all

the time; rarely the same ones twice," and included an emoticon forming a smiling face.

Porcelle said he first discovered the senior Texas leader's page when "someone I know 'liked' a comment made by Maj. Gen. Nichols, and that [activity] showed up in my timeline."

He said he follows numerous senior leader and organizational pages, and thinks they are helpful with getting information to a broad cross-section of people, including those who've deployed, transferred to new units or retired.

"Social media's another tool in the box to get instant feedback from every angle and echelon," he said. "It's a useful adjunct to more formal means and direct contact."

This can be invaluable during those times of disaster, when messages need to get out quickly, in real time.

Breitenfeldt said there was a social media multiplier effect in relation to National Guard's response to Hurricane Sandy, particularly through their follower's sharing and commenting on the National Guard's posts.

"We posted 35 stories on our website that received 17,000 hits," Breitenfeldt said. "But on Facebook, we posted a fraction of the stories, and they were seen a half a million times. On YouTube [a social media video sharing site], our videos received 1.5 million views and were shown on

"like" your Texas Military Forces Leaders

 - <https://www.facebook.com/MajorGeneralJohnFNichols>

 - <https://www.facebook.com/MajorGeneralWilliamLenSmith>

 - <https://www.facebook.com/MG.Manuel.Rodriguez>

also like

 - <https://www.facebook.com/TexasMilitaryForces>

major networks.”

This type of capability can be powerful, particularly in a state the size of Texas, which can face a myriad of disasters, potentially at the same time, including: hurricanes; tornadoes; wildfires; and even blizzards.

In addition to Nichols, other senior Texas Guard officers on Facebook include: Maj. Gen. Joyce L. Stevens, assistant adjutant general – Army and commander of the Texas Army National Guard, Maj. Gen. Manuel Rodriguez, commander of the state-based, volunteer Texas State Guard, and Brig. Gen. William L. Smith, commander of domestic operations.

“With our armories and air wings spread across the state, and units and personnel mobilized around the globe, social media can be a powerful tool to quickly send a message,” Nichols said. “Additionally, I enjoy hearing directly from our Soldiers and Airmen – getting their feedback.”

While the senior Texas general is still new to the online

community, he said he wants to use the platform to talk about more than just himself and his activities.

“I look forward to helping get the word out about the great things we’re doing, [as] a military organization with our inter-agency partners, for the state and nation,” Nichols said. ■ **DISPATCH**



State Family Programs is reaching out

Stay up to date on all the events going on for your Service Members and Families. State Family Program provides you many ways to stay informed.



FACEBOOK

We have had our Facebook page for almost three years. We are happy to see so many people 'Like' our page! We often use this site to advertise future events, inform Families of available benefits, and showcase the good things happening here at State Family Programs.

'Like' us at: TXMF State Family Program.

TXMF State Family Programs Facebook:
<http://goo.gl/ppEQj>

WEBSITE

We have a Website! This is a one-stop shop to see our event calendar, Newsletters, or available resources. You'll also find information on other programs under Family Support Services such as Strong Bonds, Yellow Ribbon, Resiliency, and other Soldier support services. Log on and browse around:

TXMF State Family Programs website:
<http://www.txfss.com/statefamilyprogram.html>

SFP RESOURCE GUIDES

This is a compact "red resource guide" with many of the basic re-sources you may need. You'll find a listing of the sections under Family Support Services, our Family Assistance Center locations, and contact information for other programs assisting with finances, childcare, education and employment. See your Brigade Family Readiness Team to request some for your unit.



youth programs

If your child isn't already signed up to be part of the youth program, now's the time to sign up! There are so many great things coming this year and you will not want to miss out!

Contact one of our Youth Coordinators to find out how to sign up and receive updates on what's going on for our Military Youth.

Robert Hankins
Child & Youth Program Director
512-782-1231
Robert.b.hankins5.ctr@mail.mil

Amanda Del Prado
Child & Youth Program Coordinator
512-782-1268
Amanda.l.delprado.ctr@mail.mil

Brandon Savoy
Child & Youth Program Coordinator
512-782-1245
Brandon.j.savoy.ctr@us.army.mil



Financial Planning

Are you beginning to worry about paying for your summer vacation or you're going to get your kids ready for school? Worried about the upcoming holidays and how you'll get through them?

Worry no more; contact your Joint Family Support Assistance Program (JFSAP) Personal Finance Consultant.

This program provides financial counseling services to help you and your family manage your finances, resolve financial problems, and reach long-term goals such as getting an education, buying a home, and planning for retirement.

With the help of our financial expert, you can take control of your finances, reduce money-related stress, and overcome the financial challenges of military life.

Financial counseling services are available to military Service Members and their Families and are free, anonymous, and confidential.

- FRG Leaders- Are you struggling at finding the topic for your next FRG meeting?
- Commanders- would you like to hold a briefing on Financial Management?

Steve is available to come to you. Simply call or email him and he will be there. He is available for individual counseling as well as group trainings.

Steve Schramka 512-230-2130
Pfc.texas@gmail.com

United Through Reading

United Through Reading is a wonderful program linking a child and their Service Member during a deployment.

This program is specially offered for all deploying Service Members and available at all #2 Yellow Ribbon events. If you would like to record your book before the Yellow Ribbon event we are offering three locations by appointment:

Ellington Field- Houston
512-782-3929

Camp Mabry- Austin
512-782-6043

71BFSB Armory- San Antonio
512-782-3416

If your battalion is gearing for deployment we encourage you to speak with your Brigade Family Readiness team to learn how you can get this at your location for drill weekend. It only takes 20 minutes and you will walk away with a CD recording of you and

the book to send to your loved one.

The impact the videos have on children is amazing. Not only do they get to see their parent every day; but it also helps ease the transition of deployment and reunion.

United Through Reading is offered throughout the US and through some USO's. If you're deploying, we encourage you to take advantage of this wonderful program. You'll take away a long lasting memory for someone special.



NATIONAL GUARD

JOB CONNECTION EDUCATION PROGRAM

Job Connection Education Program- JCEP

Employment Services for National Guardsmen

An accelerated work-readiness course designed to provide Army National Guard members returning from deployment with relevant and timely employability training and job-placement assistance.

Offered by the Army National Guard, JCEP provides targeted training and job-search services that will help participants identify transferable skills, target relevant opportunities, secure and succeed in gainful employment in the workforce. A skilled business advisor will assist participants in obtaining employment.

To learn more about the program or enroll log on to: <http://jcep.info/default.html>

Click to see a video on these and more services available at TXMF State Family Programs:
<http://youtu.be/-vQACyVOgs>

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= RESPECT**

THE **ISPATCH**

2ND QTR 2013

THE MAGAZINE OF THE TEXAS MILITARY FORCES

SPC Adam Best
masters the mystery event

**Region V
Best Warrior
Competition**
Soldiers from 7 states compete



THE DISPATCH

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On the Cover



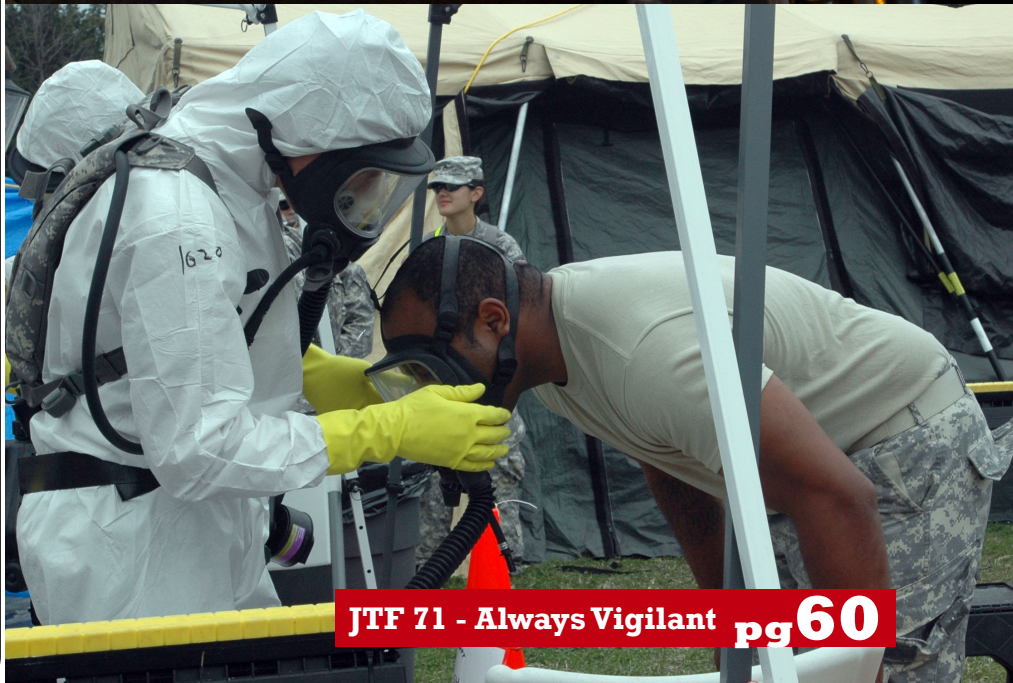
Spc. Adam Best, Operations Co., 36th Infantry Division, Texas Army National Guard, carries a casualty training dummy to safety at the mystery event portion of the NGB Region V Best Warrior Competition held at Camp Swift, Texas, May 7 - 9, 2013. Soldiers from Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas competed in this year's competition. Winners of the event will move forward to compete against other regions for the NGB title. (Texas National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Malcolm McClendon).



