

COUNTERDRUG COURIER



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TEXAS
JOINT COUNTERDRUG TASK FORCE
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Commander
Col. Suzanne Adkinson

Command Sergeant Major
Command Sgt. Maj. Jesus Gonzalez

Executive Officer
Lt. Col. Miguel Torres

Layout and Design
1st Lt. Alicia Lacy





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Commander's Comments

When I took command of the taskforce about three years ago, I published my command philosophy. With the influx of new hires, I think it's a great time re-emphasize this message to the taskforce.

1. Live the Army/Air Force Values

Always and without question embody the values of our services. Army: Loyalty; Duty; Respect; Selfless Service; Honor; Integrity; Personal Courage. Air Force: Integrity First; Service Before Self; Excellence in all we do.

2. Loyalty. Duty. Selfless

Be true to your soldiers and what is right to them and for actions and those entrusted to professionally. Put the welfare of service embodies teamwork, Choose the hard right over the airmen to do something you are



Col. Suzanne Adkinson, Commander
Texas Joint Counterdrug Taskforce

3. Set and Meet the Standard.

Set and uphold the standard. Pass uniform, complete all required show dignity and respect to your subordinates. Compassion, you to know what's going on in They learn from you. Set a good

4. Bad news doesn't get
Raise the issue. Informed is

5. **Always Err on the Side of the Soldier or Airman.** If the answer is morally or ethically correct, then make the decision to favor your soldier or airman. If your decision bites you - tell me. Give me the opportunity to correct the problem within the organization first. If you can't solve it at your level, raise it up the chain of command. I have an open door policy. I will listen to your concerns.

6. **Your Mission Set is Hard.** You have several chains of command. Work to create an atmosphere where all bosses are happy with the quality and quantity of work you and your soldiers and airmen provide. Communicate to the bosses, especially when work requirements overlap. Solve the issues at the lowest level. If you can't fix it - ask for help. Realize those you lead are in the same situation. Protect them and run interference when warranted.

Service. Integrity

airmen. They depend on you to do them. Accept responsibility for your you. Improve yourself personally and your soldiers and airmen first. Selfless discipline and faith in the system. easy wrong. Never ask your soldiers or not willing to do yourself.

Be the Example

each physical fitness rest, look fit in tasks in a timely manner. Be a leader, those you lead. Listen and learn from empathy and understanding allow your ranks. Juniors emulate seniors. example.

better with age. Go ugly early.
better than uninformed.

COUNTERDRUG COURIER

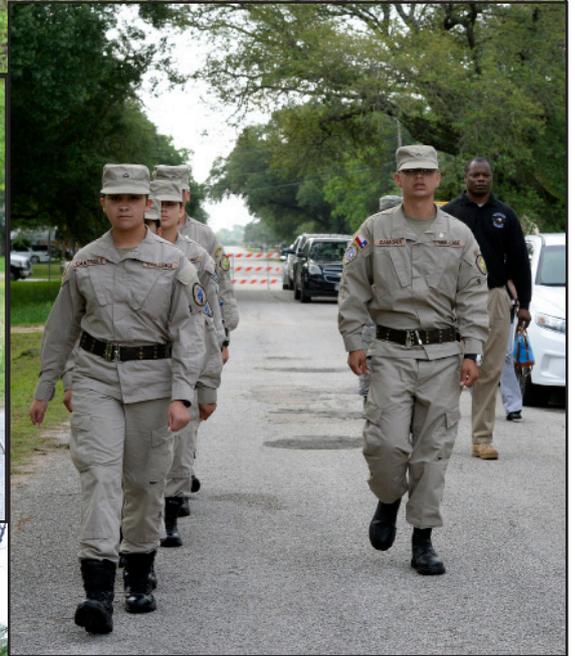
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OPERATION CLEAN UP

**EAGLE LAKE
TEXAS**

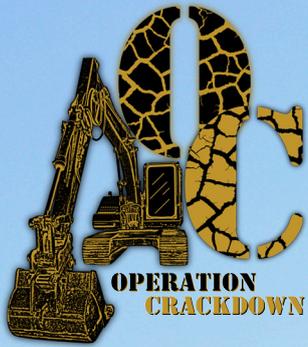
**APRIL 25
2016**



Photos By
1st Lt. Alicia Lacy
JCDTF PAO

EAGLE LAKE, Texas -- Airmen and soldiers with the Texas Joint Counterdrug Taskforce attended Eagle Lake's own Operation Clean-Up April 25, 2016. The program mirrors the taskforce's Operation Crackdown, where municipalities and the taskforce partner together to demolish structures tied to the drug trade. Before the demolition, taskforce members visited with Rice Intermediate School fifth graders. "Drugs are bad choices, so some of these houses that they're talking about harbor people that are doing drugs, people that are selling drugs and it's a bad thing for your community," Col. Suzanne Adkinson, taskforce commander, said to the students. "So this mission that you're doing here in Eagle Lake helps you to be safer in your community by taking away the houses because people go through these houses and use them for illegal things."





