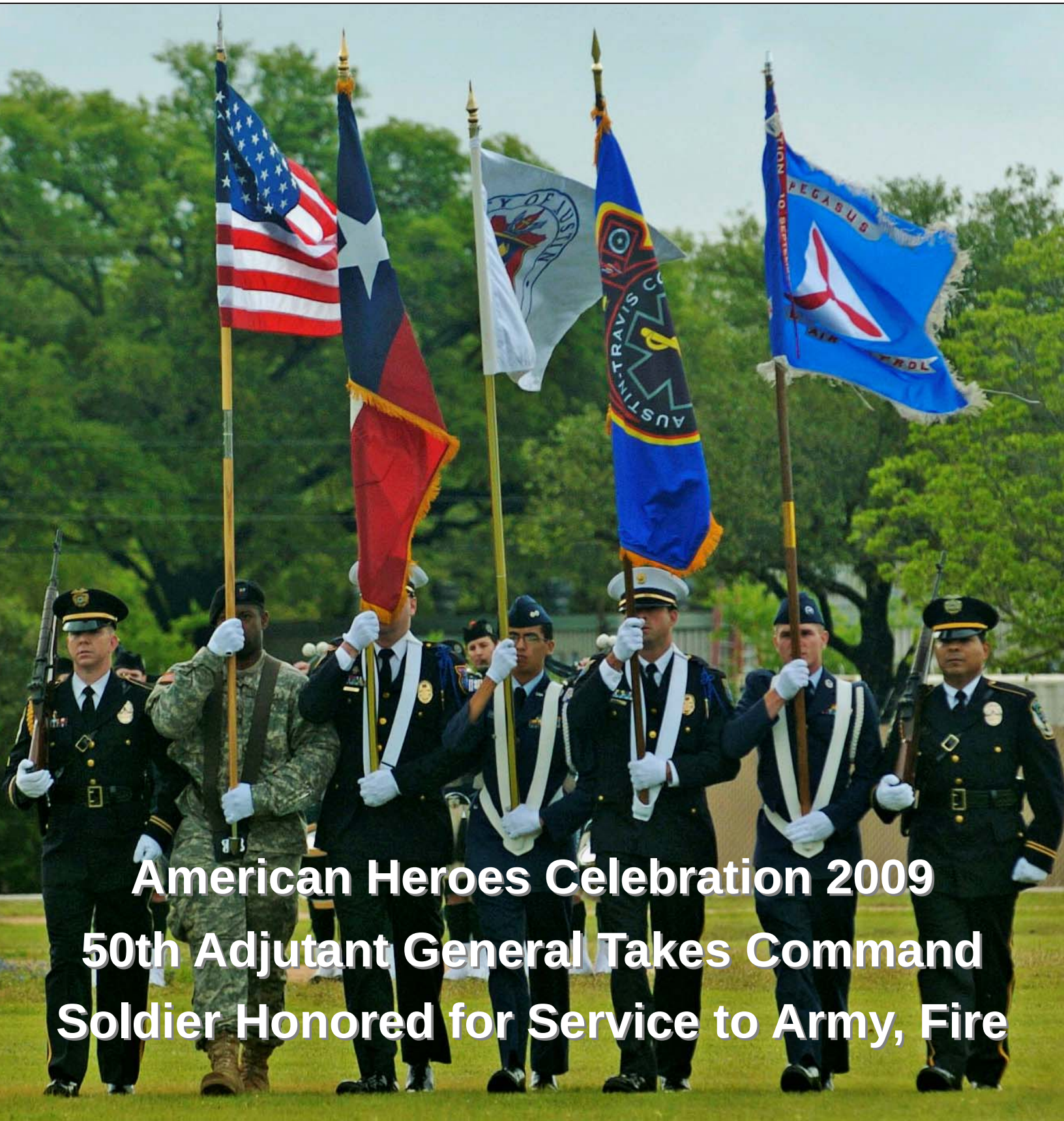
The Monthly Magazine of the Texas Military Forces

May 2009

The DISPATCH



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Staff Sgt. Damion Hobbs, a Texas National Guard Soldier and Houston firefighter was laid to rest on April 17, 2009 in Houston, Texas. Sergeant Hobbs was killed responding to a fire.

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10 American Heroes Celebration 2009

Lightning, rain and wind threatened to spoil the 2009 American Heroes Celebration Saturday and Sunday, but the clouds started clearing during the flag ceremony and by mid afternoon on Saturday the celebration was in full force with thousands of visitors.

11 Search and Rescue Dogs Find Receptive Audience

The Austin Police Department Search and Rescue Dog Team and the Travis County Sherriff's Office Dog Team came together to educate and entertain audiences at the American Heroes Airshow at Camp Mabry, on April 18.

15 Futuristic Training Comes to Camp Swift

Texas ramps up deployment training for Soldiers with two high-tech "virtual trainers" at Camp Swift.

Cover- Members of the joint forces color guard present the colors during the opening ceremonies of the 2009 American Heroes Airshow and Celebration. (Photo by Spc. Mark Braden, 100th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment.)

THE BULLETIN BOARD

Military Mail Rules Strictly Enforced

A recent increase in mail addressed to "Any Servicemember" prompted the Military Postal Service Agency to remind the general public not to send mail or care packages addressed in such a manner. Mail to "Any Servicemember/Any Wounded-Recovering Warrior," will not be delivered. This restriction applies to all classes and types of mail. Meanwhile, those interested in writing to servicemembers can visit the Defense Department's Community Relations website at http://www.americasupportsyou.mil/AmericaSupportsYou/index.aspx and click the "Citizen Support" link on the right side of the page to find groups that support troops with letters. Mailing information is available on the Military Postal Service Agency website at http://hqdainet.army.mil/mpsa/main.htm

DoD Changes Identification Cards

The Department of Defense (DoD) began the process of removing Social Security numbers from issued identification (ID) cards in an effort to prevent identity theft. All ID card holders should wait until their cards are in need of renewal before replacing their cards with ones devoid of a Social Security number. The DoD instructed retirees with indefinite expiration dates on their cards to start replacing them in January 2010. Cardholders whose cards have expired may contact the nearest Real-time Automated Personnel Identification System site. If the cardholder does not know where their local RAPIDS site is located, they can visit the Rapids Site Locator at http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/rsl/owa/home to find a location nearby.

Hotlinks to Texas Military Forces in the News

A General Takes Command: http://www.agd.state.tx.us/articles/archives/current/040309/

Mayorga Takes Command of Texas Military Forces: http://www.statesman.com/blogs/content/ sharedgen/blogs/austin/somosaustin/entries/2009/04/20 mayorga_takes_command_of_texas.html

Armed Forces Center Coming To San Marcos: http://www.newstreamz.com/2009/04/19/armed-forces-center-coming-to-san-marcos/

North Texas State Guard Unit Deployed After Wildfires: http://www.txsg.state.tx.us/

Golden Knights Parachute Team Semicentennial

The Golden Knights, the U.S. Army's official parachute demonstration team, recently kicked off its ongoing 50th anniversary celebration by unveiling a special 50th anniversary patch that all team members will wear throughout the year. As part of the celebration, there are a variety of special activities planned for the coming months, including jumps into the new Yankees Stadium and the Statue of Liberty grounds in New York City. For more information about the Golden Knights year-long 50th anniversary celebration or to learn more about the team's unique history and to view a schedule of events, visit the U.S. Army Parachute Team Golden Knights website at http://www.usarec.army.mil/hq/GoldenKnights/.

