

# The DISPATCH



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## 6 6th Boston Marathon at COB Adder, Iraq

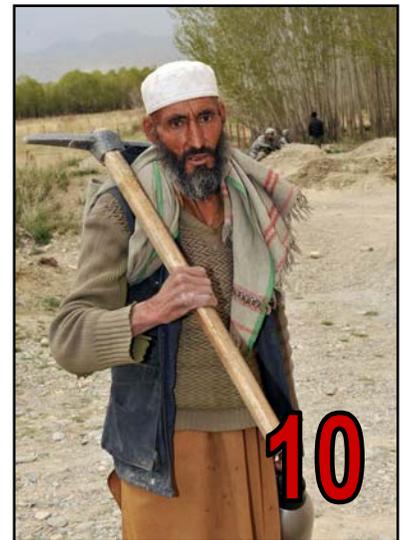
Besting roughly 400 other civilian and military runners from all over Iraq, Army Sgt. Derek Miller won the sixth-annual Boston Marathon at Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq April 18, 2010, with a time of 3:01:00, and shared the laurels was Spc. Janelle A. Drennan, whose 3:40:09 made her the first female finisher.

## 11 AHC WWII re-enactment brings history alive

The Muster Day reenactment brings to life a time in America's history when the nation was a member of the Allied forces fighting against Germany in World War II.

## 13 No exit ramp? No problems!

Even before going to basic training, new members of the Recruiting and Retention Command are tested on their rappelling skills after intensive training at Camp Swift, near Bastrop, Texas.



**Cover—A re-enactor makes a run for cover during the “Battle of the Siegfried Line” re-enactment during the 2010 American Heroes Celebration at Camp Mabry, Austin, Texas. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Daniel Griego, 100th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)**

# THE BULLETIN BOARD

# The DISPATCH

Vol. 5, No. 4 May 2010

## *Beware of Phone Scam*

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is warning veterans not to give credit card numbers, bank routing information or any personal and financial information over the phone to callers claiming to update, confirm, or verify VA-related information. VA does not call veterans and ask them to disclose personal financial information over the phone. A veteran targeted by scammers alerted VA, saying that someone called claiming to be with the VA pharmacy and asking a lot of questions. VA has not changed its process for dispensing prescriptions or for enrollment. Veterans with questions about VA services should call (877) 222-8387 or the nearest VA medical center.

## *Texas Veterans Grant Awarded*

The Texas Veterans Commission awarded a \$1 million grant to the Texas Veterans of Foreign Wars Foundation to be distributed to veterans experiencing financial hardship. Veterans across the state of Texas are encouraged to apply for emergency assistance with mortgage and rent payments, food assistance, utility payments and other basic needs. To apply for emergency financial assistance, contact the Texas VFW Foundation at 800-997-7096 or visit their Website at [www.texasvfw.org](http://www.texasvfw.org).

## *Army Ethics Competition*

The U.S. Army Center of Excellence for the Professional Military Ethic (ACPME) is sponsoring an Army-wide ethics competition running through Aug. 15. Soldiers, civilian employees and family members may choose up to seven ways to share their stories and personal insights about maintaining the U.S. Army's high ethical standards. The one-page entry form and submission package can be e-mailed to [theacpme@usma.edu](mailto:theacpme@usma.edu) or submitted by mail to: U.S. Army Center of Excellence for the Professional Military Ethic; ATTN: Competition; Taylor Hall, Bldg 600; West Point, NY 10996 or sent by fax to (845) 938-0414. For more information, visit the ACPME website at <http://acpme.army.mil/> or the competition's AKO website at [www.us.army.mil](http://www.us.army.mil) (login required).

## *Foster Homes for Veterans*

VA's Medical Foster Home (MFH) program finds a caregiver in the community who is willing to provide a Veteran with 24-hour supervision and personal assistance. This would be a long-term commitment, where the veteran may live for the remainder of their life. Veterans who enter MFH all meet nursing home criteria. The veteran pays the caregiver \$1200 to \$2500 per month to provide this care. This includes room and board, 24 hour supervision, assistance with medications, and any personal care. For more information, visit VA's Medical Foster Home webpage at <http://www1.va.gov/geriatrics/HCBC/>.

## *Wanted: Extraordinary Military Spouses*

The Military.com and CinCHouse.com 2010 Spouse of the Year Award, sponsored by AS-MBA and TriWest HealthCare Alliance, will be giving away \$5,000 to a spouse who has gone above and beyond to serve her/his family, country and the military community. Nominations are open through June 30. Get contest details and enter today at <http://www.cinchouse.com/Articles/SpouseoftheYear/tabid/8377/Default.aspx>

## *Comprehensive Soldier Fitness*

Army's latest addition to the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program, the Master Resilience Training is one of the four components of the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program which is designed to improve Soldiers' social, emotional, physical, spiritual and family strength. It also includes the Global Assessment Tool, online self-development modules and sustainment resilience training throughout a Soldier's career. For more information, visit the Army's Comprehensive Soldier Fitness webpage at <http://www.army.mil/cs/> and the "Road to CSF" video at <http://www.army.mil/media/amp/?bctid=77826704001>.

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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](mailto: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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# Never seen, but always there- telling all our stories

Story by Chief Master Sgt. Gonda Moncada  
Texas Military Forces Public Affairs

Austin, Texas (11 April, 2010) -- There is a group of people in the Texas National Guard and all other branches of the service who are never seen, but always heard.

Meet Senior Master Sgt. Elizabeth Gilbert, a member of the 136th Airlift Wing Public Affairs Office in Fort Worth who is currently in Iraq supporting the Logistics Mission Advisory Team. She will not be seen building bridges, streets or schools, but her team will and that is the way she likes it. She is one of the people behind the lens and the stories coming from around the globe.

Every photo-journalist receives credit in the byline, but like in the movies when the credits start rolling, the average viewer will have already turned away. That is not to say that these folks want to be in lime light, they do not. Their mission is to tell the Texas National Guard story, or as in Sergeant Gilbert's case the LMAT story.

"Another successful mission, she said, "on 29 March we covered a ribbon cutting ceremony of an Army Corps of Engineers built camp. This was a historical moment for the people of Iraq as they prepare themselves for self-sustainment and stability in the region and we prepare for draw-down."

This, on the face of it simple statement, is historical in that it allows the people of Iraq to populate this camp and secure their own borders. Every government strives for sovereignty - The power to make laws, to execute them, to form treaties of alliances but most importantly the right to govern. One day that will be a reality in Iraq and people like Sergeant Gilbert will have told that story.

Sergeant Gilbert is at Tallil Air Base, where she says: "It is full of Texas National guardsmen with lots of Texas flags. It is almost like being in Texas," but," she said: "got to go to another ribbon cutting event."

The 407th Air Expeditionary Group hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony where U.S. and Iraq forces joined to cut the ribbon during the Ali Base airfield Commemoration Day. Her story can be found on: <http://www.centaf.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123197338>

If it sounds like her job is fun, it is, but it is definitely not a job for the timid. Consider this: If these same troops go outside the wire, a term used for traveling outside a secure and protected camp or base, she is also there, facing every uncertainty her team does.