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Mine Blowers **pg 50**



JTF 71 - Always Vigilant **pg 60**



Before you hit the open road, check your gear **pg 68**



**Operation Hero Homecoming
Camp Mabry Open House**

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Gov. Rick Perry



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Maj. Gen. John F. Nichols

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141ST INFANTRY REGIMENT ADDS TO ITS LEGACY

*Story and photo by Capt. Adam Musil
36th Inf. Div. Public Affairs Office*

AUSTIN, Texas - The lineage of the 141st Infantry Regiment has been rewritten. After five years of research and approval processes, the Center of Military History has officially recognized the establishment of the 141st Infantry Regiment to be Feb. 18, 1823. As a result, the unit is authorized an additional 27 campaign streamers and cements its legacy as the longest serving unit in the Texas Army National Guard.

The unit's origins, dating back to the Texas Revolution as the First Texas Infantry Regiment, were lost when it was reorganized for deployment in 1917. Since that time, there have been efforts by the unit and the Texas Army National Guard to restore the history of the unit, but it was five years of research from two former 141st Inf. Reg. Soldiers, retired Col. Alan Huffines and 36th Infantry Division historian, Lt. Col. Enrique Villarreal, that linked the 141st with the First Texas Infantry Battalion.

"After going through the state archives, old Adjutant General reports and searching the Internet, we put together



the history and submitted to the Center of Military History. The Center of Military History questioned everything. The whole process was like writing a dissertation,” said Lt. Col. Villarreal.

The last remaining units of the 141st Inf. Div. are 1st Battalion, 141st Inf. Reg. headquartered in San Antonio and 3rd Battalion, 141st Inf. Reg. headquartered in Weslaco, Texas. Both units help comprise the 72nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 36th Infantry Division. The additional streamers bring the Regiment’s total to 47 Campaign Streamers, far eclipsing any unit in the Texas National Guard.

“The colors have always been the icon of a military unit,” said Col. Greg Barrow, commander, 72nd Infantry Brigade. “And when you have the colors that represent the rich tradition of service and sacrifice that the 141st now has, it helps motivate the Soldiers about their organization helps carry them forward.”

Staff Sgt. Christopher Stitton, Supply Sergeant, A Company, 3rd Battalion, deployed with the 72nd Infantry Brigade to Iraq in 2010. His unit is expected to receive a campaign streamer for the Iraq war sometime in the future.

“Years from now, I would hope that my children or the people that I’m around will also understand the importance of the Campaign Streamers. It’s not just me who is now part of this legacy, but they are as well,” said Stitton.

Sentiments similar to those of Staff Sgt. Stitton are what drove Lt. Col. Villarreal to turn his curiosity for history into his passion. “I remember when I first arrived to the 141st and looking at the lineage certificate hanging on the wall. I began wondering about the history of the unit, but more so about those who served,” Lt. Col. Villarreal said.

Emboldened by his success in the approval of the streamers, Lt. Col. Villarreal is looking into his next research project as he continues to promote the awareness of unit lineage across the 36th Infantry Division.

“I think we owe it to all those soldiers that came before us to honor the legacy and what they fought for,” Lt. Col. Villarreal said. “Historical research also provides a personal connection with the current soldiers. It helps them understand that their name may not be on the certificate, but they were all a part of it. They were all a part of something bigger than themselves.” - **36th ID PAO**



For more on the 36th Infantry Div. visit:
<https://www.facebook.com/36inf>



Camp Mabry opens its doors

Story by Sgt. Suzanne Carter
100th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment





Camp Mabry from the air.
Photo by Staff Sgt. Suzanne Ringle

Above left:
Parachute demonstration by the
Texas National Guard Parachute
Demo Team. Photo by Spc. Andrew
Oeffinger

Above center:
Soldiers from the Living History De-
tachment of 36th Infantry Division
call for support fire during a World
War II reenactment. Photo by Spc.
Andrew Oeffinger

Above right:
Soldiers from the Living History De-
tachment of 36th Infantry Division
at the World War II reenactment.
Photo by Spc. Andrew Oeffinger

The sun shone bright across the parade field as the Texas Military Forces welcomed current and former service members, their families, and the community to attend the annual Open House featuring the American Heroes Air Show, here, April 20-21, 2013.

The two-day military expo featured a variety of events intended to pay tribute to veterans, engage service members with the community and foster a spirit of patriotism.

"This was so encouraging today," said Estelle Coffey, an Austin-native attending the open house with her husband, retired Army Col. William Coffey. "It kind of brings you back to patriotism, you know. You look out there and with all of what's going on like in Boston, we need patriotism. We need people to remember who we are."

"This Camp Mabry is the bright spot of Austin," William said, remembering when he enlisted on the post in 1940. "It's a spot that is always in order and provides a place for people to gather ... to keep the spirit of the military."

A main attraction that drew the biggest crowd on Saturday was a reenactment of the Battle of Montelimar, a battle that found the 36th Infantry Division chasing the German Army during its retreat up the Rhone River in August 1944.

"It was a good reenactment of history," said Devin Zapata, 13, of Austin who attended the event with his dad, Sgt. 1st Class Jose Zapata. "It actually taught me a lot about our weapons ... It's a good way to show people how the Soldiers lived their life instead of just how we live our life in the city."

Other reenactments included living history camps set up to recreate life for Soldiers in the Texas Revolution and Civil War periods, including Buffalo Soldiers of Co. A 9th Cavalry from Camp Mabry. Reenactors demonstrated weapons used during the Civil War and invited spectators to take

part in history by holding and firing black powder reenactment loads from the antique weaponry.

The Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall, a 3/5-scale reproduction of the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, DC, drew visitors who wished to pay respect to fallen heroes and who wanted to search for familiar names. Jess Lofgreen of Austin, a 25-year veteran who participated in 295 combat missions in Vietnam, searched for his roommate's name.

"It's nice to come and look on those people who you knew personally or you knew of that made the ultimate sacrifice during the Vietnam conflict," Lofgreen said. "It's just comforting, yet difficult, to go back to that time period."

Service members from 16 countries, to include Haiti, Nigeria, Mexico and China, took the oath of citizenship in front of the memorial during a naturalization ceremony, which took place Saturday morning.

Another favorite attraction of the weekend was a military helicopter demonstration during which a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter pursued a speeding vehicle across the parade field. The chopper simulated disabling the vehicle from the air before Soldiers rappelled from the aircraft and captured the fugitives inside.

"Definitely the helicopters were my favorite," said James Burden of Austin, who brought his daughter and her friend to show service members they care. "Everything, the support of the troops and all the activities that they do for the families, it's just a lot of fun."

A parachute team and K-9 search and rescue team also demonstrated their skills and expertise at the parade field on Saturday.

The open house featured static helicopter displays and interactive booths from civilian first responders and law enforcement agencies throughout the Austin-area, as well as, information booths for service member support organizations, face-painting and food vendors.

"I think it's pretty cool," Lindsey Mabry of Austin said about her experience at the open house. "It's awesome to see all the troops out here. The support is amazing... It's just good to see that people care about what they're doing for you." - **100th MPAD**



Vietnam Wall Traveling Memorial.
Photo by Spc. Andrew Oeffinger.

Below from left to right:
A U.S. Air Force veteran at the Texas
Military Forces Open House. Photo by
Spc. Andrew Oeffinger.

Service members from 16 countries,
to include Haiti, Nigeria, Mexico and
China, take the oath of citizenship
during a naturalization ceremony.
Photo by Staff Sgt. Phil Fountain.

A Travis County Sheriff Department
K-9 team demonstrates the K-9's
obedience and strength capabilities.
Photo by Spc. Andrew Oeffinger.