Texas Drivers License Gets a Facelift

DPS is unveiling a redesigned Texas driver license and identification card with a new look and enhanced security features.

"The changes will give law enforcement improved resources for verifying the authenticity of Texas- issued driver licenses and identification cards, while combating counterfeiting, photo swapping, tampering and other types of fraud," said DPS Director Col. Stanley E. Clark.

The licenses and ID cards contain numerous security features, which DPS will not discuss publicly. Production of the new cards began April 15 for customers receiving new, renewal or duplicate licenses and ID cards. The vertical format for customers under 21 will continue.

Current driver licenses and ID cards are still valid and will be phased out as they expire. The last redesign took place in June 2001. DPS is sending out information to Texas law enforcement agencies, financial institutions and other state agencies to educate them on these changes. To see an image of the new driver license, please visit www.txdps.state.tx.us.)

The DISPATCH

Vol. 4, No. 5 **May 2009**

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Articles and photography are welcome and may be submitted to JFTX-PAO, P.O. Box 5218, Austin TX 78763-5218, or by e-mail to paotx@tx.ngb.army.mil. Deadline for submissions is the **10th day of the month** for the issue of the following month.

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Soldier honored for service to Army, fire department

Story and photos by Capt. Adam Collett

72nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

HOUSTON – An Army National Guard Soldier who also worked as a civilian firefighter was honored for his service in both professions before being laid to rest here April 17.

Staff Sgt. Damion Hobbs with the 1-149th Attack Reconnaissance Battalion succumbed to a fire while on duty with the Houston Fire Department April 12, according to a release from the department. Fire Capt. James Harlow with the department also died in the fire.

Sergeant Hobbs, 30, served on active duty with the Army from 1999 to 2003. He joined the Texas Army National Guard in 2004 and deployed to Iraq as an intelligence analyst with his battalion from Feb. 2006 through Aug. 2007. During the mobilization, Sergeant Hobbs' duties in the unit's Tactical Operations Center included briefing air crews prior to flight missions.

His fellow Soldiers praised him for his dedication to duty. "He worked probably longer hours than anybody else in the TOC, sometimes 14 or 16 hours. He never complained about it," said Sgt. Nathan Herrera, a flight operations NCO with the unit who deployed with Hobbs. "He was a complete human being – well rounded. To be able to say you served as a Soldier and a firefighter – that's typical of the person that Hobbs was."

Sergeant Hobbs and Captain Harlow were both honored April 16 during a mile-long procession that began at a fire station near Ellington Field Joint Reserve Base here and ended at a nearby church where a memorial service was held. Dozens of Texas Military Forces servicemembers joined hundreds of emergency responders from around the country for the march, escorting the fire trucks carrying the red caskets of the two firefighters.

AH-64A Apache helicopters from the Attack Reconnaissance Battalion conducted flyovers at the beginning and the end of the processional.

Maj. Scott Nicholas, operations officer with the ARB, deployed with Sergeant Hobbs to Iraq. Major Nicholas said the unit was mourning but was proud of Sergeant Hobbs' service. "It's a tough thing to deal with. The loss of a friend - the loss of a fellow Soldier. The battalion is a lesser place without him," said Major Nicholas. "He absolutely represents the best in us and in American Society."

Military and emergency services personnel also gathered to support the family during the April 17 funeral and internment. Army Brig. Gen. David Blackorby represented The Adjutant General and made award presentations to the family. Army Cpl. Lucas Gless with the 72nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team led a Texas Military Forces Honor Guard during the ceremony.

Lt. Col. Scott Kingsley, commander of the ARB, also attended the services. "Staff Sgt. Hobbs is a shining example of the heroes that fill the ranks of the Texas Army National Guard," said Colonel Kingsley. "He embodied the 'Warrior Spirit' and would never leave a fallen comrade behind."

Soldiers and firefighters bid farewell to Staff Stt. Damion Hobbs and Capt. James Harlow at a memorial service in Houston on April 16, 2009.

3rd Annual March for Fallen Heroes

5:30 a.m. on May 21, 2009

The march will start at the Lady Bird Lake running trail by the Austin High School. The rally point will be under the Mopac bridge continuing to the 36th Infantry Division Memorial at the State Capitol. (Starting point address is 1715 W. Cesar Chavez St.)

For more information, contact Staff Sgt. David J. Mendiola at 512-782-6232 or david.mendiola@tx.ngb.army.mil

Ceremony installed 50th Adjutant General in Texas

By Chief Master Sgt. Gonda Moncada

Texas Military Forces Public Affairs

AUSTIN, Texas (April 15, 2009) – The Texas Military Forces officially said goodbye to Lt. Gen. Charles G. Rodriguez and installed the 50th Adjutant General of Texas during a change-of-command ceremony at Camp Mabry Sunday.

General Charles G. Rodriguez relinquished command of the Texas Military Forces to Maj. Gen. Jose S. Mayorga during the traditional passing of the colors ceremony on the parade grounds.

The Adjutant General of Texas is responsible for leading more than 24,000 members of the Texas Military Forces, which includes the Texas Army National Guard, the Texas Air National Guard, the Texas State Guard and civilian employees of the Adjutant General's Department. The Adjutant General's Department oversees a joint federal-state program. Its federal mission is to provide combat-ready units and equipment in support of OEF, OIF and other military objectives. State missions include Defense Support to Civil Authorities during a man-made or natural disaster.

General Mayorga was appointed by Governor Rick Perry to serve as The Adjutant General of Texas. His previous appointment was that of Commander, 36th Infantry Division from August 13, 2007 to March 27, 2009.

General Mayorga began his distinguished military career in 22 December 1977 when he was commissioned a second lieutenant engineer officer in the Army. He graduated from Texas A & I University in Kingsville, Texas with a Bachelor of Science Degree. While in the Ready Reserves, General Mayorga graduated from Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, with a Master of Business Administration Degree. In September 1990, General Mayorga was assigned to the 111th Engineer Battalion from where he launched a career that included numerous command positions.

He served as the Deputy Commanding General for U.S. Army South at Fort Sam Houston from September 2, 2005 until August 12, 2007 at which point he was assigned to his previous command position.

Sunday's Agenda included a musical prelude by the 36th Infantry Division Band, performances by the mounted Buffalo Soldiers, awards to General and Mrs. Cappy Rodriguez, and finally the oath of office and change of command.