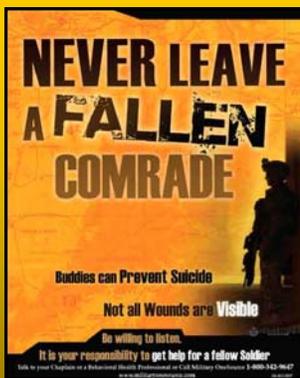
When she says: "Hello from Iraq," she is not sending "I wished you were here," postcard to mom and dad. She is every bit



**U.S. and Iraq forces join together along with KBR, contract builders, to cut the ribbon during the Ali Base Airfield Commemoration Day to officially open the brand new air traffic control tower in the background at Ali Base, Iraq March 27, 2010. The \$61.7 million ATC tower is the most modern tower built in Iraq standing 104 feet tall. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Master Sgt. Elizabeth Gilbert)**

as much a member of her team as the other Soldiers and Airmen all around her.

## afterdeployment.org Explores Behavioral Health Information



FALLS CHURCH, Va. -- The U.S. Army, with oversight by TRI-CARE Management Activity (TMA), has created an interactive Web site that allows service members and their families to explore behavioral health information. The site launched Aug. 5, 2008 at <http://www.afterdeployment.org>, and development continues.

"Afterdeployment.org serves as an interactive, self-help solution to assist with behavioral health needs

following deployment," said Army Maj. Gen. Elder Granger, deputy director, TMA.

Authorized by legislation, the site is a pilot project to help service members deal with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and other behavioral health conditions.

Visitors to afterdeployment.org will notice the user-friendly environment. By clicking on a video link play button, users can watch veterans, spouses and other family members tell real-life stories about how war changed their lives and how they dealt with the demands of readjusting after combat deployment.

In addition to these first-person accounts, a tool bar on the left side of the Web site links beneficiaries to educational topics that include: Getting Help, Check How You're Doing, Staying Healthy Where You Live, Stories from Home and Far Away, and Links, Books, Blogs & Pods. In each of these areas, additional links offer detailed information on chosen subjects.

A user-friendly environment is not all that matters to service members. Privacy is of paramount concern, and users don't have to register to access the site. Afterdeployment.org provides confidential education on sensitive issues such as stress and triggers, conflict at work, reconnecting with family and friends, moods, anger, sleep, substance abuse, stress management, kids and deployment, spiritual guidance, living with physical injuries and health and wellness.

## TWITTER “TEXASGUARD” FOR INFORMATION AND UPDATES FROM RECRUITING AND RETENTION COMMAND!



## VA recognizes “presumptive” illnesses in Iraq, Afghanistan

WASHINGTON (March 18, 2010) – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki today announced the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is taking steps to make it easier for Veterans to obtain disability compensation for certain diseases associated with service in the Persian Gulf War or Afghanistan. This will be the beginning of historic change for how VA considers Gulf War Veterans’ illnesses.

Following recommendations made by VA’s Gulf War Veterans Illnesses Task Force, VA is publishing a proposed regulation in the Federal Register that will establish new presumptions of service connection for nine specific infectious diseases associated with military service in Southwest Asia during the Persian Gulf War, or in Afghanistan on or after September 19, 2001.

“We recognize the frustrations that many Gulf War and Afghanistan Veterans and their families experience on a daily basis as they look for answers to health questions, and seek benefits from VA,” said Secretary Shinseki.

The proposed rule includes information about the long-term health effects potentially associated with the nine diseases: Brucellosis, Campylobacter jejuni, Coxiella burnetii (Q fever), malaria, Mycobacterium tuberculosis, Nontyphoid Salmonella, Shigella, Visceral leishmaniasis and West Nile virus.

For non-presumptive conditions, a Veteran is required to provide medical evidence that can be used to establish an actual connection between military service in Southwest Asia or in Afghanistan, and a specific disease.

With the proposed rule, a Veteran will only have to show service in Southwest Asia or Afghanistan, and a current diagnosis of one of the nine diseases. Comments on the proposed rule will be accepted over the next 60 days. A final regulation will be published after consideration of all comments received.

The decision was made after reviewing the 2006 report of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), titled, “Gulf War and

Health Volume 5: Infectious Diseases.” The 2006 report differed from the four prior reports by looking at the long-term health effects of certain diseases determined to be pertinent to Gulf War Veterans.

The 1998 Persian Gulf War Veterans Act requires the Secretary to review NAS reports that study scientific information and possible associations between illnesses and exposure to toxic agents by Veterans who served in the Persian Gulf War. Because the Persian Gulf War has not officially been declared ended, Veterans serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom are eligible for VA’s new presumptions. Secretary Shinseki decided to include Afghanistan Veterans in these presumptions because NAS found that the nine diseases are prevalent in that country.

Noting that today’s proposed regulation reflects a significant determination of a positive association between service in the Persian Gulf War and certain diseases, Secretary Shinseki added, “By setting up scientifically-based presumptive service connection, we give these deserving Veterans a simple way to get the benefits they have earned in service to our country.”

Last year, VA received more than one million claims for disability compensation and pension. VA provides compensation and pension benefits to over 3.8 million Veterans and beneficiaries. Presently, the basic monthly rate of compensation ranges from \$123 to \$2,673 to Veterans without any dependents.

Disability compensation is a non-taxable, monthly monetary benefit paid to Veterans who are disabled as a result of an injury or illness that was incurred or aggravated during active military service.

For more information about health problems associated with military service during operations Desert Shield, Desert Storm, Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom and related VA programs go to [www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/gulfwar/](http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/gulfwar/) or go to [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) for information about disability compensation.

# Texas Guardsman helps bring sixth annual Boston Marathon to Iraq

By Sgt. Neil W. McCabe  
4th BCT, 1st Armored Div Public Affairs Office

COB ADDER, Iraq – Besting roughly 400 other civilian and military runners from all over Iraq, Army Sgt. Derek Miller won the sixth-annual Boston Marathon at Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq April 18, 2010, with a time of 3:01:00, and shared the laurels was Spc. Janelle A. Drennan, whose 3:40:09 made her the first female finisher.

Sanctioned by the 114-year-old race's sponsor, the Boston Athletic Association, runners completing the 26.2-mile course qualify to run in the namesake race in Boston, said the COB Adder marathon organizer, Command Sgt. Maj. Lauro F. Obeada, command sergeant major of the 4th Special Troops Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division.

Sergeant Major Obeada said that in addition to their certificates, all runners finishing receive the same blue and yellow enameled pewter medallions presented to runners in Boston, as well as the official BAA Boston Marathon long-sleeve tee-shirt and lapel pin.

Like the namesake race and its iconic hills in Massachusetts, the race at COB Adder has its own unique challenges. Among these challenges are the uneven surface of some of the roads and the wind, which can vary from brief gusts to full-blown sandstorms, such as the vicious storm that postponed the race the previous day.

To avoid the brunt of the Iraqi sun, the race began at 4:30 a.m.

The early start sent racers onto a dark course, illuminated by streetlights and guided by chemical light sticks set out to make sure runners did not take the wrong turn. All along the route, there were water points, medic stations and portable toilets staffed by dozens of volunteers.

When Sergeant Miller and the others began to come in, just past 7:30 a.m., the

temperature was already in the 80s.

"I was pacing at a 6:30-mile until I hit the wall at mile 18, after that it was just survival," said Sergeant Miller, a native of Hersey, Pa., who is assigned to Sergeant Major Obeada's personal security detachment.

Sergeant Miller said that after the fifth mile, he was part of a two-man leader-pack with second-place finisher, Francis Yiga.