LAREDO



**Story and photos by
1st Lt. Alicia Lacy
JCDFTF PAO**



KNOCK

IT

LAREDO, Texas – Their voices thundered in unison, “Knock it down, knock it down.”

And with a few blows from an excavator’s arm, the small, dilapidated Maryland Avenue house came crashing down.

The demise of the house that has been tied to the drug trade was met with cheers and applause from the dozens of community members, civic leaders, fifth graders and law enforcement who gathered outside the Laredo home to watch it fall May 4.

The house was one of 26 structures the Texas National Guard’s Joint Counterdrug Taskforce demolished in the South Texas community as part of the organization’s Operation Crackdown April 29-May 15.

Operation Crackdown is a program unique to the Texas National Guard’s taskforce where Texas Guard engineers travel to a community for about two weeks to demolish about 30 structures tied to the use or distribution of drugs. Since the inception of the program in 1993, the taskforce has demolished more than 1,500 structures in 25 communities, ranging from homes to an abandoned warehouse and a former nursing home.

The May Crackdown was the taskforce’s third time in the Laredo community.

“What has gone on over the years that we’ve noticed is that once these structures go down, the crime goes down (in that neighborhood),” said Laredo Police Chief Ray Garner about the impact of the program. “If you take a look at the history of Operation Crackdown and go back and look at some of the addresses that have been taken care of, you’ll see new homes up there, you’ll see a cleaner neighborhood and that’s the important thing.”

The program aims to send a drug-free message to the children who live and go to school in these neighborhoods. With each operation, taskforce members visit with fifth graders from a local elementary school and present an anti-

drug demonstration with the help of local law enforcement. For this operation, the members visited with J.C. Elementary School’s fifth grade class.

“Keeping our kids safe is more than a priority,” said Dr. A. Marcus Nelson, Laredo Independent School District superintendent. “If we don’t come together and focus on keeping them safe, there are a lot of people who will try and hurt them. The fact that we come and tear down this house is such a strong message to those who want to try and hurt or harm our children – and the message is so clear. The message is that we will not tolerate those who seek to endanger our children in any way.”