Top: Maj. Gen Jose S. Mayorga addresses the crowd during the opening ceremonies at the 2009 American Heroes Celebration at Camp Mabry, Austin, Texas on April 18, 2009. (Photograph by Spc. Mark Braden, 100th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment(

Middle left: Outgoing Adjutant General Charles G. Rodriguez passes the state colors to incoming Adjutant General Jose S. Mayorga. (Texas Military Forces Photo)

Middle right: Adjutant General Jose S. Mayorga passes the colors to Command Sgt. Major Juan Morales, Sergeant Major for the State of Texas. The colors are entrusted to the command's senior command sergeant major for safekeeping. (Texas Military Forces Photo)

Bottom: Smoke from an artillery salute drifts across the parade field at Camp Mabry, Austin, during the change of command ceremony here on April 19, 2009/ (Photos by Spc. Mark Braden, 100th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

Flu in the News; What You Need to Know

Story by Chief Master Sgt. Gonda Moncada

Texas Military Forces Public Affairs

Camp Mabry, Austin, Texas – (Apr 28, 2009) – The numbers are as yet small especially in the United States, but people have been stricken by the flu (influenza type A H1N1)and authorities say that it may get worse before it gets better. If and when that happens, Governor Rick Perry may place Soldiers and Airmen of the Texas Military Forces on state active duty to assist local, state and federal health professionals. If called upon to support our friends and neighbors we have to be medically fit ourselves and the following are some common-sense guidelines:

If you exhibit the following symptoms you should seek medical attention before coming to work:

Fever

Cold-like symptoms (excluding known allergies)

Body aches and general malaise

If you are feeling fine, the following recommendations may help you to stay that way:

Cough or sneeze only into disposable tissues – if not immediately available, sneeze or cough in your sleeve.

Immediately discard the tissues and wash hands thoroughly.

Continue to wash your hands as often as possible throughout the day.

Disinfect smooth surfaces, i.e. phones, keyboards, door knobs, desktops regularly.

If, in spite of these precautions, you become ill, contact your first line supervisor, leave the workplace or stay at home, and discuss leave options with your supervisor.

If a family member is ill, notify your first line supervisor, continue prevention practices and avoid close contact with co-workers. Supervisors, If you encounter a Soldier or Airmen at work who appears to be ill, ask him or her whether he or she is suffering from known allergies, if not, recommend that he or she seek medical attention. Disinfect smooth areas, and note the onset of the symptoms.

The aforementioned should in no-way be viewed as medical advice. Your doctor, the CDC, the World Health Organization are all good sources of information. The following website is recommended for your review: http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/

For more information on preventing the flu please visit: http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits.htm?s_cid=swineFlu_outbreak_internal_003

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: Why should I call the Lifeline?

The **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** is a 24-hour, toll-free suicide prevention service available to anyone in suicidal crisis. <u>If you need help, please dial **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**</u>. You will be routed to the closest possible crisis center in your area. With more than 130 crisis centers across the country, our mission is to provide immediate assistance to anyone seeking mental health services. Call for yourself, or someone you care about. Your call is free and confidential.

Para obtener asistencia en español durante las 24 horas, llame al **1-888-628-9454**.

From immediate suicidal crisis to information about mental health, crisis centers in our network are equiped to take a wide range of calls. Some of the reasons to call 1-800-273-TALK are listed below.

- Call to speak with someone who cares
- Call if you feel you might be in danger of hurting yourself
- Call to find referrals to mental health services in your area
- Call to speak to a crisis worker about someone you're concerned about

Change agents awarded for performance excellence

Story and photos by Master Sgt. Brenda Benner-
Texas Military Forces Public Affairs

AUSTIN, Texas – The 50th Annual Conference of the National Guard Association of Texas, held March 27-29, celebrated the achievements of many Texas Military Forces (TMF) organizations. One of the weekend's ceremonies recognized winners of the Texas Adjutant General's Performance Excellence Competition (TAGPEC).

The TAGPEC is used as the strategic framework for leading change. The Fiscal Year 2009 competition was open to all Lt. Col./Col. and Capt./Maj. level commands for all TMF units.

Each unit's TAGPEC application was judged by a board of examiners using performance criteria such as, but not limited to leadership, strategic planning, customer knowledge, safety and emergency preparedness.

Texas Adjutant General-designate Maj. Gen. Jose S. Mayorga, who personally presented all certificates and awards, said the awards are about change. He encouraged everyone in attendance to look at their organizations from within and determine how to make improvements.

First place in the 05-06 level command category was awarded to the Standing Joint Inter-Agency Task Force commanded by Col. Marvin Miller.

Second place was awarded to Texas Medical Command, led by Col. Marco Coppola.

The third place award was presented to 2nd Battalion, 136th Infantry Regiment, commanded by Lt. Col. Armando Santos.

There was only one official winner at the 03-04 level. The top honor went to the Camp Swift-based 342nd Engineer Company (Horizontal) commanded by Capt. Charlton Mosley.

Leaders of other organizations participating in the competition were recognized with Certificates of Appreciation for their documented efforts to improve their units by becoming change agents in their quest for excellence.

Captain Mosley said one of his unit's strengths is the ability to recognize and meet the needs of all its "customers" which includes full-time and M-day Soldiers and their families. Another area of emphasis for the 342nd involves emergency preparedness.

"By focusing on (our) Soldiers' family readiness, their personal equipment inspections and the unit's primary equipment, we ensure that our unit is prepared to meet the needs of Texas during times of natural disasters," said Captain Mosley.

Captain Mosley said building upon his unit's vision of "one team" was motivation for entering the TAGPEC.

"I rank the men and women of the 342nd among the best engineers of our nation," Captain Mosley said. "I couldn't be more proud to represent them as charged under my command."

Maj. Gen. Jose S. Mayorga, Adjutant General of the Texas Military Forces awards Col. Marco Coppola (above) and Capt. Charlton Mosley (left) top honors in the Texas Adjutant General's Performance Excellence Awards. Winners excelled in many categories.

Interested in making a difference?

Visit http://www.uso.org/howtohelp/

GED Plus Car, Gordon Roar Down Victory Lane

By Chief Master Sgt. Gonda Moncada

Texas Military Forces Public Affairs

Texas Motor Speedway, Ft. Worth, Texas (5 April, 2009) – It could not be more fitting for a race car driver to say: "The Texas Motor Speedway is not my best track which makes today's victory that much more special," because on the hood of his car he sported the National Guard GED Plus logo, a logo that promises to give teenagers a second chance to finish their GED even when that has proven to be too difficult in the past.

Jeffrey Gordon and his crew chief Steve Latarte, were all smiles and high fives after winning the 2009 Texas Spring event at the Texas Motor Speedway; a victory they both admitted, that had not come easy; but before the race even started and before they spoke to the media, they addressed National Guard members.

Both Mr. Gordon and Dale Earnhardt Jr. stopped by to speak with National Guard members who were thrilled to be so close to their idol. He spoke of sweeping turns and cross-or tail winds and effect of those conditions on the vehicle. He explained that whether car, boat or aircraft, the wind would have a significant impact on the race, even more so since he would be driving 190 miles an hour or more, but he said: "We will battle that today; we are ready." He added: "We have never won here in Texas but we are going to try and change that statistic today."

When he was asked why he had chosen the National Guard as a sponsor when he could pick from so many well-known brand names, Mr. Gordon replied: "We are very proud to have the National Guard GED Plus on board today. Dale was involved with the 88 car and the National Guard and it certainly did not take long for me to get involved. The things that the National Guard is doing out there to help so many people and helping kids to get their GED are tremendous especially in today's tough economy."