Mr. Yiga, who finished at 3:16:00, is a Ugandan security guard at the COB.

"Running together, we took turns drafting each other from the wind," he said.

At the 18-mile mark, Mr. Yiga, a former Uganda marathon champion, also had trouble and stopped at the water point.

"I looked for him, I saw he was 100 meters back," he said. As he hobbled from the finish line to the medic station setup inside COB Adder's Memorial Hall, Mr. Yiga said he stopped because he tweaked a thigh muscle and had to walk it off before he could jog the last eight miles.

"The most important thing is to complete the course," he said. Sergeant Miller said when he saw Yiga had pulled up he took advantage.

"If you fall behind at mile 18, you don't have it in your legs to pick it back up again. You have to save your move for when you feel you are the strongest," Sergeant Miller said. "I just told myself: 'Don't panic. Just keep this pace—he doesn't have the legs to keep up with you.'"

Running is a mental struggle more than a physical one, said Specialist Drennan, an intelligence analyst with the 201st Battlefield Surveillance Brigade, who battled sore knees during the race.

The Denver native and a track star at Eaglecrest High School in Aurora, Colo., said because this was her first marathon after competing in 10 half-marathons, her first mental struggle came at mile 13.

"I kept hearing the voice of my father,

who was also my track coach telling me: 'Keep going. Keep fighting.'"

Specialist Drennan said her first call would be to her father, who was waiting to hear how she did.

Although the race was promoted throughout U.S. Forces Iraq, the number of runners was restricted to 400, said Spc. Stevan H. Gonzalez, a Texas National Guardsman from San Juan, Texas.

Specialist Gonzalez, who handled the day-to-day preparations for the race, said the last slot was filled April 15 by an email registration at 3:37 p.m.

Despite the 400-runner cap, Specialist Gonzalez said he told last-minute applicants show up at the race anyway, and there was a good chance there would be enough no-shows to give the walk-ups a slot. After the race, he confirmed that everyone who wanted to race was given an official number and allowed to compete.

Two of the last applicants were identical twin brothers deployed to Iraq with the Virginia National Guard, Spc. Solomon Zemene, #399, and Spc. Eskinder Zemene, #398.

"We got here two weeks ago and when I saw the poster for the marathon, I told my brother we should do it," said Solomon, whose 3:36:56 time beat his brother's 4:00:07 time.

"He always beats me. I think he is just tougher. He keeps going when I feel like quitting," said Eskinder, who, like his brother, is a resident of Alexandria, Va., and a student at Northern Virginia Community College.

As the Zemene twins look forward to other races here in Iraq, Sergeant Miller said he is slated to fly home with other Soldiers from his battalion before the end of the month, and he is already eyeing his next goal.

"I ran in Boston in 2004, but I dropped out with cramps at mile 5. I will absolutely be there next year."



# 136th MP BN returns from detainee operations in Afghanistan

**Story and photo by Sgt. 1st Class Merrion LaSonde** Sanders, Deputy Commanding General- Support, 36 ID.  
**36th Infantry Division Public Affairs**

TYLER, TX- "I am surrounded by people who heard our nation's call and responded when the country needed them," said Congressman Louie Gohmert (R-TX), during a welcome home ceremony here at the Trinity Mother Francis Rose Stadium. "God bless you and God Bless America. Thank you!"

In June of 2009, the 136th Military Police Battalion deployed to Bagram, Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The battalion assumed its mission of detention operations (care, custody and control of over 1100 detainees) and base defense at Bagram Airfield under the name Joint Task Force Lone Star. In December 2009, the task force executed a historic move from the Bagram Theater Internment Facility (BTIF) to the new Detention Facility in Parwan (DFIP) meeting United States Forces and Afghanistan strategic initiatives in detention operations and shaping future Afghan partnerships.

JTF Lone Star's accomplishments were many and included integration of 10 separate units and over 1200 Army, Navy and Air Force personnel into a cohesive joint team to successfully conduct theater level detention operations; provided base defense/security for the Detention Facility in Parwan and life support area by securing over 40 acres from enemy attacks while allowing for the final build out, occupation and operation of the Detention facility in Parwan; safely transferred over 200 detainees to the Afghan National Detention Facility in Kabul; conducted ground release missions of over 50 detainees to the International Committee of the Red Cross; and organized family visitation missions which provided over 300 family members an opportunity to visit over 200 detainees.

"I would like to say, 136 MP's welcome home," said Brig. Gen. Stephen G.

Sanders, Deputy Commanding General- Support, 36 ID. "These Soldiers were successful in their mission and they all came home. Considering the demands of the mission they had and the microscope they were under constantly, their success speaks well of their professionalism and their dedication to duty."

General Sanders went on to say, "(Lt. Col. Amy Cook) not all battalion commanders can say they successfully led a battalion in this difficult a mission and brought them all home, congratulations."

The 136th Military Police Battalion, with its attached companies, is descended from units of both the 36th Infantry Division and the 49th Armor Division. Unit lineage includes participation credit for WWII campaigns at Naples-Foggia, Rome-Arno, Southern France, Ardennes-Alsace, Central Europe, Northern France and Rhineland. In November 1973 the battalion was re-organized as the 149<sup>th</sup> Military Police Company and HHC, 49th Armor Division. The Battalion remained the 149th MP Company, until 2004 when the 49th Armor Division retired its colors and was re-flagged as the 36th Infantry Division. The 149th MP Company became the 236<sup>th</sup> MP Co under the 71st Troop Command. In 2006, Army transformation saw the formation of the 136th Military Police Battalion and subsequent assignment to the 136th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade.

Today, the Battalion is composed of seven units located across the great state of Texas: The HQ in Tyler, 236th MP Co. in San Antonio, 606th MP Co in El Paso, 702nd MP Co in Lufkin, 712th MP Co in Baytown, 698th MP Detachment (CID) in Houston, and the 1149th MP Det. (CID) in Austin. This was the first deployment for the Battalion Headquarters.

"One year ago, I developed three goals for our mission to Afghanistan," explained



**Lt. Col. Amy Cook, Commander, 136th Military Police Battalion, 136th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, 36th Infantry Division, unfurls her colors. The practice of casing a unit's colors is an Army tradition that symbolizes the unit's movement to a new theater of operation. It is the honor of the unit command to uncasing their colors upon their return.**

Cook. "The first was to complete the mission honorably, and we can safely say that we have done that. In an environment that has a long shadow of Abu Ghraib cast over it, we were able to bring a light of integrity and honorable service to the new detention facility in Parwan. The second goal was to get everyone home safe. The third was to exploit our diversity. The combination of talents of this team and the American spirit allowed us to safely move an entire theater internment facility during our tour. It has been my honor to serve as the commander of this unit."

TEXAS MILITARY FORCES » TEXAS KNOWLEDGE ONLINE

*Texas Knowledge Online has a new homepage and a new look!*

*Come and see what's changed!*

# True American heroes- New citizens sworn in during special court

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

AUSTIN, Texas— "Patriotism is voluntary," said former Seaman and politician Jesse Ventura. "It is a feeling of loyalty and allegiance that is the result of knowledge and belief."

One could not find greater patriotism than from the service-members who valiantly serve a country of which they are not citizens. For 15 such veterans, that changed on Saturday, April 17 when the Honorable Lee Yeakel opened a special session of the US District Court to swear in these incomparable volunteers as US citizens.