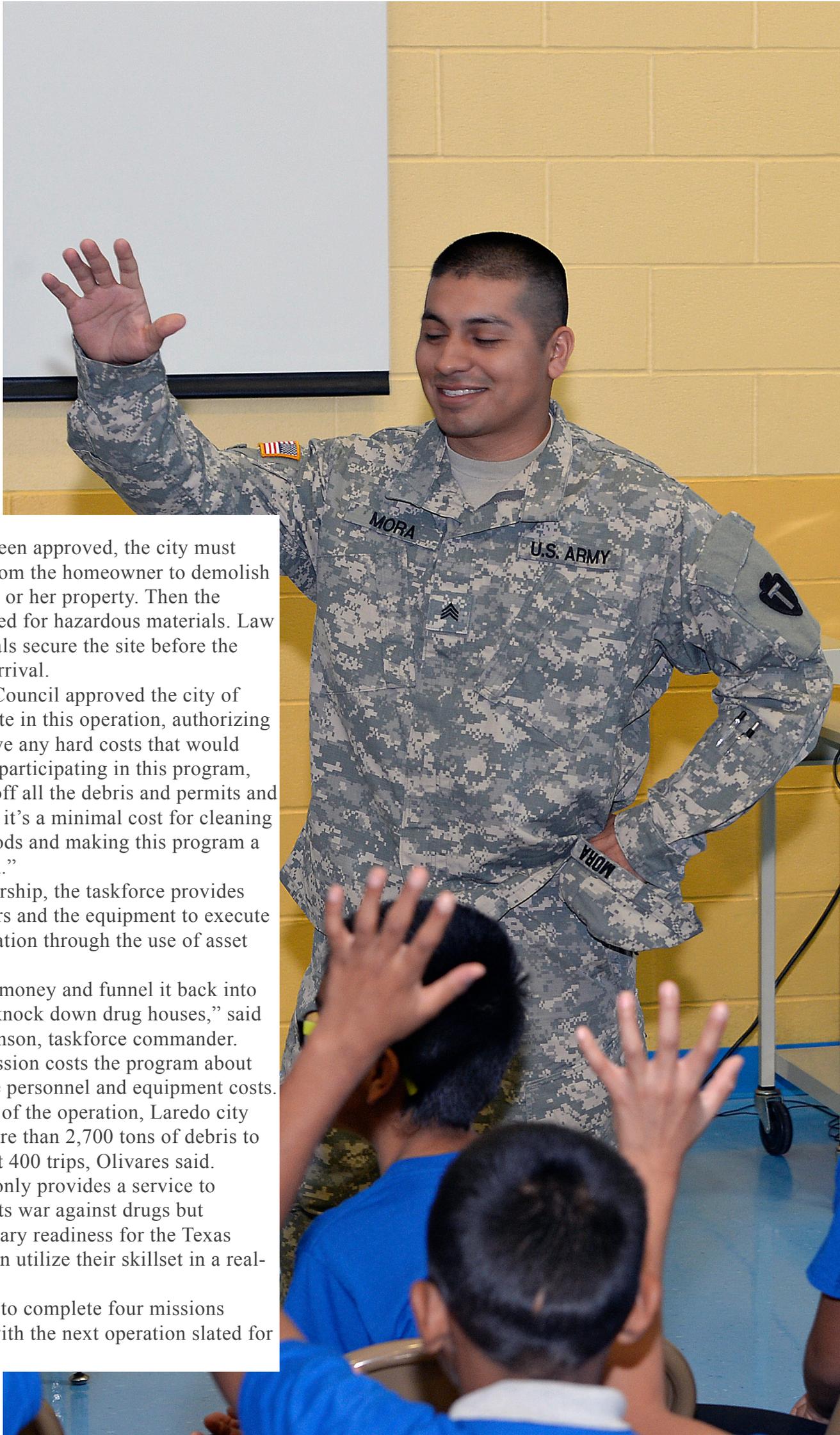
Out of the school’s entire fifth grade class, about two dozen students were selected to witness the demolition.

“We are thankful and grateful for your interest and hard work in helping clean up our neighborhood and helping save us from drugs,” said Carolina Banderas, a J.C. Elementary School fifth grader. “Our school year is ending and we are looking forward to a clean and safe environment at the middle school next year. Many of us will walk to school and expect to be safe.” The process for a city to have an operation take place can be arduous, but Laredo city officials said it’s worth it to help eradicate drug use and drug-related crimes in the city.

“This is a very rigorous process,” said Jesus Olivares, Laredo city manager. “It’s a process that involves a lot of investigating done by the police department, building department, community development and those involved with the U.S. Border Patrol. A total of 76 structures have been demolished in the city through Operation Crackdown.”

The process involves a request from the city and agreements made between the Texas National Guard and the city. For a structure to be selected, it must have a connection with the drug trade.

D O W N



Once the site has been approved, the city must receive approval from the homeowner to demolish the structure on his or her property. Then the structure is inspected for hazardous materials. Law enforcement officials secure the site before the National Guard's arrival.

"The Laredo City Council approved the city of Laredo to participate in this operation, authorizing my office to approve any hard costs that would be associated with participating in this program, including hauling off all the debris and permits and field costs. We feel it's a minimal cost for cleaning up our neighborhoods and making this program a successful program."

Through the partnership, the taskforce provides the service members and the equipment to execute the two-week operation through the use of asset forfeiture funds.

"We're using drug money and funnel it back into the community to knock down drug houses," said Col. Suzanne Adkinson, taskforce commander. Each two-week mission costs the program about \$30,000, to include personnel and equipment costs. At the culmination of the operation, Laredo city officials moved more than 2,700 tons of debris to the landfill in about 400 trips, Olivares said. The operation not only provides a service to the community in its war against drugs but also enhances military readiness for the Texas Guardsmen who can utilize their skillset in a real-world mission.

The taskforce tries to complete four missions every fiscal year, with the next operation slated for Dallas.