Soldiers from the Texas Army National
Guard use a technique known as "fast
roping" to exit a UH-60 Blackhawk.
Photo by Spc. Andrew Oeffinger.





“It’s nice to come and look on those people who you knew personally or you knew of that made the ultimate sacrifice during the Vietnam conflict. It’s just comforting, yet difficult, to go back to that time period.”

For more pictures visit:
<http://flic.kr/s/aHsjEVrXS8>





Region **V** Best Warrior

*Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Malcolm McClendon
Texas Military Forces Public Affairs Office*

With flags in hand and supporters close by, 14 Soldiers ran to the finish line to end the eight-mile road march. Army National Guardsmen from Arkansas, Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Nebraska, and Texas competed in this year's NGB Region V Best Warrior competition held at Camp Swift near Bastrop, Texas, May 7 – 9, 2013.

The competitors consisted of the overall noncommissioned officer and junior enlisted winners from each state's respective competitions. Texas Army National Guard Senior Enlisted Advisor, Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Milford, said these Soldiers are Regions V's finest.

Sgt. Stephen Levins, Kansas Army National Guard

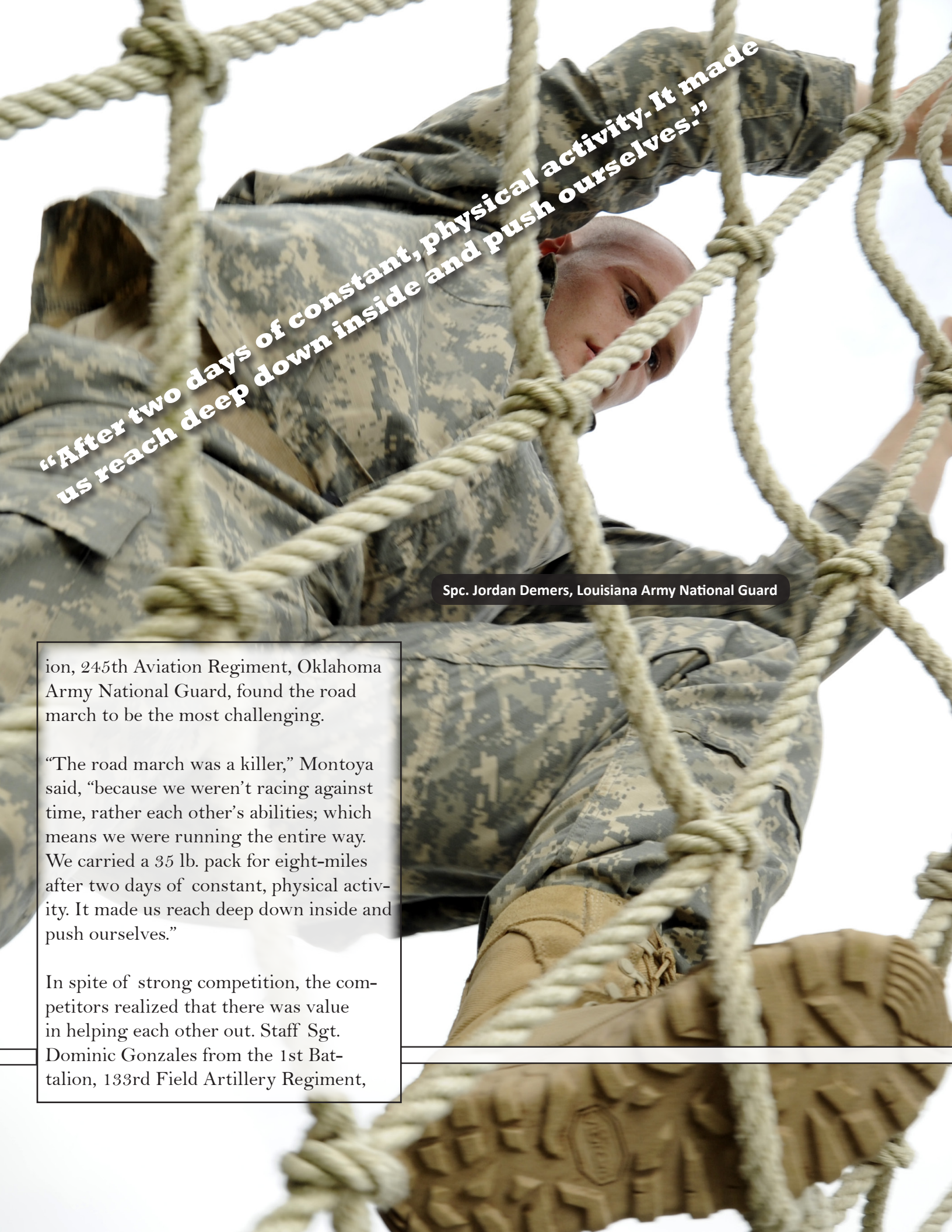
"The Soldiers here have separated themselves as the best of the best."

"The Soldiers here have won home unit and state competitions, and separated themselves as the best of the best," Milford said. "They have demonstrated not only that they are physically fit, but that they are proficient at crucial Soldier skills."

The competition at Camp Swift called for the Soldiers to demonstrate their combat lifesaving, land navigation, marksmanship, and other warrior-tasks skills. Additionally, they had an appearance board, where they were tested on Army knowledge, and wrote an essay on how they, as a leader, can help prevent suicide.

Sgt. Steven Montoya from the 1st Batta

Staff Sgt. Derick Moudy, Missouri Army National Guard



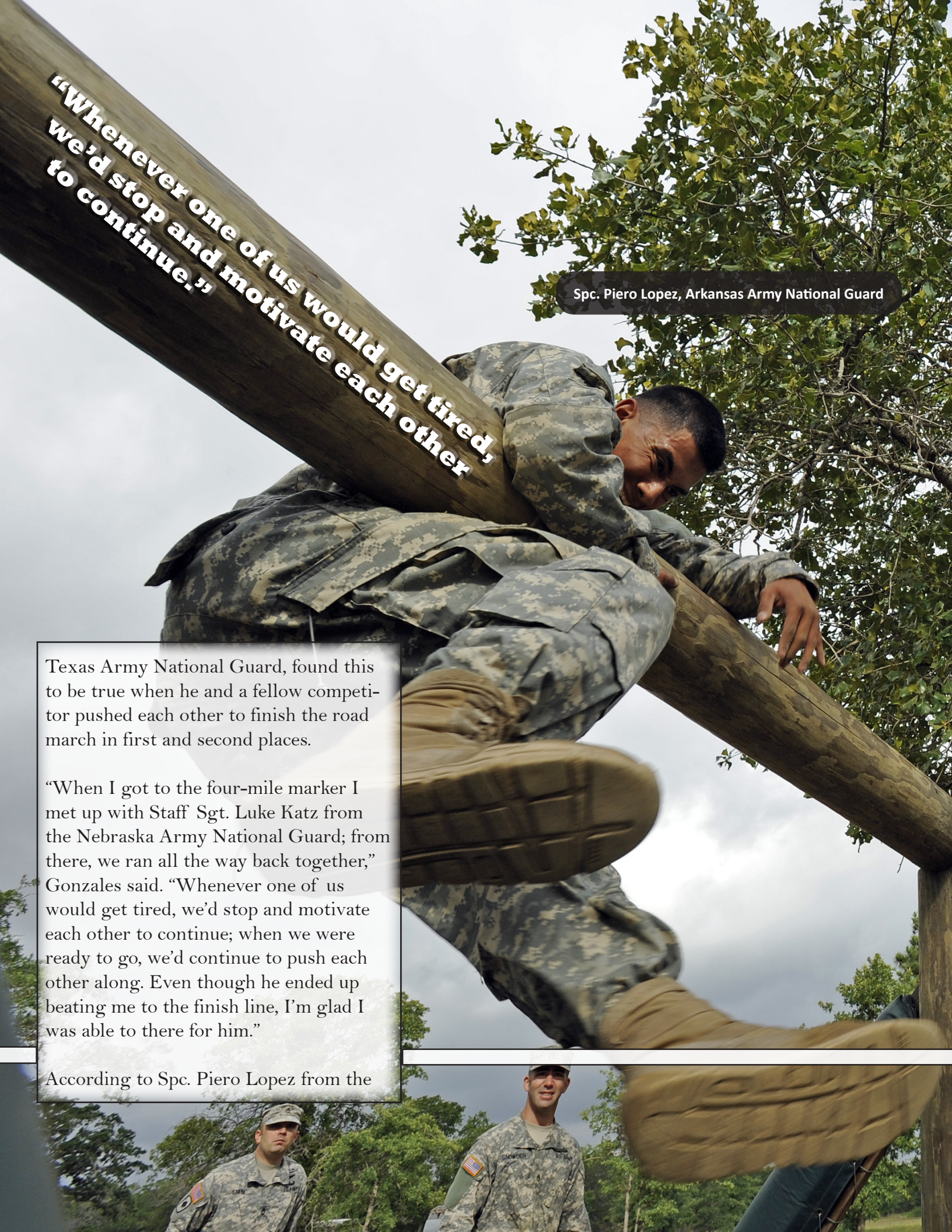
“After two days of constant, physical activity. It made us reach deep down inside and push ourselves.”