The ceremony, held during Camp Mabry's 4th annual American Heroes Celebration, took place in front of the American Veterans Traveling Tribute Traveling Wall. The wall, which is a precise replica of the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C., offered a somber and reverent setting for this significant occasion.

"I can think of no more appropriate place for this," said Retired Lt. Col. Donald R. Allen, CEO of the AVTT, who also served as the distinguished guest speaker for the event. "Our history has taught us that we were founded on the principle of freedom at any cost."

The newly immunized citizens came from 13 different countries, including Kenya, Mexico, Russia and Kazakhstan. Their services included the US Army, Marines, Air Force and Coast Guard. The troops, ranging in ages from 19 to 39, included four combat veterans and eight Texas residents.

Army Spc. Victor A. Becerra, who was born in Mexico and raised in California, deployed to Iraq twice before even becoming a citizen. A member of the 36th Infantry Division, he spent his second deployment to Iraq training their police force.

"What we were doing was overseeing the training of 6th Iraqi division," he said, "to make sure that their forces were properly trained so they could stand to protect the region that they were in charge of."

Specialist Becerra always felt close to the nation for which he's served for years.

"I've been an American since I first put on this uniform, ever since I started speaking the language," he said. "I feel just as proud to be a part of this country."

Maj. Gen. Jose S. Mayorga, commander of the Texas Military Forces, presented each new citizen with his coin and congratulated them on their achievement.

"It took maybe six to eight months," said Specialist Becerra. "That included the studying for the exam for the interview. It's good to know how this country has developed when it was founded back in the 18th century."

"They were defending and protecting and fighting for a country that they weren't even a citizen of," said Colonel Allen. "That, my friend, is a true measure of patriotism, these are great patriots. We should be very proud that as a country, there are people that are willing to fight for us to become one of us."

Without a doubt, these brave servicemembers have worked and devoted themselves to the fulfillment of a life of service.

"I've always been an American at heart," said Specialist Becerra. "But I could say that today, it's official; I am an American."



**Above left—** Service members from four branches and seven states swear-in as citizens at the 2010 American Heroes Celebration.

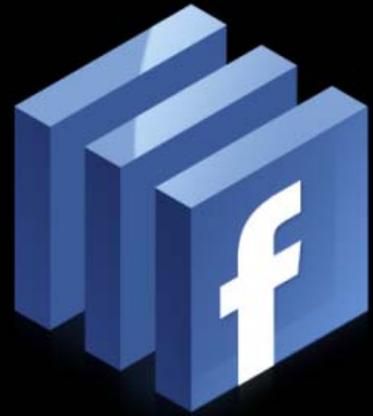
**Above right—** The Honorable Lee Yeakel opened a special session of the U.S. District Court to swear in the United States' newest citizens. (Photos by Sgt. Jennifer D. Atkinson, Texas Military Forces Public Affairs)

**For more info on US citizenship, visit [www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis](http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis)**

## Look for the Texas National Guard

on facebook at

<http://www.facebook.com/TexasMilitaryForces>



## Texas surgeon moonlights as paratrooper, looks to Ranger School

**Story by Capt. Travis Cole**  
**Combat Skills Training Branch**

FORT BENNING, Georgia— (29 Jan 2010) – Somebody who you would not immediately associate with paratrooper school graduated here 29 January.

Capt. Scott McAninch, Battalion Surgeon and Emergency Room Doctor, joined the proud tradition of United States Army paratroopers by graduating from the U.S. Army Airborne School at Ft. Benning, Georgia.

Captain McAninch is obviously not the



**U.S. Army paratrooper (Photo by Brenda Donnell/Fort Benning Homepage)**

typical Army Captain in a military specialty that trains him to jump out of airplanes. He is a highly skilled ER physician from Belton and works out of Metroplex Hospital in Killeen for his civilian profession. He is also the battalion surgeon of the 1st Battalion (Airborne), 143rd Infantry and he is commonly asked: “why would a man with a prestigious civilian career, as well as a military specialty that is in high demand choose to be a paratrooper?” The answer lies in Captain McAninch’s passion for service, as well as his desire to make a greater than normal commitment to himself, his state and his country.

Captain McAninch is a Grand Prairie native and a graduate of the Texas A&M School of Medicine. He is not only a highly educated paratrooper, but at thirty-four somewhat older than most of the men volunteering for Airborne School. Captain McAninch joined the Texas Army National Guard out of a desire to contribute to protecting our nation’s freedom as well as to provide quality care to Soldiers.

He has spent five years in the National Guard with previous assignments with the 1-149 Aviation in Texas from 2004 to 2008 and with the 1-19 Special Forces Group (Airborne) in the Utah Army National Guard in 2008. When he returned to the Texas and the Texas National Guard, Captain McAninch wanted to do something unique. He was drawn to the newly formed Airborne Battalion in Texas as a way to serve with highly motivated troops.

Like many of its new officers, Captain McAninch saw in the 143rd the potential of a unit that could be a cut above the rest. He was excited about the opportunities to

serve and train as well as doing the sort of non-medical infantry training that would allow him to better understand the men he serves.

Of course, in the Airborne, those opportunities for training start out with Airborne School at Fort. Benning. Airborne School lasts three weeks and during its final week, Soldiers complete five jumps to earn their silver jump wings. Captain McAninch started Airborne School on 17 January during an exceptionally cold winter in Southwest Georgia. Outside of the bitter cold, he recalled his trainers, the Black Hats, and their teaching methods. Although the first two weeks can be monotonous with endless Parachute Landing Fall practice and time in the swing landing trainers, Captain McAninch said that the airborne experience of jumping out of airplanes was exciting, satisfying and exhilarating.

With that milestone completed, Captain McAninch is now qualified to jump with his unit. Even more impressive is this surgeon’s desire to follow up with arguably the Army’s toughest course, the Ranger School. He is looking forward to other future training opportunities as well, such as the 143rd’s jump into Australia in 2011.

The 143rd Airborne Battalion is actively seeking Soldiers to be a cut above but only the highest motivated and physically fit need apply.

Captain McAninch, the battalion surgeon, has the intestinal fortitude to be among the best Soldiers in Texas, and so can you! Soldiers should call Staff Sgt. Zach Miller at (512) 782-6757.

# Afghan students getting green thumbs in Ghazni Province

**Story by U.S. Air Force 2nd Lt. Katherine Roling  
Ghazni Province Reconstruction Team Public Affairs**

GHAZNI Province, Afghanistan— Almost 5,000 Afghan students at Sanayee High School in Ghazni province, Afghanistan, are learning not only about math, history and geography, but also about agriculture.

The Agribusiness Development Team in Ghazni, made up of members from the 36<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division of the Texas Army National Guard, led a small team of U.S. service members April 8 to the all-male high school where they spoke to the assistant principal to verify the completion of a school project.

The project, similar to Future Farmers of America programs, involves small square-foot gardens and aims to give students a chance to work with the soil.

While Abdul Sabur, the assistant principal, was content with the work that had been done, the Texas ADT learned that the school needed additional seeds and tools for the agricultural classes to give the students a more hands-on experience.

“Once we show the students physically how to plant trees and seeds, it will encourage them,” said Abdul Sabur.

The team also learned that agricultural teachers were scarce. They offered to train the current agricultural teachers to better qualify them for the job. The team also suggested a field trip for the students to Jungal Bagh farms, where they could see the work of agricultural experts in progress.