DoD

STARBASE

A Department of Defense Youth Program

SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY



The Texas Joint Counterdrug Taskforce oversees the Department of Defense's STARBASE program, which focuses on science, technology, engineering and math, as they continue their education. The program engages students in learning about science, technology, engineering and math, as they continue their education. The program engages students in learning about science, technology, engineering and math, as they continue their education. The program engages students in learning about science, technology, engineering and math, as they continue their education. While at the base, students are able to engage with military personnel, while understanding



5 ENGINEERING MATH



Program in Houston and Austin. STARBASE aims to motivate fifth graders to explore science, technology, engineering, and math through hands-on and classroom activities, exploring Newton's Laws, Bernoulli's Principle, and the Ellington Field in Houston or Camp Mabry in Austin five times throughout the school year. The program shows how science, technology, engineering, and math are all incorporated in military careers.

Texas police officer shares interagency experience

Lt. Col. David Eaton

Department of Joint, Interagency and Multinational Operations

According to a high-ranking Texas law enforcement official, criminal activity along the border between Texas and Mexico is continually changing. While the pace of that change continually accelerates, the rules that law enforcement agencies operate do not. Capt. Jaeson Jones, with the Texas Department of Public Safety, said his organization studied criminal behavior and found criminals were often operating in the gaps and overlaps created by the myriad of local, state, national, Mexican, and international law enforcement agencies that work along the border. The path to the solution, he and his superiors thought, would be greater interagency cooperation and collaboration. He said his agency knew they had to be willing to break some paradigms like not relying on the Uniform Crime Report that was created in 1930 as their main source of data on criminal activity. They also had to figure out whom they could trust because some law enforcement officials were working with criminal cartels. “You have to start simple,” he said. “Baby steps, like sharing an intelligence report with local law enforcement officials, will help open doors with other agencies,” he said. Jones shared his experiences building interagency teams with Command and General Staff College and Combined Arms Center faculty and staff, as well as with almost 100 CGSC students May 19-20. CGSC’s Department of Joint, Interagency and Multinational Operations hosted the two-day event. Jones’ message to all is the necessity of reaching out as individuals and as organizations to continue developing interagency partnerships anywhere and everywhere possible. Jones is with his department’s Intelligence and Counterterrorism Division in Austin. Over several years, Jones and his organization adapted to emerging threats and public safety concerns and fundamentally changed Texas law enforcement to meet these concerns head on. Classic situation-dependent law enforcement evolved into intelligence-driven law enforcement and continues to reap significant success in security, collaborations and prosecutions. He said again and again that these changes could not have been done as well or worked as effectively without embracing a whole of government and interagency concept. Jones listed several key tenets that



Capt. Jaeson Jones
Intelligence and Counterterrorism
Texas Department of Public Safety

better enable an interagency approach. First, it is not just the sharing of information but the persistent person-to-person collaboration that makes the difference between “talking” interagency and actually “doing” the interagency approach identifying and solving problems. Second, it all starts with trust. Start with small projects and exchanges and build trust between stakeholders. Third, it’s not the mission or vision statement that makes the interagency — it’s people. From the top leaders down to individuals in each organization, it is the day-to-day and face-to-face due diligence that enables true interagency cooperation. It makes no difference if people are from the local state or federal level. Leaders must embrace, embed, insist on and reward the interagency partnership. Stakeholders at all levels need to find ways to incorporate and institutionalize the interagency approach within their day-to-day activities. Fourth, an interagency approach is more an attitude toward a new way of doing business than a capitulation. Interagency work is hard work. It’s a long-term persistent uphill battle against existing personal and organizational comfort zones, fortified paradigms and declining resources. Once interagency cooperation is established, the relationships need constant attention and reintroductions resulting from changes in leaders and missions. The attitude must be interagency — it is hard but the benefits make it worth the efforts. Finally, interagency enables everyone and every agency to become better at what they do, what the Department of Defense calls “synergy.” Despite the upstart costs in manpower, personal egos and institutional prestige — interagency works and by doing so more organizations are successful and more mission are accomplished. Jones brought his organizational experience and interagency message to several local, state and federal institutions around the United States, including the Defense Intelligence Agency, the Naval Postgraduate School and the Department of Homeland Security. This model is a concrete example demonstrating the national and strategic value of partnering across the interagency.

welcome home

1st Sgt. John Dockrey
Sgt. Maj. Brian Harless
Master Sgt. Andres Floresperez
Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Garza
Staff Sgt. Richard Posey
Master Sgt. Cade Logue
Staff Sgt. Raul Gonzales
Sgt. 1st Class Contance Hendrix
Tech. Sgt. Libni Paredes
Tech. Sgt. Marivel Perez
Staff Sgt. Tiffany Salazar
Warrant Officer Audrey Foushee

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