Above– Texas National Guard members with driver Jeff Gordon. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Eric Wilson, Texas Military Forces Public Affairs)

Above right- Jeff Gordon's National Guard GED Plus car before the race. (Photo by Chief Master Sgt. Gonda Moncada)

Middle right– On the track, waiting for the race to start. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Eric Wilson)

When asked: "Without crushing a youngster's dream to become a car racer, what message do you have for kids thinking of dropping out of high school, he said: "It is very important to finish high school; as a matter of fact I wished I had gone a little further in my education and gone to college. My parents pushed me and instilled in me the importance of education because of course as a kid all I ever wanted to do was race, race, race. My parents made me keep up my grades and I am so glad that they did. I believe it would have been a huge mistake not to finish high school."

He added: "Even in racing it paid off and could possibly have paid off even more if I had gotten my college degree, so maybe I'll finish that after I finish racing." I am proud to carry the GED Plus logo on the car because it gives some kids who have already dropped out, a second chance. Sometimes we make a decision and later on we think, 'I wished I would not have done that. The GED Plus program provides that second chance."

Mr. Earnhardt Jr. was equally supportive of the program when he spoke to the service members about his relationship with the National Guard. He said: "The men and women of the National Guard are among my fan base and I am proud to carry their logo."

Before the race, National Guard members were able to tour the garages and the number 24 and 88 cars up close. After the race they celebrated the win screaming their voices raw. If possible they were even more exited than Jeff Gordon, who did exactly what he had promised one Soldier he would do: "Win this one."

Texas' Tiger Team Arrives in Baghdad

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Jason Kendrick

56th IBCT Public Affairs Office, 36th Inf. Div.

BAGHDAD – Setting the conditions for a successful re-deployment from a combat theater back to home station can be a daunting task. 16 Soldiers of the Texas Army National Guard recently forward deployed to Iraq and arrived in Baghdad on Apr. 20. in order to support the re-deployment of the 56th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 36th Infantry Division, headquartered in Fort Worth, Texas.

The Soldiers that comprise the Tiger team hold a variety of military occupational specialties (MOS's) primarily concentrated within the personnel and logistics arenas. This core focus enables the team to successfully set the units and Soldiers up for a smooth transition from federal active duty status back to state control.

"To administratively prepare Soldiers for re-integration back into the Texas [Army] National Guard and ensure that they are set up for future career progression and promotion by documenting all the great things they have done over here – evaluations and awards- and getting it into their permanent file," explained Lt. Col. Ben Johnson, Tiger Team Officer in Charge.

The Tiger team will only enjoy a short stay in Baghdad as most will be sent onward to other locations to support the battalions that comprise the 56th IBCT. While in Baghdad, the Soldiers on the team received their "combat patch", some for the first time.

"I feel honored to receive and be able to wear this unique patch," said Sgt. 1st Class Jin Simonton, of Austin, Texas.

"It is a great opportunity for me to come here, and I knew that I was going to be working with great people with experience," said Pfc. Jessica Cavazos, a 19 year old Soldier who recently graduated from advanced individual training at Fort Jackson, S.C.

Left- Pfc. Jessica Cavazos, of Brownsville, Texas, receives her "Combat Patch" from Command Sgt. Maj. John Morgan, senior enlisted leader of the 56th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 36th Infantry Division on Apr. 21 at Camp Victory. Cavazos is a human resources specialist assigned to the Tiger team.

Texas National Guard Tiger team assigned to the 56th Infantry Brigade Combat Team stands in formation after a "Combat Patch" ceremony held at Camp Victory on Apr. 21. The Tiger team forward deployed to Iraq to help set conditions for a successful re-deployment of the 56th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 36th Infantry Division back to Texas.

72nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team Partners with 36th Div. Association

Army National Guard Capt. Adam Collett with the 72nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team visits with the members of the 36th Division Association (Houston Chapter) in Houston, Texas, Saturday, April 11th, 2009. The 72nd IBCT is partnering with the Division Association and other support organizations to strengthen community connections for Soldiers and families in advance of the unit's deployment to Iraq later this year. (Photo/Texas Army National Guard, Capt. Adam Collett)

American Heroes Celebration 2009

By Chief Master Sgt. Gonda Moncada

Texas Military Forces Public Affairs

Camp Mabry, Austin, Texas (21 April, 2009) – Lightning, rain and wind threatened to spoil the 2009 American Heroes Celebration Saturday and Sunday, but the clouds started clearing during the flag ceremony and by mid afternoon on Saturday the celebration was in full force with thousands of visitors. The ground was soggy, but the aroma of sausage and BBQ dispelled all thoughts of not going out and joining the fun.

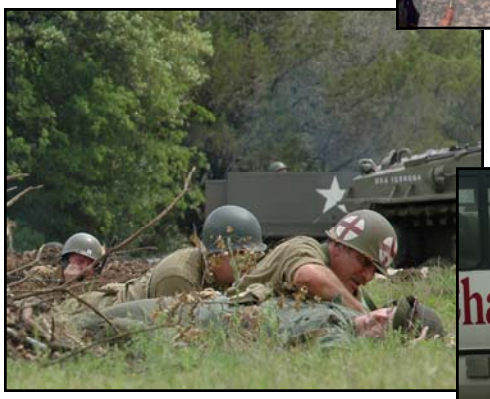
Soldiers, Airmen, family, friends and Camp Mabry neighbors enjoyed a day of recognition, remembrance and fun. The highlight of Saturday's events was the American Hero's Air Show highlighting helicopters and their crews. In addition to Texas Military Forces helicopter personnel, STARFlight Rescue and DPS crews were recognized for their often life-saving flights above Texas or overseas. Other groups recognized for their day-to-day heroic actions were Police, Fire, EMS, Rescue Units, SWAT, sheriffs and search and rescue personnel.

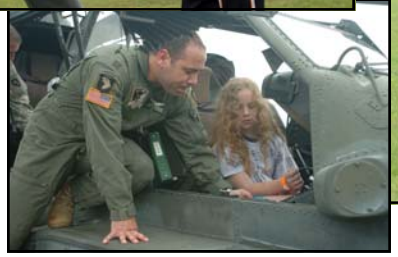
During the opening ceremony, and after a moment of silence, the clanging of a bell echoed across the parade field. Each clap signified a father, mother, son or daughter lost, be that in battle in a foreign land or saving somebody from a burning home or crime in Texas, but mostly it was a day of celebrating freedom. Children were treated to horseback rides, bounce houses, K-9 demonstrations, face painting and other fun activities, while the history buffs enjoyed WWII and Vietnam reenactments. STARflight, Department of Public Safety and military helicopters were open to the public and kids and kids at-heart had their photo taken inside the cockpit.

Sunday, Lt. Gen. Charles G. Rodriguez transferred command to the 50th Adjutant General Texas, Maj. Gen. Jose S. Mayorga and later that day a group of brand-spanking new lieutenants took the stage when one by one they received their first salute.

The 36th Infantry Division played, the Austin Police Department Pipe and Drum Corps performed magnificently and the Buffalo Soldiers strutted their stuff. What began with raincoats and umbrellas turned into a glorious Texas weekend and the professional relationships forged during Defense Support to Civil Authorities were strengthened by bonds of friendship.

See you next year!





Vietnam Reenactment Brings Memories, History to Life

By Sgt. Jennifer D. Atkinson

100th Mobil Public Affairs Detachment

While a wide grassy field and a cedar tree "jungle" may be far from the humid jungles of Vietnam, for many visitors to the American Heroes Celebration here April 19, the reenacted ambush was a glimpse into the pages of history, both personal experience and a war some have only read about.