“Really, what it comes down to, is that agriculture is very important to the Afghan people, and we need to reach them at a very young age,” said U.S. Army 1st Lt. Rodney Robinson, agribusiness marketing specialist. “What better way to reach them than through high school, because agriculture is one of the main sources of income for the Afghan people.

“We want to help the students, so by giving them the knowledge and the hands-on experience, they can take this and better their families’ lives or they can pursue an agricultural degree.”

Along with members from the Ghazni Provincial Reconstruction Team, the Texas ADT looked for ideas for future projects.

The school grounds, established almost 80 years ago, bustled with activity as young boys and teenagers, ranging from 1<sup>st</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade, traveled between classes. In addition to the main school building, overflow tents littered the ground, which provide more classroom space to the eager students.

During their discussion with the assistant principal, they discovered that the school was very popular with its students.

“About 350 students will graduate this year, and 90 percent will be going to a university,” said Sabur.

The school, one of 20 to 25 schools in Ghazni City, encourages its students to become teachers. “About seven students from here who went to the university came back here to teach,” said Sabur. “We have some students who teach at the university in Ghazni now.”

However, the faculty faces challenges inherent to a war-torn country. During the time of the Soviet occupation, their library books were burned, said Sabur.

The library is now used as a classroom to accommodate overcrowding.

Despite these challenges, the school, which teaches 17 sub-

jects like history, geography, math, agriculture, English, Dari and other basic education courses, maintains its popularity and prestige.

“This is a very popular school in Ghazni City,” said Sabur. “When people graduate from here and go to Kabul, they will ask the students if they graduated from Sanayee High School.”

The high school is conveniently located near a 53 acre demonstration farm that grows trees and plants for government facilities. Known as Jungal Bagh Farms, it is another location that the Texas ADT has supported since 2008.

Once the visit to the school was complete, the Texas ADT and Ghazni PRT made the short trip to Jungal Bagh Farms. They met with Sultan Hussein, the Department of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock representative. Mr. Hussein, accompanied by United States Agency for International Development and United States Department of Agriculture representatives, showed the team the work being done at the farm.

Hussein explained that he was responsible for providing trees to government facilities like schools and government compounds.

“I have to make sure I have enough trees for all those sources every year,” said Hussein.

More than 22,000 trees have gone to several districts throughout Ghazni province, including Qarah Bagh, Giro, Malistan and Ghazni districts, he said.

Aside from agriculture, the Texas ADT also looked at the opportunity to support water control structures at the government-run farm. Two years ago, flooding destroyed all of the pine and fruit trees, and the team wanted to find a way to prevent that.

“We’re going to be able to put in some water control structures that will prevent some of the scour and erosion problems, and stop the flooding of the fields,” said U.S. Army 1st Lt. David Inbody, Texas ADT hydrologist.

The best method will probably be gabions, which are a low-tech but effective technology, said Inbody. “They’re baskets full of rocks and they slow the water down but still allow some of the water to get through.”



**Capt. Charles Peters, Texas ADT operations officer, inspects the condition of a greenhouse during a site survey at Jungal Bagh Farm in Ghazni Province on April 8. Texas ADT works closely with farmers to achieve the best growing conditions for crops. (Photo by Tech. Sgt. JT May III)**

# American Heroes Celebration re-enactment brings history to life

**Story by Cpl. Maxiliano Garza**  
**100th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment**

The Muster Day reenactment brings to life a time in America's history when the nation was a member of the Allied forces fighting against Germany in World War II. The annual event, put on by the Brig. Gen. John C. L. Scribner Texas Military Forces Museum, took place at Camp Mabry in

Austin during The 2010 American Heroes Celebration, held April 17 and 18.

Throughout the two-day reenactment, the period actors camped out in the field in authentic tents.

"I have been inspired by WWII history since I was a child and my father, who is a WWII veteran," said Matt Rayson, portraying a field medic in the 36th Infantry Division.



G Company, 36th Infantry Division, the main body of the reenactment, along with other living history groups and military vehicle collectors, built the battlefield and campgrounds of the American Division and their German counterparts. The battlefield was filled with simulated dragons' teeth, barbed wired, bombed out buildings and military pyrotechnics.

The goal was to remind people of what life was like for Texas Army National Guard's 36th Infantry Division in World War II, honor all veterans. The public was also educated on Texas military

history with vehicles such as a Sherman Tank, M3 Halftrack, jeeps, German Hetzer, and Kubelwagens. The re-enactors also had authentic uniforms and weapons.

"Veterans appreciate [the re-enactors] being out there, veterans from the 36th have come by time to time," said John Reed, a 36th ID re-enactor.

The event recreated the attack on the Siegfried Line in March 1945, which was the last line of defense the Germans had before the US entered Germany.

With the Allied troops in the east tree line and Axis troops coming in by convoy, their encounter began the engagement. With shots fired from rifles and machine guns on both sides, the 36th ID slowly moved forward on the German bunkers and buildings. When the 36th's Sherman tank rolled onto the battlefield, the Germans quickly started using mortars and their own armored vehicles against the US troops. After the 40-minute battle, the 36th ID ended the skirmish by destroying the German headquarters. After the re-enactors performed a quick clean up of the battlefield, the spectators joined them on the field to collect and keep parts of the engagement as souvenirs.

"If anything's my favorite, it's the old World War II tanks," said Daryl Reif, a spectator of the event. "I would love to see a tiger tank, but those are very hard to come by."

Mr. Reif, who has attended the event for four years straight, enjoys bringing his six-year-old son each time. "It keeps getting better every year."



**Top left— A re-enactor participates in the "attack on the Siegfried Line" demonstration at the American Heroes Celebration. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Daniel Griego, 100th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment.)**

**Bottom left— Texas Military Forces Museum director Jeff Hunt talks to the crowd after the "battle" during the American Heroes Celebration. (Bottom photos by Cpl. Maxiliano Garza, 100th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)**

**Bottom right— An explosion during the battle re-enactment gives visitors a glimpse of a WWII battlefield.**

# Search and rescue dogs help entertain, educate public at AHC

Story and photo by Spc. Suzanne Carter

100th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

AUSTIN, Texas - "We wouldn't put a dog in a tree in a search event," said Casey E. England of Travis County Search and Rescue. "But we might have a reason for why we would need to put a dog in a harness and raise him up a cliff face."

Mr. England and Megan E. Kazda, also of Travis County Search and Rescue, prepared AJ, a Labrador mix, for a rappelling demonstration as part of the search and rescue dog event at the 2010 American Heroes Celebration at Camp Mabry in Austin. The exhibitions, held April 17, showcased the discipline and skills of search and rescue and police dogs.

"We all practice rope safety and rappelling," AJ's handler Sean D. Glynn said about his search team. "You also want to get the dogs used to being rappelled down.

"This is part of the initial training where you're just getting them used to being comfortable suspended and moving in a vertical environment," Mr. Glynn continued. "I'm going to give him some pieces of bread, and he's going to associate this happy feeling.

"Some dogs, they might scramble at first," Mr. Glynn said, while content AJ dangled in his harness from the tree above. "As soon as they get used to being up there, they're just suspended and hanging out."



**Megan E. Kazda, Travis County Search and Rescue, holds on to AJ as they rise among the branches.**

"It's cool because he could save me," said Sophie Beilinton, 9, as she reached out to pet the dog after his safe return to the ground.