Spc. Jordan Demers, Louisiana Army National Guard

ion, 245th Aviation Regiment, Oklahoma Army National Guard, found the road march to be the most challenging.

“The road march was a killer,” Montoya said, “because we weren’t racing against time, rather each other’s abilities; which means we were running the entire way. We carried a 35 lb. pack for eight-miles after two days of constant, physical activity. It made us reach deep down inside and push ourselves.”

In spite of strong competition, the competitors realized that there was value in helping each other out. Staff Sgt. Dominic Gonzales from the 1st Battalion, 133rd Field Artillery Regiment,



Spc. Piero Lopez, Arkansas Army National Guard

Texas Army National Guard, found this to be true when he and a fellow competitor pushed each other to finish the road march in first and second places.

“When I got to the four-mile marker I met up with Staff Sgt. Luke Katz from the Nebraska Army National Guard; from there, we ran all the way back together,” Gonzales said. “Whenever one of us would get tired, we’d stop and motivate each other to continue; when we were ready to go, we’d continue to push each other along. Even though he ended up beating me to the finish line, I’m glad I was able to there for him.”

According to Spc. Piero Lopez from the

“From these struggles and triumphs, you are able to develop great friendships and a foster that ‘esprit de corps’ that being in the Army is all about.”

39th Infantry Combat Team, Arkansas Army National Guard, teamwork at competitions like these bring Soldiers closer together.

“At first you size each other up, because they’re your competitors,” Lopez said. “However, after you begin facing the same challenges you realize that these are your fellow Soldiers, your brothers-in-arms. From these struggles and triumphs, you are able to develop great friendships and a foster that ‘esprit de corps’ that being in the Army is all about.”

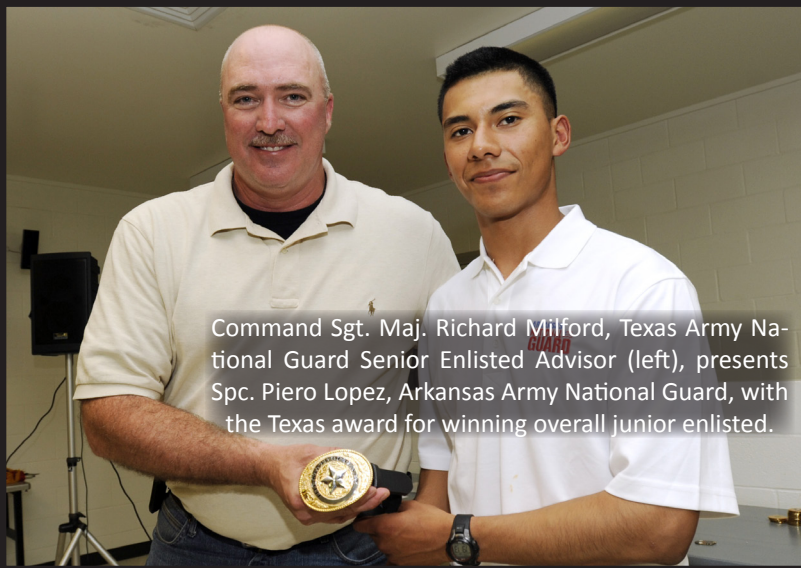
At competition’s end, Lopez and Gonzales were voted overall junior enlisted and NCO winners, respectively. They will move forward to represent Region V at the NGB level Best Warrior Competition to be hosted by the Arkansas Army National Guard in July. - **DISPATCH**

Spc. Adam Best, Texas Army National Guard

For more photos visit:
<http://flic.kr/s/aHsjF5xw2r>

The Awards Ceremony

*Photos by Staff Sgt. Malcolm McClendon
Texas Military Forces Public Affairs Office*



Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Milford, Texas Army National Guard Senior Enlisted Advisor (left), presents Spc. Piero Lopez, Arkansas Army National Guard, with the Texas award for winning overall junior enlisted.



Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Milford, Texas Army National Guard Senior Enlisted Advisor (left), congratulates Staff Sgt. Dominic Gonzales, Texas Army National Guard, for winning overall NCO.



Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Milford, Texas Army National Guard Senior Enlisted Advisor (left), congratulates Spc. Adam Best, Texas Army National Guard, for winning runner up junior enlisted.



Fellow NCO competitors congratulate Staff Sgt. Dominic Gonzales for winning overall NCO.

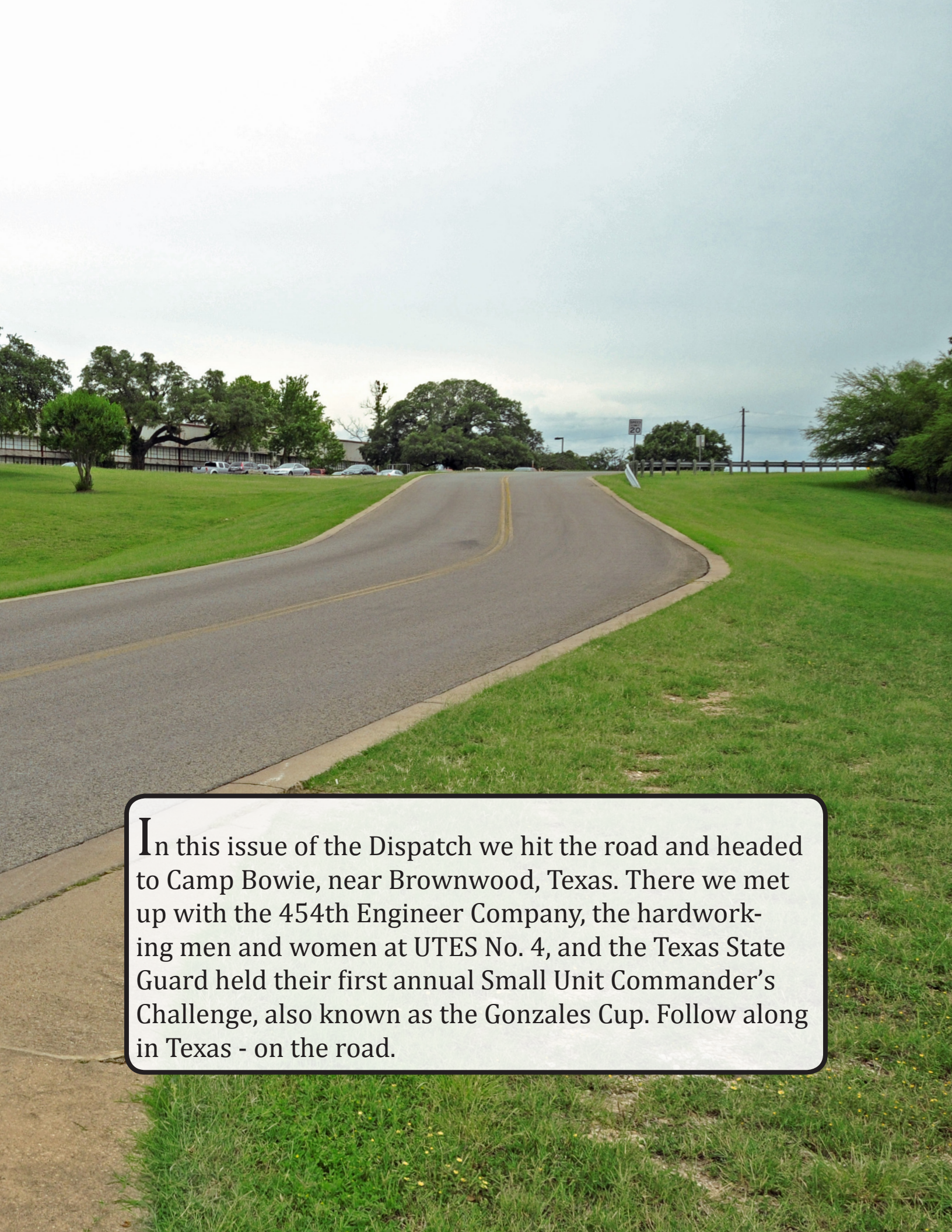


Maj. Gen. John F. Nichols, the Adjutant General of Texas, takes a moment to congratulate all junior enlisted competitors.