Because of the treatment they received when coming home, "a lot of the veterans retreated with indifference, and sometimes, hostility," said Jeff Hunt, Director of the Texas Military Forces Museum on Camp Mabry and member of G Company Living History Detachment.

"I haven't talked about it much with my family," said Michael Williams, a Vietnam veteran from Pflugerville, Texas, but "this gave my kids a chance to see a little bit of what it was like there. Not a lot of what it was like, thank God, but a little bit."

For Glen Villoz, from Georgetown, Texas, telling stories of the men like Mr. Williams is why he participates in the reenactments. "Instead of coming home heroes, [the Soldiers] were generally shunned," he said, but as the population of Vietnam veterans ages, "they want their story told."

"What these guys went through when they were 18 or 20," said Mr. Villoz, "they never wanted to talk about that stuff with their families." His goal is to make sure these Soldiers are remembered for their contribution to history, not just that they were part of an unpopular war.

These Soldiers' "service and sacrifice was equal to any other veteran in any other war," said Mr. Hunt, but Vietnam was the first war Americans really got to see happen in front of them." "They sat down to dinner…and it was right there." Because of the amount of media coverage, he said, "history can be skewed."

"Vietnam gets referred to a lot," said Mr, Hunt, and it is important to educate people about the causes and effects of the war. Ignoring what happened there isn't the answer, he said, because "if we ignore it, lessons aren't learned and we [as a society] tend to repeat mistakes."

Gabe Ramirez, a resident of Austin originally from Mendocino, Calif., fought in Vietnam, and his son has deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"Iraq isn't Vietnam," said Mr. Ramirez. "My son's war isn't mine, but I want our story told. Maybe I don't like what I remember, maybe I miss my buddies, but I want people to know what we did, and what our war was really like. This is a good place to start."

36 ID ADT completes first of multiple deployments

Story and photo by Spc. Mary B. McDaniel

36th Infantry Div. Public Affairs

Austin, Texas—The 36 Infantry Division recently welcomed home the Agricultural Developing Team-1, (ADT-1), 36 Infantry Division, from a ten month deployment to Afghanistan. The unit deployed to Afghanistan in early April 2008.

The main focus of the ADT, a unit made up of approximately 50 soldiers, was to establish relationships with Afghan farmers and assisting them with various agricultural needs. In coordination with locals and government officials, ADT-1 identified problem areas and generated special projects to address the needs of the people.

Colonel Poe speaks with his staff as they prepare for a post operative mobilization briefing.

Col. Stan Poe, Commander, Agricultural Developing Team (ADT-1) expressed that for him it was a great honor to be providing support to the Afghanistan citizens. From his perspective, the people know a little about farming but not enough that would provide them with a stable environment.

"They know how to farm, they know how to produce, it's just the techniques they use are out dated," Colonel Poe said. "It's a very slow process, but they are very nice people and open to the help and easy to work with, they were glad that we were there."

"I saw a lot of progress in both their techniques and what they have learned." The ADT Commander said.

Agriculture makes up about 80 percent of the country's economic industry and about 85 percent of the population is engaged in farming. With all that the country has been through consisting of war and natural disasters, not to mention a substantial large amount of drug growth, it has had a drastic effect on the people, infrastructure and economic stability. That is where ADT comes in, helping the people sustain such issues like crop growing, maintaining soil for production and rejuvenating the water systems such as making sure the irrigation systems are functioning properly.

"Water is a central way of life," said Sergeant 1st Class Michael McCord, Agricultural Development Team hydrologist. Sergeant McCord specializes in irrigation, finding water and using the available water to help the irrigation for plants and crops. He believes the irrigation system is the heart of the problem.

"The problem is the huge gap between how irrigation was used 300 years ago and now with the new and improved technology," Sergeant McCord said. "Education is needed for the people to manage water including, water storage capabilities and the infrastructure power." Sergeant McCord believes once the water problem is resolved then cropping will fall into place.

The United States sends National Guardsmen from all over the U.S, which are affiliated with agriculture. 50 of the most highly skilled and qualified soldiers from the Texas National Guard with various backgrounds were chosen to support the agricultural development and security combat operations.

Search and Rescue Dogs Find Receptive Audience

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Daniel Griego

100th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Camp Mabry's American Heroes Celebration this year brought together diverse groups of people from various backgrounds and professions. Uniquely suited to feature a massive gathering of departments and organizations, the weekend-long event combined the related efforts of two offices that have never before worked together, the Austin Police Department Search and Rescue K-9 Unit and the Travis County Sherriff's Office K-9 unit.

During three separate demonstrations on Saturday, these teams came together to educate and entertain the public on the challenges, rewards and techniques of working with trained dogs.

"We start training out dogs the minute we get them," said Matthew W. McDermott, K-9 team head for the Austin Police Department's Search and Rescue Team. "Training is simply a matter of rewarding the [behavior] you want to keep and ignoring the stuff that you don't."

Though a part of the Austin Police Department and found within the 15-man Search and Rescue Team, the three-man K-9 team is not made up of police officers.

"We're an all volunteer team," said Mr. McDermott. "We're not sworn officers."

In contrast, the officers of the Travis County Sherriff's Office use their dogs in official police situations.

"My dogs are bomb dogs," said Jo A. Carson, a K-9 handler with the county office. "We also search for suspects who may have committed criminal acts."

The demonstration included the APD office describing training techniques and taking the audience step by step through the reinforcement process. Mr. McDermott led his Golden Retriever, Ruby, through search games and recognition exercises to highlight the dog's refined skills.

The county office followed with a discipline presentation about how obedient and focused the police dogs are. Darren Jennings, dressed in a protective suit, allowed Hutch, a German Shepherd, to subdue him as he played the role of a suspect. With perfect accuracy, Hutch subdued Mr. Jennings on command and immediately let go when the "suspect" began obeying the orders of the enforcing officer, Mike Stanley. True to training, the dog's actions never threaten the life of the suspect, they only serve to detain the individual.

Often misperceived as a violent attack dog, police dogs rarely engage their targets with biting or clawing. The handlers of both offices train their dogs especially for tracking, taking advantage of dogs' naturally heightened sense of smell.

A fan favorite of children and adults alike, the search and rescue dog demonstrations brought to the American Heroes celebration a wonderful glimpse into specialized law enforcement.

Left- Brendon D. Wilson, K-9 handler for the Austin Police Department, plays tug of war with Kobe, his Australian Shepherd.

Top right- Darren Jennings demonstrates dog attack techniques with Hutch.

Bottom right- Mike Stanley, K-9 handler for the Travis County Sherriff's Office walks with Hutch, his German Shepherd.

Former Cowboy Talks About Commitment, Guard

After nine seasons and 107 tough games with the Dallas Cowboys, Air Force Academy graduate, A-10 Warthog pilot, Gulf War veteran, and three-time Super Bowl winner Chad Hennings, isn't afraid of throwing out tough questions of his own.

Asking "How do you exemplify commitment as an individual? To a team? What does it mean to be committed to leadership? And finally, how do you commit to success?" Mr. Hennings addressed the Texas Army National Guard - Combat Skills Training and Evaluation Battalion and the 141st Infantry, 72d Brigade Combat Team.