Despite a light rain earlier that day, dogs from Austin Police Department Search and Rescue and Travis County Sheriff's K-9 Unit also demonstrated their special skills.

Matthew W. McDermott, a volunteer with APD Search and Rescue through K-9 Search, began the demonstrations with a word about safety.

"We get out there and we talk to the kids about what to do if they get lost, how to use their heads," he said. "The main thing you want them to know is to stay in one place. Doesn't matter if they're in the woods or if they're in the mall. ... Grab on to something, like a garbage can."

Mr. McDermott performed an evidence demonstration with his 11-year old Australian Shepherd mix, Willa. Sniffing out a glove hidden in a row of boxes, Willa lay down when she caught the scent.

"This is her trained alert," Mr. McDermott said as he described techniques Willa uses to let him know she's found her target.

Travis County Sheriff's K-9 Unit showcased their dogs' discipline and focus. Deputy Mike Stanley walked his German Shepherd, Tex, across the parade field. Tex did not hesitate or take his attention off his handler.

German Shepherd Ryker and Deputy Jo A. Carson apprehended "unsavory character," Stanley, in a bite suit. Deputy Gilbert A. Hernandez and Meliton, another German Shepherd, pulled a stubborn suspect from his vehicle in a demonstration new to the celebration.

Though police dogs move fast, they do not move with the intent to injure. Ryker and Meliton followed their training and released their suspects when they stopped resisting.

"We spend about 10 hours a day training new dogs," Deputy Hernandez said. "Of course it's not 10 hours straight, but we start with obedience and work up from there."

Deputy Hernandez said, though Travis County owns them, "essentially, they are our dogs. We spend 10 hours a day in the car while we're working, and then they go home with us. ... It's a 24-hour-a-day job pretty much."

The amount of time these K-9 handlers spend with their dogs creates an intense bond. Mr. McDermott pointed this out when he compared search and rescue dogs to police dogs.

"Ours are friendly, lick-your-face dogs," he said. "Theirs aren't. Theirs are trained for protection. They'll take a bullet for their officer if they have to."

While families love seeing the dogs in action, Mr. McDermott said the celebration gives search and rescue teams an opportunity to inform people about the dogs, their training and their jobs.

"We love being out here," he said. "The thing I like about it the most is the recognition we get as a team. I'm often amazed at how many folks don't know that Austin even has a search and rescue team."

**Learn more about your GI Bill! [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov)**



*Until Every One Comes Home*

# Want to help support your Texas Military Forces? Find out how at <http://www.uso.org/howtohelp/>

## No exit ramp? No problem! Rappel training at Camp Swift

**Story and photo by Chief Master Sgt. Gonda Moncada**  
**Texas Military Forces Public Affairs**

Camp Swift, Bastrop, Texas (2 Apr 2010) - Even before going to basic training, new members of the Recruiting and Retention Command were tested on their rappelling skills after intensive training that culminated here Friday.

Members of the 136<sup>th</sup> Training Regiment conducted Rappel Master Refresher training and UH-60 Pilot Rappelling Certification Training in support of an upcoming Air Assault Course.

After receiving ground, slant wall and tower training, the students boarded one of

the two UH-60s, wearing what appeared to the untrained eye as very uncomfortable rope seats but in reality are life lines in the literal sense of the word. The aircraft would ascend and descend numerous times until all students had a chance to jump and also serve as ground personnel managing the rappelling ropes that stretched to the ground.

Some jumps were picture perfect and graceful, some not so much but the most important aspect of this training was that it was performed under strict supervision and in accordance with safety regulations.

"This is realistic training and it instills

a sense of gravitas in our students because military service is serious business," said rappel master, Master Sgt. Thomas L. Harper.

Ground training started at 0800 hours with students rappelling from increasingly higher towers. As a portion of their training the young Soldiers were also trained in combat-life-saving. Each Soldier, whether male or female had to show enough upper body strength to perform a four-men litter-carry as well as 'a grab a battle buddy by the collar drag' in case a quick exit from the battlefield overrides all other concerns such as head injuries and broken limbs.

If any of the young people had a romantic view of military service before the training, they departed with a much better understanding. Each of the students performed a feat that many would define as terrifying, and if asked earlier in the training would have seemed impossible to many of them. Ultimately, their unwavering dependence on the trained staff, their own confidence and courage gave them the skills necessary to depart a hovering aircraft while momentarily dangling between heaven and earth with nothing but a harness, a set of ropes and experts guiding from above and below.

Other training conducted at Camp Swift includes obstacle course training, life firing and land navigation. It has a grenade range, firing range, mock village to conduct close combat training, living and dining facilities.

Training at Camp Swift has increased dramatically since 9-11 and multiple facilities have been added to the existing site.



**Soldiers rappel from a UH-60 Blackhawk during rappel training at Camp Swift.**

# Annual supply and maintenance conference connects, improves

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

"They don't know the questions to ask to get the right information," said Master Sgt. Frank H. Arellanes of contemporary Texas Army National Guard supply sergeants. "They are not alone; if they'd just be willing to ask for help, they'll get it."

The wealth of information necessary to function as a supply sergeant is daunting and oftentimes overwhelming. From transfers and requisitions to inventories and inspections, it is among the most mentally demanding positions within the military. Each year, these taxed servicemembers come together for three days to discuss their mission, goals and procedures. For this year, they did more than that as the 2010 Texas Army National Guard Supply and Maintenance Conference convened to rewrite the book on how best to service our troops.

Held April 6 – 8, this year's conference welcomed supply sergeants, property book officers (PBO) and brigade supply representatives from across the state to the InterContinental Hotel in the Galleria area of Houston.

"My office pulls together all the supply maintenance personnel from around the state and brings them together for a week of training and networking," said Col. Ronald G. McLaurin, Director of Logistics and OIC for the conference. "It allows them



Mr. Bruce "Buck" Baker, Texas Physical Security Office Program Manager, discusses physical security inspections during a class at the 2010 Texas Army National Guard Supply and Maintenance Conference.

to catch up on all the latest supply and maintenance issues as well as update their computers and update their procedures."

If this year's conference had a theme, it would likely be standardization and uniformity. In an effort to streamline supply operations and create a new system for the entire state, the property book officers spent the conference together collaborating on a single plan for all brigades.

"We've been tasked to rewrite the external property book officer SOP," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Tracey L. Ference, PBO for the 136th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade. SOP stands for standing operating procedures. "We're thrilled to actually be able to sit down and hammer something out."

Meanwhile, supply sergeants enjoyed round robin lectures from the subject matter experts in various fields of supply actions.

"I just think that it was great the way they broke the classes down," said Staff Sgt. Ricky Williams, Supply Sergeant for the headquarters company of the Standing Joint Interagency Task Force. "The training was a lot better I think this year than last year."

"This year's big focus for the conference is training," said Colonel McLaurin. "The next important thing is the networking, they get to meet their contemporaries and if they have an issue they can pick up the phone."

Lt. Col. Benjamin S. Johnson, surface maintenance manager for Texas, spotlights the maintenance side of the conference. "My role," he said, "is to bring in all the various field maintenance shop chiefs and give them an update on the status of the future endeavors within the maintenance community."

Attendees also had a special opportunity to meet with vendors and patrons from throughout Texas who might fill their supply and maintenance needs. One such vendor, the Chemax Corporation, offers cleaning and chemical supplies applicable for military use.