Maj. Gen. John F. Nichols (center), the Adjutant General of Texas, and Command Sgt. Maj. Bradley Brandt, Senior Enlisted Leader, Texas Military Forces, pose for a picture with the winners.





In this issue of the Dispatch we hit the road and headed to Camp Bowie, near Brownwood, Texas. There we met up with the 454th Engineer Company, the hardworking men and women at UTES No. 4, and the Texas State Guard held their first annual Small Unit Commander's Challenge, also known as the Gonzales Cup. Follow along in Texas - on the road.



Gonzales Cup

Texas State Guardsmen compete in the Small Unit Commander's Challenge and a chance to get their hands on the Gonzales Cup.

*Story and photos by
Texas State Guard Public Affairs Office*



Members of the 19th Regiment's winning team

Six members of the Texas State Guard's 19th Regiment, headquartered in Dallas, won the first annual Gonzales Cup. Named for the Battle of Gonzales, the two-day event took place at Camp Bowie, TX, June 6 – 9, 2013.

Texas State Guardsmen from across the state participated in the event and demonstrated their best skills in a number of individual and team tasks.

According to Maj. Kevin Lilly, officer-in-charge of the event, the intent was to create a physically and mentally demanding exercise.

"The Commanders Challenge was designed to provide a competitive training exercise for our soldiers, incorporating our Mission Essential Tasks into a series of field training scenarios," Lilly said. "Additionally, we wanted to promote esprit-de-corps, unit cohesion, team bonding."

All tasks were graded to U.S. Army standards and included a combat lifesaver/first aid skills evaluation, the Army physical fitness test, marksmanship, and radiotelephone operator procedures.

Col. Robert Hastings, commanding officer of the 19th Regiment, was impressed by the competitors' performance.

"I am very proud of this team of highly skilled and motivated



Photos: Texas State Guardsmen from the 19th Regiment compete in various events for the title.



Guardsmen,” Hastings said. “They went after this challenge with vigor. They studied, they trained, they rehearsed, and they won.”

Led by Master Sgt. Mark Sligar, the 19th Regiment’s winning team, consisted of Sgt. Ken Clayton, Sgt. Ronnie Littles, Cpl. Brian Nail, Pfc. Samuel Lopez, and Pfc. Robert Marlin. Additionally, Clayton was recognized for achieving the highest individual score in the competition. **- TEXAS ON THE ROAD**



For more on TXSG's 19th Regiment visit:
<https://www.facebook.com/19Regiment>

Engineers clear the way

Engineers from the 454th prepare for upcoming deployment

*Story and photos by Ms. Laura Lopez
Texas Military Forces Public Affairs Office*

CAMP BOWIE, Texas (June 18, 2013) – As National Guard Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen gear up for their required annual training, the men and women assigned to the 454th Engineer Company, 111th Engineer Battalion, Texas Army National Guard (TXARNG), spent time at Camp Bowie in Brownwood, Texas, preparing for a route clearance mission in Afghanistan, where they're slated to deploy early next year.

The three-week annual training included learning about the different mine-resistant, ambush-protected (MRAP) vehicles, obtaining the appropriate and necessary licenses, undergoing multiple safety briefings and spending time in a newly built Virtual Clearance Training Suite (VCTS). The training also included four-to-five hour, full route clearance practice missions, June 17-18, 2013, with different targeted areas of interest set as close to theatre conditions as able to be replicated forcing Soldiers to move beyond computerized simulators and learn more than just the different convoy configurations.

"These training missions really drive home what these Soldiers are going out there to do," said



A Husky tactical support vehicle leads the route clearance convoy during a practice-training mission.

Capt. Kenneth Sweet, Commander, 454th Engineer Company, 111th Engineer Battalion, Texas Army National Guard. "These Soldiers are going out there to find explosive hazards so that vehicles that are not designed for that don't find them."

Just one of a handful of route clearance mission teams within the National Guard and the only one within the TXARNG, training and readiness remain at the forefront of the minds of commanders who will lead them, potentially into harm's way. A first deployment for about 50 percent of the Soldiers, the company's executive officer believes that having the resources and equipment readily available for them to train with is essential.

"Just getting their hands on a Buffalo (mine-protected vehicle) and driving a Husky (tactical support vehicle) and stuff of that nature is an experience many of these guys have never done before," said 1st Lt. Corey Ebert, 454th Engineer Company, 111th Engineer Battalion, Texas Army National Guard.

A multifaceted mission that provides the rest of the forces the





ability to move freely around the battlefield, one Soldier from San Angelo, Texas, working with the counter improvised explosive device integration cell planting the land mine simulators and roadside bombs for each practice-training mission received an eye-opening experience.

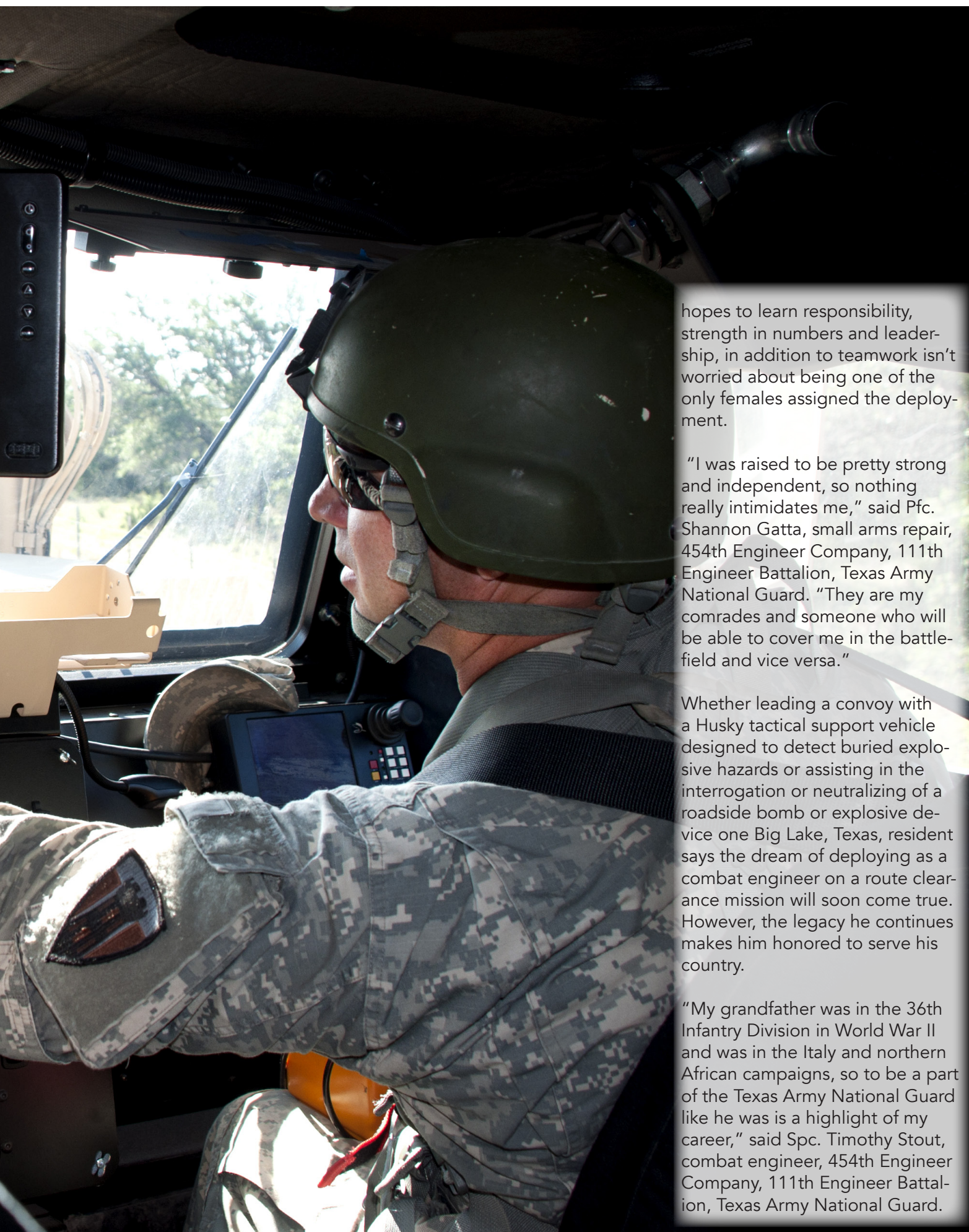
"Working with them places the shoe on the other foot and allows one to see what the enemy does and why," said Spc. Joshua Morris, construction equipment mechanic, 454th Engineer Company, 111th Engineer Battalion, Texas Army National Guard. "It's kind of interesting knowing they (my fellow Soldiers) are going to get hit, but at the same time you want it to happen so they can learn that muscle memory of going through the motions here, rather than over there."