Questions like these are important to Mr. Hennings and he took valuable time out of his busy schedule to discuss the answers with a group epitomizing commitment in his mind...the Texas Army National Guard.

Mr. Hennings is very appreciative of all the "Committed Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers, and Soldiers," delivering a very dynamic and motivational speech to those that "sacrifice to protect our State and National Interests" at Camp Swift on 20 January 2009.

Mr. Hennings colorful presentations and captivating anecdotes engages the soldiers, focusing on both the individual and how the individual fits into a team.

The "building blocks" of his message include: Overcoming Adversity, Trust and Teamwork, Perseverance, and Determination.

All of these "building blocks" work together to encourage and motivate individuals and teams deploying overseas or helping out at home in Texas.

Prior to his presentation on commitment, Mr. Hennings was treated to a briefing on the Combat Skills Training and Evaluation Battalion by the Commander, Maj. Jeff Long and exposed to much of the training that the units attend.

This included a trip through the Hmwvv Roll-Over Simulator, marksmanship on the EST 2000, familiarization fire on the M 249 and M 240 Machine Guns, and engagement training in the Convoy Simulator. Throughout all of the training, Mr. Hennings was in the same Personal Protective Equipment Soldiers wear, competing to do the very best he could.

Midway through the day, Mr. Hennings along with seventeen select NCOs and Soldiers, sat down to enjoy a question and answer lunch. The lunch was hosted by the Officers of the Combat Skills Training and Evaluation Battalion and recognized those that have made significant contributions to mission accomplishment and have been performing at very high levels.

Despite an already long day, Mr. Hennings spent time signing autographs and chatting with the troops. On the return trip home, he stated that he thoroughly enjoyed being with "Warriors, loving the experience and planning to return soon. Future plans include visiting the Texas Army National Guard Special Forces, Cavalry and Long Range Surveillance Units in the near future.

(For more information on the SF, Cavalry or LRS units, please contact Maj. Rex Vehrs 512-897-082 cell or rex.vehrs@us.army.mil).

Maj. Rex D. Verhs and Sgt. Jennifer D. Atkinson contributed to this story.

Left- Chad Hennings asks tough questions during a presentation to Texas National Guard Soldiers at Camp Swift.

Above- Chad Hennings takes a turn behind the "Ma Deuce," or M-2 machine gun at the Combat Skills Training and Evaluation Battalion at Camp Swift. (Photos by Spc. William Fortune)

Futuristic Training Comes to Camp Swift

Story by Staff Sgt. Daniel Griego

100th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

The convoy moved steadily on as its alert Soldiers continued to scan their sectors. Anxious and attentive, they react immediately to an ambush and work to neutralize the threat. With each member performing their respective role, this efficient, complex machine moves, shoots and communicates as a single entity to complete its mission. Between the radio communications, the suppressive fire and the quick-response movements of the drivers, the full convoy operates in perfect sync. Once clear of the danger zone, a voice from another world echoes in their ears. "Endex, endex. This simulation is complete."

As the U.S. Army continues to confront an ever-evolving world of conflict and technology, it must challenge its own standards of training to best meet the needs of the mission. Capitalizing on the latest advancements in computer simulations, the Army has implemented two new standards in pre-deployment training: The Virtual Convoy Operations Trainer (VCOT) and the Engagement Skills Trainer (EST 2000).

From the operator's manual, the VCOT "is a family of modular training devices that enable Service Members to train for convoy operations in virtual combat environments."

Army Sgt. Phillip P. Dodson, Range Operations Specialist, performs a function check on EST equipment used to train National Guard Soldiers at Camp Swift.

Spc. Christopher Lopez of B Co, CSTEBn, serves as gunner during a VCOT simulation. The VCOT allows realistic convoy training for Soldiers without needing real vehicles and routes. (Photos by Staff Sgt Daniel A. Griego.)

Simulating humvees and other tactical vehicles, troops sit with devices meant to replicate convoy seating while wearing virtual reality headsets for a full spectrum of vision. The system provides users unparalleled feedback by recording the complete exercise and playing it back for the troops during their after action review.

The virtual simulation offers a real-world picture to each individual, said Staff Sgt. Herbert W. Cox, VCOT Instructor at Camp Swift. "It teaches React to Combat, React to Ambushes, Roadblocks, Identifying Targets and other skills."

Fully encompassing an Army mission, the VCOT simulations walk the Soldiers step by step through every aspect of an assignment, from the operational order (OPORD) and pre-combat inspections (PCI) to staging and fragmentary orders (FRAGO).

"This gives you the kind of engagement scenarios you're going to possibly see in theater," said Capt. James W. Jones, executive officer for B Co, Combat Skills Training & Evaluation Battalion.

Distinguished as one of the few states with two VCOT systems, Texas got the most recent model just four months ago, augmenting the existing system, the Virtual Combat Convoy Trainer (VCCT). After training the currently deployed 56th Infantry Brigade Combat Team and the mobilizing 72nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, the system has been in almost constant use for the last six months, training thousands of Texas Soldiers.

"We need to get some more VCOTS in the state of Texas," said Sergeant Cox. "It's a great training asset."

Camp Swift, as a vanguard for Army National Guard training, also boasts having the standard in Army marksmanship simulation, the EST 2000.

The system, which replaced the Weaponeer in 2003, is a Windows-based program that can immediately identify a shooter's problems by showing the instructor the aim of the barrel before and after impact. This allows for facilitated diagnosis of trouble with breathing, trigger squeeze or aim.

"It is realistic training," said Spc. William R. Fortune, Facilities NCO for S-3 Operations at Camp Swift. "[The EST] can critique your shooting and your marksmanship by telling you what you're doing wrong. If you're pulling a round, you can actually see what you're doing."

The system uses an air compressor within the equipment to simulate the recoil of the respective weapons while, at the same time, a studio sound system plays coordinating firing sounds to further round out the experience.

Versatile and accommodating, the EST 2000 has a light side for training on the 9mm pistols, M4 and M16 rifles, as well as a heavy side for the M248, M240B and the .50 Cal. machine guns.

"We try to train them on the weapon systems that they'll be using when they deploy," said Charlie D. Macalik, Training Aids, Devices and Simulations Systems manager for the state.

As the standard Army simulation system, the EST 2000 prepares the troops in every way for basic rifle marksmanship qualification, down to the uniform requirement of helmet with full vest and plates.

"This is designed to have them practice their skills and fundamentals before they get out on the live range," said Mr. Macalik. "Soldiers that go through the EST prior to live-fire qualification do better than those not using EST."

As we refine and advance our technologies, we also advance our training equipment. The EST and VCOT present only a brief glimpse into what's to come for safe and effective training. The better our simulations become, the more effective we will be on the battlefield.

Understanding & Dealing with PTSD: Get The Facts

By Maj. Steve Keihl

Behavioral Health Team

This past month, I had the privilege of visiting the Restoration and Resilience Center at Fort Bliss. The center is set up to assist our returning heroes in coping with and overcoming the reality of combat stress disorders.

The program is a one of a kind model that includes intense treatment during a 4-6 month, 32 hour a week regiment. The program is also a "whole soldier" program addressing comprehensive issues including psychological, physical, emotional, social, and even spiritual dimensions.