"We help active duty military and National Guard with their deployment supplies, fuel training supplies and motor pool supplies," said Connie Klug, Sales Manager for Chemax. "I have several of my customers that wanted me to come share with the rest of the National Guard the products they have already used and trust."

A greater attendance this year accompanied the heightened priorities for training and procedures. Up from 135 last year, the 267 attendees in 2010 represent an increased attention to this invaluable field.

"I think that it was a very good turn-out," said Sergeant Arellanes. "I think there were a lot of fresh faces eager to learn and I think it is incumbent upon us that are older to continue to teach them and give them an environment where they can learn."

**BRIGADIER GENERAL JOHN C.L. SCRIBNER TEXAS MILITARY FORCES MUSEUM**

**BUILDING 6, CAMP MABRY, AUSTIN, TEXAS**

**HOURS OF OPERATION:**

**WEDNESDAY-SUNDAY—10:00AM TO 4:00 PM**

**MONDAY AND TUESDAY - CLOSED**



**BE WISE. STAY ALIVE. WEAR YOUR PPE!**

All U.S. Army personnel are required by regulation to wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when riding as the operator or a passenger on a motorcycle. This applies to Soldiers regardless of component or duty status, and DOD civilian employees when on duty, both on and off a military installation.

**Helmets**  
Must meet DOD standards and be properly fastened under the chin. Full face helmets offer the best protection. NHTSA estimates that helmets reduce the likelihood of a crash fatality by 37% and brain injury by 67%.\*

**Eye protection**  
A windshield alone is not proper eye protection. Impact or shatter resistant face shield, goggles, or wraparound glasses that meet ANSI Standard Z87.1 are required. Tinted lenses may be worn during the day but clear ones should be used at night.

**Clothing**  
Dress for the SLIDE not the ride! Garments made from leather or abrasion resistant fabric provide a high level of protection. AR 385-10 requires the use of full fingered gloves or mittens designed for riding a motorcycle.

**Sturdy foot wear**  
Sturdy leather over the ankle footwear is required and provides protection from a variety of hazards. Motorcycle footwear with low heels and oil resistant soles provide a good grip on the pavement.

**BE SEEN AND PROTECTED**

Clothing designed for riding a motorcycle generally offers both protection and visibility. If black is chosen, a conspicuous enhancement should be worn. Reflective quality and location on the rider is more important than the amount of reflective material.

Local requirements may differ slightly. Riders should check with their installation safety office for details.

\*NHTSA Traffic Safety Facts DOT HS 810 887W

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## Staying safe on a motorcycle— know the required PPE for Soldiers

Around the globe, motorcyclists throughout our great Army are removing the dust covers from their bikes and charging up the batteries, eager to begin the 2010 riding season. Ask any motorcycle enthusiast what they enjoy most about their hobby and they'll probably tell you it's the exhilaration and freedom that comes with open air and a long stretch of highway.

All the things that make motorcycling great, however, are also what make it so risky for inexperienced or undisciplined riders. Even so, during fiscal 2009, our Army made significant progress in turning the arrow down on motorcycle fatalities, with a 37-percent overall reduction from the previous fiscal year. The good news is we're on track to push that number even lower in fiscal 2010. More than halfway through the year, we've experienced three fewer fatalities as compared to the same time frame in fiscal 2009.

Although we've made great strides in reducing these fatalities, we haven't been able to escape the problem of indiscipline. Of the last 22 fatal accidents where speed was reported, 18 were attributed to excessive speed. And in the 33 fatal accidents between fiscal 2009 and to date in 2010 where the status of Motorcycle Safety Foundation training is known, an overwhelming 85 percent had completed an approved MSF course. These statistics show that even when these Soldiers had the proper training, many still chose to disregard the standard at the cost of their futures.

During the past few years, our Army leadership has responded to these issues with a variety of innovative programs geared toward keeping our Soldiers safe and responsible on their motorcycles. Included among these initiatives are the highly successful Motorcycle Mentorship Program (MMP), which pairs novice riders with experienced mentors in a friendly, peer group setting, and investment in motorcycle simulators to prepare Soldiers for common hazards on the open road.

Another best practices initiative that's gaining ground on our installa-

tions is the progressive training model, where Soldiers begin their motorcycle safety experience in the Army-mandated Basic Rider-Course, but progress through higher-level training to build upon and sustain advanced riding skills. This initiative will be fully resourced in fiscal 2012 and beyond across our Army, but these great efforts at installations across the force are making a big difference already.

The importance of engaged leadership in Soldier safety is without question the most important and enduring effort we owe our Soldiers. Ultimately, it is up to the individual to make the right decisions to stay alive, but Leaders and buddies can help. As we observe Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month this May, I ask you to take ownership of your safety and find out if your installation offers any of these great programs. More information on the MMP, installation-specific rider associations and clubs and upcoming rider events are all available on the USACR/Safety Center Web site at <https://safety.army.mil/mmp/>. Always remember that even when you're off the installation, your duties and obligations as a Soldier remain, regardless of state or local law, so keep that personal protective equipment on and wear it properly.

The next few months will offer perfect conditions for riding and other fun activities, so make sure you're prepared for wherever the road may take you. We kicked off our annual Army Safe Summer campaign in April, and a wealth of summer safety information is available via the "Campaign Corner" tab on our Web site. Please share this information with your fellow Soldiers and Families to make this summer your most enjoyable yet.

Thank you for what you do every day for our nation and our Army. Our Band of Brothers and Sisters remains strong due to your work and dedication, and I wish each of you a safe and happy start to the summer season.

Army Safe is Army Strong!

WILLIAM T. WOLF Brigadier General, USA Commanding

# Following in their footsteps— Revolutionary, Civil War demos at AHC

**Story and photos by Officer Candidate Micah Barnes**  
**100th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment**

CAMP MABRY, Austin, Texas— As the sky cleared from the dark and hazy morning to a bright and sunny afternoon, the air filled with the smell of fire and a billowing cloud of smoke. Wind blew away the ominous cloud, revealing a single line of ancient single-shot rifles used in the late 19th century, hoisted in the air by men young and old.

Held during the American Heroes Celebration at Camp Mabry in Austin, Texas, the Civil War and Texas Revolution weapons demonstration showcased not only weapons of the times, but also post Reconstruction dress, lifestyles and food of the era.

Throughout this event, authenticity was the key message conveyed to all the members of the audience and participants in the demonstrations.

"I feel more or less this is a forgotten time period that is swept over in the history books," said Kevin M. Burke, a native of League City, who wore his grandfather's uniform and shot a rifle used between 1906 and 1917. "This is my way of trying to follow in my grandfather's footsteps and get a better understanding of the family history."

The weapon's demonstration became an educational piece at one point, once the audience started to become involved with the "living history" group. They learned how to make some of the common foods that Confederate Soldiers ate such as hard tack, a hard bread that had a high resistance to spoiling and was used for centuries for land and sea operations by the military.

Another learning point for the on-lookers included how to properly load, aim, and fire the rifles and pistols of their military heritage.

"It was pretty intense, my heart was pounding because I knew that the rifles were loud and I did not realize how heavy they were," said Blake A. Kirk, a sixteen-year-old native of Rockwall. "I almost dropped it after I loaded the rifle."