Focused on working as a team to successfully accomplish the task at hand, members of the engineer company were given a variety of different scenarios in which a roadside bomb or explosive device found them, as a means to force them to determine and discuss the best way to react to the situation. Additionally, commanders ended each scenario with a follow-up mission like a key leader engagement or the establishment traffic control points to further enhance their skill arsenal.

A resident of Dallas, Texas, who



Combat engineers, Spc. David Salazar, left, and Sgt. Clark Turner, discuss the location of a potential roadside bomb discovered during a practice route clearance mission.



hopes to learn responsibility, strength in numbers and leadership, in addition to teamwork isn't worried about being one of the only females assigned the deployment.

"I was raised to be pretty strong and independent, so nothing really intimidates me," said Pfc. Shannon Gatta, small arms repair, 454th Engineer Company, 111th Engineer Battalion, Texas Army National Guard. "They are my comrades and someone who will be able to cover me in the battlefield and vice versa."

Whether leading a convoy with a Husky tactical support vehicle designed to detect buried explosive hazards or assisting in the interrogation or neutralizing of a roadside bomb or explosive device one Big Lake, Texas, resident says the dream of deploying as a combat engineer on a route clearance mission will soon come true. However, the legacy he continues makes him honored to serve his country.

"My grandfather was in the 36th Infantry Division in World War II and was in the Italy and northern African campaigns, so to be a part of the Texas Army National Guard like he was is a highlight of my career," said Spc. Timothy Stout, combat engineer, 454th Engineer Company, 111th Engineer Battalion, Texas Army National Guard.



As citizen-Soldiers from a diverse range of professions, this San Angelo, Texas, based engineer company is honored to be one of last major combat deployments in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) for the TXARNG in the foreseeable future and hope that the residents will come together, support the Soldiers and their families, while understanding more about the missions and roles of the National Guard.

"This deployment (and all others) prove to everyone that the National Guard is not just something that can be used here at home or just used in the state of Texas; they are multifaceted, wear more than one hat and are a recognizable force to provide our active duty counterparts," said Ebert.

The 454th Engineer Company will continue to train at various locations in Texas to include Fort Bliss in El Paso, before their scheduled deployment to Afghanistan in early 2014. - **TEXAS ON THE ROAD**

The air digger of a Buffalo mine-protected vehicle, interrogates a potential roadside bomb discovered during a practice route clearance mission.



To follow the 454th Eng. Co. visit:
<http://goo.gl/TuIFE>



Maintaining the fleet

The mechanics at UTES No. 4 work to make sure Texas National Guard units have ready vehicles

*Story by Staff Sgt. Jennifer Atkinson
Texas Military Forces Public Affairs Office*



CAMP BOWIE, Texas-- After more than a decade of war and disaster response, equipment can wear out, change hands and be replaced during a constant cycle of training, use and maintenance.

For the Texas Military Forces (TXMF), Unit Training Equipment Sites (UTES) are a place units and leadership can turn to for help with effective equipment use, mechanical support and repair.

More than a simple repair shop, “the UTES have a two-fold mission - maintenance and overall equipment readiness in times of disaster,” Chief Warrant Officer 2 Andrew Piri, officer-in-charge of the Camp Bowie UTES.

At Camp Bowie, UTES No. 4 “shares a concurrent maintenance mission with the Field Maintenance Shop,” said Piri, supporting the physical act of maintaining equipment on-site and as far afield as San Angelo.

There are six UTES located all over the state, includ-

ing Camp Swift near Austin, Camp Maxey in Powderly, Texas and at Fort Bliss, near El Paso, said Piri.

The UTES take care of “75-85 percent of supported unit maintenance,” said Piri. That total includes scheduled services, like oil changes, transmission services and other routine tasks, as well as unscheduled problems that result in “deadlined” vehicles- vehicles that cannot be used during a mission.

“Units can’t take care of a lot of that stuff two days a month,” said Piri. “They just can’t keep up with the work that needs to be done.” Along with the actual work on the vehicles, a unit might have issues processing the number of parts that may be needed, or storing new or replaced parts.

With TXMF Engineer assets concentrated in the general area of Camp Bowie, much of the UTES mission involves travelling to various armories “to maintain heavy, hard-to-transport equipment,” said Piri. Often, traveling to the units rather than hauling equipment to



the site means the unit can better conserve funds.

The second aspect of the UTES mission is a consolidation point for equipment used in Defense Support to Civilian Authorities (DSCA) mission, such as wildfire response, and unit training at Camp Bowie. Keeping the equipment in one place allows better monitoring of the condition of critical disaster response equipment, a lesson learned from past missions.

“The priority out here is D7 bulldozers,” said Piri. “Soldiers show up assigned to the DSCA mission, pick up the dozers and go. In the past, [the dozers] have just been sitting in a pasture, and when folks went to use them, everything was broken.”

The concentration of equipment serves a training purpose, as well. Units using Camp Bowie for training don’t have to worry about getting enough equipment moved from their home armory, but can use the vehicles already on-site. It not only reduces training costs for units, it also makes sure any problems are found before a critical

mission is negatively affected.

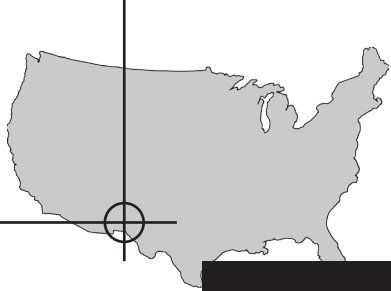
Military equipment isn’t the only things UTES technicians work on, though. “Engineer assets are important, but the UTES also supports Camp Bowie by servicing various civilian vehicles used in the day-to-day running of the training center,” said Piri.

Older equipment makes up the bulk of what the UTES work on, but new equipment falls well inside the scope of work at a UTES.

When new equipment does arrive, UTES technicians perform “initial technical inspections” to ensure all the vehicles perform to standard, and UTES personnel also enter the engine serial numbers into the military supply system to track use, location, and maintenance records.

“It’s a great experience for the guys working here,” said Piri. “There’s just a huge variety of equipment to work on, and it’s important to the entire TXMF mission.”

- TEXAS ON THE ROAD



Honoring the past...

Story by Staff Sgt. Phil Fountain

Texas Military Forces Public Affairs Office

Four members of the Texas Army National Guard's 101st Information Operations Field Support Battalion, headquartered at Camp Mabry, Texas, participated in the 24th annual Bataan Memorial Death March, a marathon at White Sands Missile Range, N.M., Mar. 17, 2013.

Sgt. 1st Class Arturo Cabello, Sgt. Rene Cervantes, Spc. Stevie Jacobs and Spc. Christopher Sarchet competed in the military light category, said 1st Lt. Sabrina K. Zowada, the battalion's executive officer. Additionally, a medic assigned to the unit, Spc. Brad Jenkins, was on-hand to render aide, as needed.

"The march honors service members who were taken prisoner while defending the Philippine islands of Luzon and Corregidor during World War II," Zowada said. "As prisoners of war, thousands died from disease, starvation and captivity."

On April 9, 1942, following the three-month Battle of Bataan, U.S. and Filipino forces surrendered to Japanese forces. Afterward, the Americans and Filipinos were subjected to the infamous "Bataan Death March," which was later judged to be a war crime.

Among the captured was a Texan, Kearie L. "K.L." Berry. He was then a colonel in the U.S. Army, and later - as a National Guardsman - became the adjutant general of Texas.

Berry survived the Death March and then faced three and half years as a prisoner of war, said Lisa Sharik, deputy director of the Texas Military Forces Museum. Following the war, Berry joined the Texas Military Forces and served as the state's senior officer for fourteen years, from 1947 to 1961.

During the ordeal, "Berry and his men were forced to walk 80 miles to Camp O'Donnell," she said.

"Berry endeavored to keep his troops going and he made a record of the Soldiers who were killed during the march," Sharik said. "He also carved locations, officers names and the famous Bataan poem (by Frank Hewlett) into his canteen and mess kit, which he carried throughout his four years as a POW."

These artifacts, as well as Berry's Distinguished Service Cross, are currently on display at the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum, in Austin, she said. They are on-loan from the Texas Military Forces Museum's collection.

This was the first year Texas Guard Soldiers participated in the remembrance march, Zowada said. The response was positive and something others could benefit from participating in.