I found myself totally enthralled as I listened to the program Chief, Dr. Fortunato, explain the various components of the program and guide me through the numerous service offices, treatment rooms, and common areas. My time at the R&R Center provided me with a growing hope that we are making progress in both understanding and treating PTSD and other combat related stress problems with our wounded warriors.

Even though PTSD remains a hot topic within the military culture and mental health world, there is still a lot of misunderstanding and confusion. I have worked with soldiers and airmen who were diagnosed as having PTSD by squad leaders, commanders, and even parents. I have interacted with others who were diagnosed just because they had been deployed. In case you are wandering, both of the above examples are inappropriate!

Reunions are happy occasions, but PTSD can have effects on a Soldier's homecoming. Get the right information and diagnosis from a mental health professional. (US Army photograph.)

Only qualified mental health professionals can provide a diagnosis of PTSD and such a diagnosis require meeting a number of criteria found in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV-TR).

OK, so here are some FACTS about PTSD. First off, PTSD is a condition that may develop after an individual has experienced some type of traumatic or life-threatening event. In our world, combat is one such event that can lead to PTSD.

Symptoms of PTSD can be placed in three general categories.

The first could be described as *RE-EXPERIENCING* the event. This could be categorized by intrusive memories, intense nightmares, or even flashbacks.

The second category is *AVOIDANCE*, which could be experienced as both an attempt to avoid people and situations that may remind you of the event or even withdrawal from life in general.

The final category could be described as *HYPERVIGILANCE* and could be experienced as easy to startle, irritability, anger, paranoia, and related sleep problems.

It is important to remember that NOT every service member exposed to combat will be diagnosed with PTSD. The facts are that the majority of service members participating in combat will NOT receive such a diagnosis. It is also important to remember that most service members will experience some of the symptoms of PTSD during NORMAL reintegration to life in the United States.

Having some of the symptoms of PTSD does not mean you can or should be diagnosed with PTSD. In fact, diagnosis requires that ALL three categories of symptoms are present at the same time for a period longer than 30 days.

I served as an MP in combat in Iraq and I can say that during my reintegration period, I dealt with virtually all of the symptoms of PTSD at one time or another. Some of the symptoms linger even today. That does NOT equal a diagnosis of PTSD.

I like to remind our brave warriors often that anytime a normal/healthy person is placed in an abnormal/unhealthy environment, the normal response is readjustment! Our soldiers and airmen are placed in the most abnormal environment possible (combat) and it is completely normal to struggle with reintegration and readjustment issues to a point.

That being said, PTSD is a real problem in our real world and can lead to a host of personal, relational, and even professional struggles if unattended. If you think you may be struggling with PTSD, you should get some help. Try this: take the anonymous PTSD assessment online at: www.militarymentalhealth.org. If your assessment suggests further treatment, get some help. Call us (512-782-7464) and we can assist! Remember, PTSD is treatable and fixable!

Behavioral Health Resources of the Month

Combat Stress Injury by Charles Figley and William Nash (ISBN 0-415-95433-9) is one of the most comprehensive and informative texts on the realities of combat related stress disorders, PTSD, and other struggles associated with combat. The text includes information regarding combat stress management, combat stress injuries and adaptation, and reintegration research. This book is a fantastic tool for anyone wishing to know more about combat related behavioral health struggles and treatment. Highly recommended for commanders and leaders!

Kids Take On Firefighter Challenge at AHC 2009

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Daniel Griego
100th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

With a furrowed brow and tired arms, he carries the fire hose over his shoulder across the line. Once across, he picks up a mallet and begins to pound away at a forced entry simulator. Tired but relentless, the next task brings the individual to a mannequin rescue scene, wherein his strength is tested as he carries the body to safety. Finally, he must extinguish a simulated fire with the precise aim of a powerful pressure hose. Successfully completing the tasks, he greets his family as they praise and cheer for him. This three-year old has just completed the Kid's Firefighter Challenge.

Scott M. Bartell, Lieutenant for Austin Fire Department Engine 1, helps Jack H. Waters, 5, work the fire hose during the Children's Firefighter Challenge.

The 2009 American Heroes Celebration at Camp Mabry welcomed dozens of uniformed departments and organizations to show off their service to the community. The Austin Fire Department warmly embraced the youth of the event by putting on a small-scale version of their annual service competition, the Scott Firefighter Combat Challenge.

"It's actually a competition that we train for quite a bit," said Scott M. Bartell, Lieutenant for Engine 1 of the Austin Fire Department. "It's a fun thing for the kids to see what we do."

Showcasing the American Fire Service while promoting physical fitness for children, the Kid's Firefighter Challenge takes participants through four of the rigorous trials of the real competition.

"[The Firefighter Challenge] was developed as an assessment tool for fire departments," said Bartell. "It simulates our firefighting activities."

The children's version includes a fire hose carry, the Keiser block, which simulates forcible entry, victim rescue with the aid of a mannequin, and a fire hose drag and spray. The adult counterpart additionally includes wear of the full SCOTT Air-Pak breaking apparatus and climbing a five-story tower.

"I like the hammer because I liked to move the big block," said Elizabeth W. Schiesser, 10. "I would like to do it again because I had a fun time."

Jim Key, retired Austin Fire Department Captain and coach for the AFD Firefighter Challenge Team, has been working with the competition since its conception more than 15 years ago.

"We brought some of the toys we play with on a daily basis that represent firefighting," said Key. "We want kids to have a good day."

"I like spraying the hose because it's like pulling a trigger on a gun," said Jack H. Waters, 5.

In addition to giving youths the opportunity to perform real firefighter activities, the Kid's Firefighter Challenge also educates children on fire safety, home evacuation during a fire and other safety topics. As an outreach program, it stimulates children to take an active role in their family's fire plan and engages them with related competitions such as fire safety posters and essay contests.

This year's national-level competition for the Firefighter Combat Challenge takes place in Dallas in October with the world competition following in November in Las Vegas.

Captain mentors teens in Senate Youth Program

by Staff Sgt. S. Patrick McCollum
National Guard Bureau

3/16/2009 - **WASHINGTON (AFNS)** -- Students participating in the U.S. Senate Youth Program recently toured government buildings including the Pentagon, met their elected representatives and learned about the foundations of democracy here.

They also became personally acquainted with a defender of this democratic process: Capt. Ladonna Singleton.

The Air National Guard captain, a communications officer with the 254th Combat Communications Group in Garland, Texas, was the only Air Guard member to mentor students in the week-long program that brings young people from across the country to learn more about the political process.

Captain Singleton escorted the students as they talked with high-level officials, including senators, Supreme Court justices, and even President Barack Obama.

Though the students may already know a lot about the political process, Captain Singleton said many were unfamiliar with the military.

"Some of the students had no idea what the Air Force did or the Army or the Marines or the Coast Guard or any of the other services until they met up with us," she said. "They now have a face, and now they're like, 'Maybe I can consider this.'"

The students were very curious about her job in the military.

"Most of the questions I get (are) 'What do you do?' and 'Do you like it?' and 'Why you do it?'" Captain Singleton said.

She took these opportunities to talk to them about the Guard and their role in hurricane relief, she said. Captain Singleton took a little more time with Evan McCartney, a Senate Youth Program student from Missouri who expects to go to the U.S. Air Force Academy.