"Nearly 6,000 marchers braved the 35-mile-per-hour winds," reported Adriana Salas, with the White Sands Missile Range's public affairs office. "Prior to beginning their 26.2-mile march or honorary 14.2 miles, the marchers were able to shake hands with 12 survivors who are well into their 80s and 90s."

One of the Texas Soldiers was moved by the experience.

"I was able to meet two," Jacobs said. "There were thousands of participants swarming them. I'm honored to have spent a few minutes with them. Their stories of service and sacrifice were motivating."

Jacobs also has a personal tie to WWII. He said his great-grandfather and grandfather both fought in the war, in Europe.

"I can only fathom what they went through," he said. "[The march] was a humbling experience, and something I won't forget." - **DISPATCH**

marching 26.2 miles in its shoes



Above and below:
Members of the 101st Information Field
Support Battalion participating in the
2013 Bataan Memorial March.





Soldiers and Airmen of from Texas, Indiana, and Arkansas train along side first responders.





VIGILANT

GUARD

SOLDIERS FROM THE 136TH MEB
PARTICIPATE IN THIS YEAR'S
VIGILANT GUARD.
AN EXERCISE IN HOMELAND
EMERGENCY RESPONSE.



Story and photos by Spc. Elizabeth Peña
136th MEB Public Affairs Office

In the world of consequence management, preparing for a disaster is just as crucial as responding. For civilian and military responders, preparedness was the focus of effort as they trained to save lives this week during Vigilant Guard, April 15-19 at Camp Gruber near Muskogee, Okla.

“When we can work with those that we will work with in a disaster” says John Luther, emergency manager for Washington County Arkansas. “It just makes us all more competent, we know one another were not strangers and were more familiar with one another’s techniques, the beauty of it is there will be lives saved for effort.”

This exercise, designed to bring guardsmen from Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Indiana, Kentucky, and Louisiana together with civilian first





Soldiers and Airmen of from Texas, Indiana, and Arkansas train along side first responders.

responders, provided an opportunity for different agencies and organizations to work alongside one another in a simulated natural disaster.

“Not everyone here is from the same FEMA region,” said Sgt. 1st Class Mark Wallace of the Joint Interagency Training and Education Center, “which is a huge plus, coming out of your comfort zone and working with other teams is realistic because if you have a large enough event, you will have to come out and respond elsewhere.”

The different regions of the Federal Emergency Management Agency play an important role in disaster management, as the National Guard’s Homeland Response Force mission is regionally based. The Joint Task Force 71 (Maneuver Enhancement Brigade), part of the Texas National Guard, is responsible for the FEMA Region VI HRF mission. Its function is to provide command and control to

the subordinate assets in combating Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and High Explosive threats.

“Texas has the CBRNE piece of the exercise,” said Army Col. Lee Schnell, commander of JTF-71 (MEB). “We are the response force. Our mission is to alert, assemble, and deploy in the FEMA Region VI.”

The HRF mission, led by units like JTF-71 (MEB), is carried out by the support outfits trained to provide search and extraction, decontamination, and medical triage services. These CBRNE Enhanced Response Force Packages can deploy within six hours to a scene and are equipped to sustain long-term operations by sharing the burden of response between the states.

“The units are set up to work no more than 12 hours,” said Army Lt. Jonathan Ballard, Commander for the Loui-



siana CERFP. “That is about how much equipment they carry. When you get to work with other units you learn other battle rhythms transfer the mission to another unit as they come in so that we can run our 24-hour operation.”

Vigilant Guard Arkansas is the first full-scale demonstration of the FEMA Region VI Homeland Response Force mission, which was certified by the Department of Defense in October 2011. The three-day exercise featured a simulated earthquake scenario to test the cooperative and emergency response capabilities of all military and civilian personnel on site.

“We know we are the next door neighbors, the close ones there, the first responders,” said John Luther, the Emergency Manager for Washington County, Arkansas. “We also know we don’t have all the resources it may take to

actually overcome a disaster in an area and knowing that the military is supporting us in that role is very, very important.”

There are currently 10 National Guard-sourced HRF mission sets, one for each FEMA Region. This mobile and ready-trained capability boasts up to 570 Army and Air guardsmen who will support the civil authorities in charge of saving lives in the event of an incident or natural disaster. When not deployed, the HRF personnel focus on planning, training, and exercising within their respective states.

“We want to have a good warm and fuzzy that we’re leaving the folks of Texas in good hands,” said Wallace. “At the end of the day it’s all about the casualties. The sooner we can save their lives is the bottom line.” - **136th MEB PAO**



36TH COMBAT AVIATION BRIGADE TAKES CHARGE IN KUWAIT

Story by Maj. Randall Stilling

Photos by Sgt. Mark Scovell

36th CAB Public Affairs Office



CAMP BUEHRING, Kuwait—A ceremony was held Thursday to commemorate the Transfer of Authority from the 35th to the 36th Combat Aviation Brigade.

The traditional event is a visual symbol of the transfer from one command to another as one brigade's guidon is cased for the trip home and the other is unfurled for the mission ahead.

The 36th CAB has deployed to the Middle East with both UH-60 Black Hawk and AH-64 Apache helicopters to conduct security cooperation, joint exercises, and training. These partnership events promote security, stability, and mutual interests in the region.

The 35th CAB of the Missouri Army National Guard is headed home after a tremendously successful 9-month deployment. The incoming brigade is from the Texas Army National Guard and is headquartered in Austin, Texas.

When all subordinate units are in

place, the 36th CAB will include Army National Guard units from seven states and an active duty battalion based Fort Hood.

Brig. Gen. Charles L. Taylor, Army Central Command Chief of Staff, said, "As you head home, you

can hold your heads high for what you've accomplished here."

Col. Mark McLemore, Commander of the 35th CAB, said, "To the Soldiers of Headquarters Company, 35th CAB, the unsung heroes, it has been a pleasure and an honor to work beside you, and with you."

After casing his brigade guidon, McLemore said, "My work here

done. I leave this mission in great hands. I have absolutely no worries as you will take this mission and move it forward to great, new heights."

When contrasting this deployment with past combat tours, Col. Rick Adams, Commander of the 36th CAB, said, "This is new ground for all of us in this co-operation/security/partnership realm of operating. Every one of us plays a role as ambassador as we move around the region."

"We are ready for this mission. My brigade is highly energized," said Adams.

With the transfer of authority complete, there was only one thing left to do: lower the Missouri flag in front of the brigade headquarters building, and hoist the Lone Star flag of Texas. The flag was then lowered to half-staff in honor of the victims of the Boston Marathon bombing. - **36th CAB PAO**

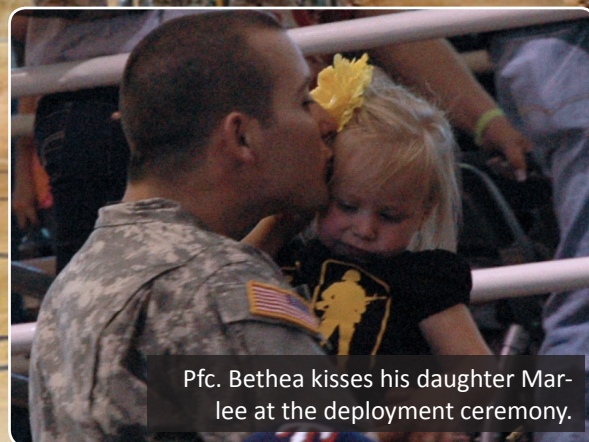
**"We are ready for this mission.
My brigade is highly energized."**

To follow the 36th CAB visit:
<https://www.facebook.com/36CABTX>



3-144 Soldiers say good-bye to family and friends.

Story by Staff Sgt. Jennifer D. Atkinson
56th Bde. Public Affairs Specialist



Pfc. Bethea kisses his daughter Mar-lee at the deployment ceremony.

KILGORE, Texas - The Kilgore College gym echoed with cheers from family members as they watched their loved ones from B Co. 3-144 Inf. run into the gym, forming three platoons stretching the length of the gym, April 6.

Kilgore Mayor Ronnie Spradlin promised the Soldiers and families that Kilgore would not forget them in their absence, sending a city flag with the unit to remind them Kilgore stands behind them. Known as the "City of Stars" for the lighted stars on the city's many oil derricks during the holiday season, Spradline told the troops the city would leave the star above City Hall lit until they returned home as a beacon of hope and prayer for the deployed.

B Co. will deploy to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom after several months of training at Camp Shelby in Hattiesburg, Miss. Nim Kidd, Chief of the Texas Division of Emergency Management, spoke to the assembled families and Soldiers, reminding each person there

"Texas Military Forces are the backbone of what we do... you come out of your homes and your jobs, and you

serve Texas every day."