"I want to be a pilot," Evan said of his planned Air Force career. He expressed a particular interest in jets.

Captain Singleton introduced Evan to the day-to-day workings of the Air Force, and the growth fields of unmanned aircraft systems, intelligence, and the captain's favorite -- communications.

"She's just brought an awareness of the internal side of the Air Force," Evan said. "I've always kind of known about the (UAS'), but she's shown me how it is growing."

News Briefs

Cavalry Squadron thanks College, Restaurant for Support during Crash-site Security Mission

By Spc. James Gaspar

72nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

COLLEGE STATION, Texas – The commander of the 1st Squadron, 112th Cavalry Regiment presented certificates to two civilian groups here Feb. 5, for support of squadron Soldiers working at a helicopter crash site the previous month.

Army Lt. Col. Bruce Ferrell presented the certificates to

the staff of Texas A&M University's Association of Former Students and to the staff of the International House of Pancakes here.

Approximately 35 Soldiers from the squadron were mobilized for five days to provide site security after a Texas Military Forces UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter crashed on the Texas A&M campus during a training exercise Jan. 12.

During that mission, both organizations provided critical support for the mobilized Soldiers, according to Army Maj. Paul Mancuso, executive officer for the squadron. Mancuso cited the IHOP restaurant as responding quickly and being extremely flexible to ensure contract meal arrangements for the Soldiers began on time. Staff from the AFS made a morale visit to the Soldiers in the field one morning, bringing care packages, Mancuso said.

Marci Gutierrez, restaurant manager, accepted the certificate on behalf of the staff at the IHOP location. Porter S. Garner III, president and chief executive of the AFS, accepted one certificate on behalf of that group. Scot Walker, Brenda Lessor, Della Holcomb, Kathryn Greenwade and Lisa Ashorn accepted a second certificate.

Mancuso and Army 1st Lt. David Inbody assisted Ferrell with the presentations.

Texas's Best Shooters at Sniper Competition

2 009 Texas Adjutant General's Combat Sustainment Exercise, for the Adjutant General's Sniper Matches took place March 28 and 29 at Camp Swift Texas. The Texas Military Forces snipers participated with the Texas State Rifle Association's Mid Range Championship which involved engaging targets at 300, 500 and 600 yards. Twenty-one TXMF personnel participated in the exercise.

The high individual both for new shooter and high over all was 1st Lt. Erik Alejos, A Company, 1/141 Infantry Battalion.

High Team was A Company, 1/141 Infantry Battalion with team members consisting of 1st Lt. Erik Alejos and Staff Sgt. Henry Aguirre.

Governor's Twenty Tabs were awarded to Lieutenant Erik Alejos and Sergeant Henry Aguirre. Governor's Twenty Tabs are awarded to the top twenty marksmen in the TXMF. They are broken down to eight rifle, eight pistol, two light machine gun and two Sniper slots. (Photos taken by Robert Langum)

CAC-Enabled Kiosks Coming to Armories, Reserve Centers

By Sgt. S. Patrick McCollum
National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. (4/20/09) - Information security has become an increasing concern in the military. Hackers attempt to crack into the Department of Defense global information grid daily.

While the active-duty military responds with new security measures, such as the requirement to log in to government computers with a Common Access Card (CAC), traditional Guardmembers with no CAC reader find themselves locked out and unable to do their jobs.

Army National Guard officials began rectifying this situation last year by installing thousands of CAC-enabled kiosks at armories and reserve centers in all 54 states and territories.

More than $3.5 million has been allocated for about 8,400 kiosks around the country.

"These (kiosks) are spread across units in an armory that may only have one computer," said Lt. Col. Rodney Swann, chief of network engineering operations for the Army National Guard. "When you have units that are drilling in that armory, they have no capability to do their work."

As Internet access and e-mail become more important to the job specialties of more Guardmembers, these kiosks will serve a vital role.

The National Guard Bureau provides an integrated CAC reader and keyboard, said Swann. It also provides monitors for 75 percent of the kiosks fielded and the states have extra monitors for the remaining 25 percent, he added.

"Generally, it's been received very positively by the (traditional) force that before didn't have anything," said Col. Bret Slater, chief of information technology plans, programs and policy for the Army National Guard.

The kiosks will also be helpful during Soldier Readiness Processing drills. Guardmembers will be able to access Army and Guard Knowledge Online and other Web sites to identify personnel issues before jumping into line. They can also fill out their periodic health assessment online to expedite the process of seeing a health provider.

"They know what issues they have and know what they need to do to get things working," said Colonel Swann.

Colonel Swann said the kiosks complement, but do not replace, the Distance Learning classrooms currently available in many armories.

"The Distance Learning computers are all personal computers that are put into a specific area that serve a different purpose," said Colonel Swann.

The main difference between the two, he said, is that the kiosks will not be equipped with word processing or spreadsheet programs – they are intended for use as an Internet portal.

A test model of CAC-enabled kiosk stands at the New York National Guard Joint Force Headquarters in Latham, N.Y. (Photo By Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone, 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade)

This Month in Military History: May

May 1837- Fearful of military insurrection and anxious to reduce government spending, President Houston furloughed most of the army. Defense now rested upon a small detachment of mounted rangers, a disorganized militia consisting in theory of all able-bodied males between the ages of seventeen and fifty, and volunteers called up to meet emergencies. Violent encounters with Indians and rumors of Mexican invasions continued, but the president's determination to delay military action in hopes of securing annexation by the United States was consistent with his reduced defense budget. (Handbook of Texas Online)

May 11, 1945- This night marked the beginning of a full-scale Allied offensive in Italy, designed to tear down the last barriers before Rome. For the opening phase, an attack against the strong Gustav Line covering Cassino, all Allied artillery that could be spared was used. The four battalions of the 36th were sent into the Minturno sector to support the 85th Division, while dummy pieces were set up in the rear area at Qualiano to mislead the enemy. (Pictorial History of the 36th Division, the 36th Division Pictorial History Team)

BEING BRIEFED before taking off to spot artillery targets are pilots: L. to R.: Staff Sgt. Raymond H. Porter, Lt. Artie T. Svoboda, Lt. Carl A. Bergman, Lt. Wallace T. Higgins.

STATE OF TEXAS

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

A Message from the Governor:

It is my pleasure to extend greetings to everyone attending the American Heroes Celebration at Camp Mabry in Austin.

When the situation is dire and the people of Texas are in danger, the first responders who are showcased at this event can be found rushing into harm's way.

While Texans are well aware of the courage and dedication of these fine individuals, events like this allow civilians to put a face to the heroism.

To those attending, this is a splendid opportunity to see how these heroes do their jobs to better understand just how much they are willing to sacrifice for the greater good.

I encourage you to take a moment to express your gratitude to these fine men and women. Politicians in Austin and Washington, D.C. can pass proclamations and read speeches, the personal exchange of a simple "thank you" from you can make a big difference.

To the youngsters present, these are the real role models of our society. Learn what you can from them, explore the machinery they use to do their jobs and never be afraid to ask questions.

First Lady Anita Perry joins me in wishing everyone a fun and inspirational event.

Sincerely,

Rick Perry

Rick Perry

Governor