Kidd thanked the families for supporting the troops during this deployment, noting it was a new challenge for his family as well.

"I want to thank the families," said Kidd, "because, like you, I have a son going on this deployment as well."

Brig. Gen. Lee Henry, Assistant Division Commander-Maneuver, 36th Inf. Div., reminded the crowd that for the men of the Fourth Texas Infantry, this was not the first time standing in this bittersweet formation, looking both ahead to the mission at hand, and behind at the families waiting in Texas. B Co. has deployed three times over the past twelve years.

"What you see before you represents one percent" said Henry, "an all-volunteer force of one percent of the military age men and women who are eligible to serve." "These soldiers represent all the communities around us," said Henry. "What you have in front of you are policemen, small business owners, school teachers. They will take their experience to Afghanistan and they will set themselves apart." - **56th BDE PAO**

2-149 GSAB Soldiers mobilize

Story by Staff Sgt. Jeremy Spires
36th Inf. Div. Public Affairs



GRAND PRAIRIE, Texas – Amidst a hanger full of loving friends and family, more than 100 Texas and Oklahoma Army National Guardsmen comprising B Company, 2-149th General Support Aviation Battalion, 36th Infantry Division, receive encouraging words and near deafening applause during their deployment ceremony, April 20.

“You are a national treasure,” said Maj. Gen. James K. “Red” Brown, commanding general, 36th Inf. Div., to the soldiers, family and friends gathered before him. “No other nation in the world deploys reserve component soldiers and defends the country as you do. You back up to no one, you are the best that this country has to offer. You are well trained, you are well led and you are prepared to do the mission you are about to do.”

More than 30,000 Texas Army Na-

tional Guards soldiers have deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, and the soldiers of B Company will assist in the final months of the U.S. presence in Afghanistan.

“At the end of the day our mission is a retrograde mission,” said Maj. Chris Hanna, commander of B Company, 2-149th GSAB. “Essentially, we are closing down shop in Afghanistan, and they want us to be there and assist in moving all the equipment and personnel that are in these different areas.”

Similar to the withdrawal from Iraq, this type of operation will require a massive logistics surge.

“I cannot tell you when things are closing down, but when they do we will be there to pick up their stuff,” said Hanna. “Whether it is pallets of MREs, equipment, personnel or

whatever, we will be there to consolidate it to a central location in order to prepare them to return home.”

For many of the soldiers in formation this is not their first major operation. They have mobilized for support and combat operations for the state of Texas and the United States.

“I want to tell you how proud we are of you for standing up and taking an oath to support and defend the constitution of this great nation,” said Maj. Gen. Brown. “You do so with honor, you do so with pride and you do so with valor, as you have demonstrated each and every time that we have asked you to deploy.”

U.S. Congressman Mark Veasy, a member of the Armed Forces Committee, also attended the ceremony, as well as, the Patriot Guard Riders of North Texas. - **36th ID PAO**





Gearing up for the open road

*by Staff Sgt. Jennifer Atkinson
Texas Military Forces Public Affairs Office*



Texas motorcycle riders are blessed with four seasons of riding weather, except for a few bone-chilling cold days in the winter or spring thunderstorms, and as the bluebonnets bloom, motorcycles will start showing up on Texas roads.



Check out the TXMF Motorcycle Safety video:
<http://youtu.be/97btgyalAFY>

If you're a servicemember and you ride, there are a few things the Texas Adjutant General recommends you keep in mind:

1 - You must complete a basic motorcycle riding skills class. A combination of classroom instruction and basic riding drills on a marked "range," these classes are designed to give you the fundamentals of safe motorcycle operation.

Servicemembers must complete a basic course before riding on post, complete an advanced riding course within three years of getting their motorcycle license, and participate in refresher courses on a regular basis. Information on Motorcycle Safety Foundation classes can be found at <http://online2.msf-usa.org/msf/Default.aspx>.

For Texas Military Forces members, the cost of the required courses may be reimbursed by the State Safety Office. For more information, call the State Safety Office at 512-782-5005.

2 - No matter how much you love feeling your hair blowing in the breeze, a helmet is a required piece of personal protective equipment, no matter your duty status. There is a persistent rumor that Texas Military Forces members only need to wear mandatory PPE during drill status, but this simply isn't true. All helmets must be DOT approved, and if you wear a shorty, you must wear eye protection.

3 - Long sleeves aren't optional. During the height of summer, you don't need to be head to toe in leather, but you must wear a sleeved garment that covers your wrist bones. Leather is always a good choice for riding, since heavy leather resists abrasion for a much longer distance than heavy denim, and that could save some skin off your back.

4 - You'll need gloves. Full-finger gloves are required as part of your PPE. You don't need the rigid knuckle gloves, unless you want them, but you do need something to cover your hands.

5 - No riding in flip-flops or tennis shoes. Boots or heavy shoes that cover the ankle bones must be worn. In case of an accident, boots will help protect your feet from abrasion, and even during normal riding, good boots protect your feet from rocks and road debris.

The Department of Defense requirements have recently changed, moving reflective and highly visible clothing from the "required" category to the "recommended" category. Bright riding clothes are still a good idea, but they're no longer required by the DoD. Local posts and installations may have their own rules, so double check if you're riding to an unfamiliar installation.

Besides protective gear and riding courses, there are a few more things to keep in mind.

Keep your head on a swivel. Don't expect drivers in cars to see you, and plan to be proactive while riding.

If you're riding with a group, don't let yourself get pushed into riding past your ability. Yes, it sucks to have to put the brakes on a ride, but it's better than going down on a twisty road that's beyond your riding ability.

Make sure your bike is in good working order. You don't have to do a full-blown PMCS every time you roll out of the driveway, but check the tire pressure and keep an eye out for any unusual changes in the way your bike runs.

During dawn and dusk, deer become a bigger hazard on the road. A crash involving a motorcycle and a deer can hurt a lot more than your pride. Slow down and keep a good eye out.

Have fun, and keep the rubber side down!



Texas National Guard Family Support Foundation Awarded Grant

The Texas National Guard Family Support Foundation (TXNGFSF) was awarded a Texas Veterans Commission Grant, Fund for Veterans' Assistance, to provide: emergency financial assistance for housing, utilities, auto repairs, daycare, medical expenses, co-pays, insurance premiums, and financial counseling.

**Eligible recipients are service members, spouses,
and their dependents.**

***For more information, contact State Family Programs:
Brent Green, Family Assistance Center Coordinator
brent.m.green2.ctr@mail.mil***

or

***Luann Barron, Administrative Assistant
lu.a.barron.ctr@mail.mil***



"This program is made possible by a grant from the Texas Veterans Commission Fund for Veterans' Assistance. The Fund for Veterans' Assistance provides grants to organizations serving veterans and their families." www.tvc.texas.gov

Have a story to tell about your unit?
We will be happy to share it in the Dispatch. Please read below
for story and photo submission requirements.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Articles-

- ☒ Articles should be between 300-600 words, and absolutely no longer than 1100 words. Please include author, and unit information (if applicable).
- ☒ All articles should have quotes from at least two sources (interviews).
- ☒ *Associated Press Style Guide should be used when referring to military titles and state abbreviations.
- ☒ Please include an AP Style Guide dateline. (*CITY, State (Month XX, 20XX)*).
- ☒ Please ensure interviewee first name, last name, and rank (if applicable) are included.
- ☒ Please submit documents with a minimum of formatting. A plain Word document is best, with NO embedded photos.

Photos-

- ☒ Photos should be as high-resolution as possible. Photos less than 1MB may not be usable.
- ☒ Please do NOT embed photos in article documents.
- ☒ Please include full and detailed cutlines, and photo credit information in a separate document. Cutlines should include who, what, where, when, and why and be at least two sentences.

** If you need help with any of the above, please don't be discouraged from submitting your story. Contact us and we will help.*

Submissions may be edited for clarity and ease of reading as well as to correct any errors.

Please send submissions to:

Staff Sgt. Malcolm McClendon at malcolm.m.mcclendon.mil@mail.mil

For more information, please contact Staff Sgt. Malcolm McClendon at 512-782-7258 or malcolm.m.mcclendon.mil@mail.mil



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2013 Texas Joint Forces Best Warriors



SrA Nicholas Martin
Junior Enlisted Best Warrior
Texas Air National Guard



SSG Dominic Gonzales
NCO Best Warrior
Texas Army National Guard

Texas State Level Best Warrior Competition is open to Army and Air Guard personnel.
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