The exhibits of the Civil War and the Texas Revolution of-

ferred families the opportunity to experience history hands-on. Several of the audience members crowded to take pictures of their sons and daughters attempting to hold onto the rifles, while the other adults looked at the living history Soldiers in amazement at how they moved around in the period shoes and uniforms.

"I could never miss this even if I wanted to; my kids look forward to it all year, both days actually." said Austin native Aaron Blake.

Overall, the fun-filled demonstration assisted in boasting the American Heroes Celebration message of remembering and honoring American Soldiers from our past and present. This event educated and bolstered the curiosity for learning about the American past through the audience's hands-on participation.

"This weapons demonstration is amazing, just being able to see all the things people used back in the past is really cool." said Blake. "I'm really appreciative of history to the point I'm thinking of joining a reenactment group."



*Michael T. McFadden, Lee R. Chesney, and Devin S. Morris, all Austin natives, demonstrate the firing of American Revolution rifles at the 4th Annual American Heroes Celebration on Camp Mabry.*

## National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic: Sept. 18-25, San Diego



VA's newest national program, the Summer Sports Clinic promotes rehabilitation of body and spirit by teaching summer sporting activities to Veterans with significant physical or psychological impairments. The Clinic offers such sports as surfing, sailing, kayaking, track and field, and cycling to Veterans who are newly injured from amputations, traumatic brain injuries, post-traumatic stress disorder and other neurological disorders, all benefitting from the therapeutic environment offered at the Clinic. Each year, the events offered will vary, allowing greater exposure to new adaptive sports and recreational activities.

For information or to request an application, please contact Tristan Heaton at (858) 642-6426 or email [Tristan.Heaton2@va.gov](mailto:Tristan.Heaton2@va.gov)

# VA uses Recovery Act money to repair historic military monuments

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs will use up to \$4.4 million in funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act program to repair and preserve historic monuments and memorials at VA-operated national cemeteries, soldiers' lots and other facilities throughout the United States.

"The Recovery Act will help us preserve these historic memorials for future generations," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "In many cases, these irreplaceable historic structures will receive long overdue repairs while keeping skilled American artisans employed on projects important to our heritage."

Funds for the monument and memorial repairs are coming from more than \$1.4 billion in the Recovery Act allocated to VA.

Forty-nine monuments at 36 sites in 23 states will be repaired or conserved under this program. These represent some of the oldest and most significant memorials at VA cemeteries, and require treatments that include cleaning, roof and step repairs, stone consolidation, joint repointing, and painting or waxing of metals.

Cost estimates for individual projects range from less than \$10,000 to \$510,000. The monuments and memorials included in this treatment initiative were installed between 1842 and 1952, and most are associated with the Civil War.

The most costly preservation project is the National Soldiers' Monument at Dayton National Cemetery in Ohio. The Soldiers' Monument dominates the landscape from atop a mound at the center of the cemetery. The cornerstone was laid in 1873 and it was completed in 1877. This dramatic structure is composed of a 30-foot marble column on a granite base and topped with a soldier at parade rest. At the corners of the base are four figures representing the infantry, cavalry, artillery and Navy. President Rutherford B. Hayes delivered the dedication address on Sept. 12, 1877, to a crowd of about 22,000. This monument was severely vandalized in 1990, and the current initiative will address problems associated with the repair.

The oldest monument among the 49 sites is Dade's Pyramids at St. Augustine National Cemetery in Florida. The pyramids cover vaults that contain the remains of 1,468 soldiers who died during the Second Seminole War from 1835 to 1842. The three Dade's Pyramids are each six feet tall and were constructed in 1842 of coquina stone. They were dedicated at a ceremony that marked the end of the Florida Indian Wars.

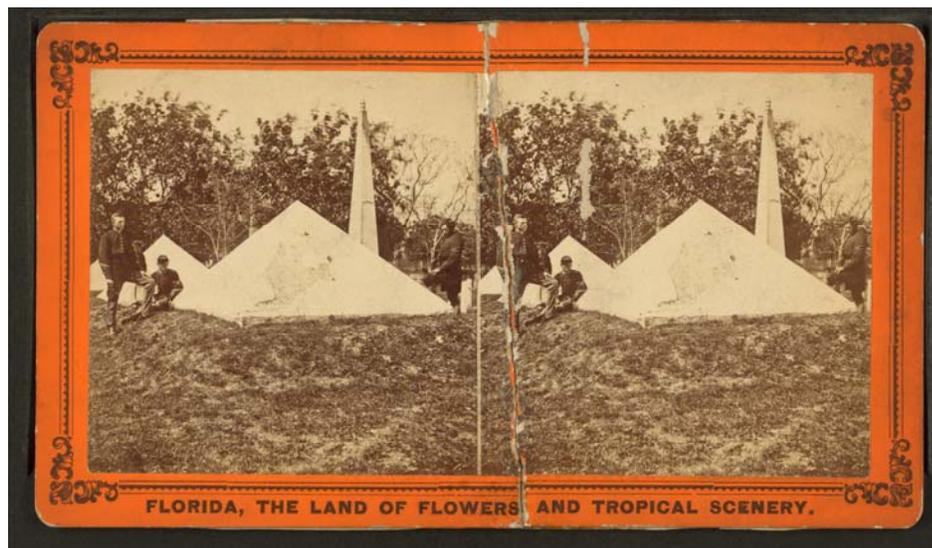
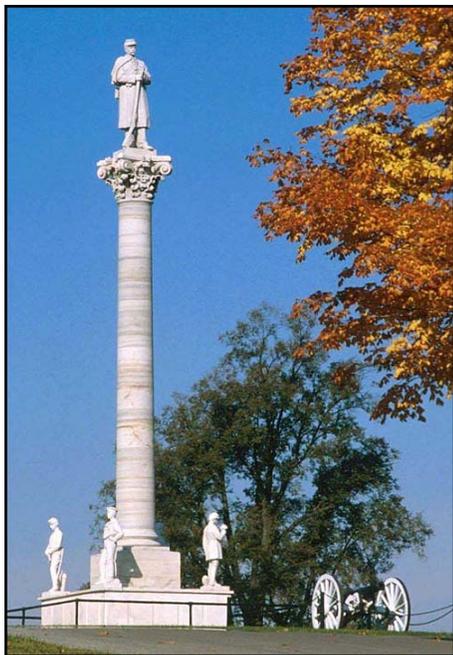
The funds will also be used to repair and conserve three monumental limestone entrance archways built around 1870 at national cemeteries in Nashville and Chattanooga, Tenn., and Marietta, Ga. VA will also use ARRA funds to conserve the soldiers' obelisk monuments at cemeteries affiliated with the National Homes for Disabled Veteran Soldiers. Also scheduled for

repairs are 11 monuments funded by states where large numbers of their troops were buried, five Confederate monuments, and a memorial to President Zachary Taylor located near his tomb in Louisville, Ky.

The Recovery Act, signed into law by President Obama on Feb. 17, 2009, is an unprecedented effort to jumpstart the American economy, create and save millions of jobs, and put a down payment on addressing long-neglected challenges so our country can thrive in the 21st century. In addition to repairs to monuments and memorials, America's national cemeteries will receive an estimated:

- \$25.9 million for national shrine projects to raise, realign, and clean headstones or grave markers and repair sunken graves at various locations across the country;
- \$5.9 million for energy-related projects such as conserving energy and water through the use of wind turbines, solar power and other measures;
- \$9.5 million to repair roads, buildings, and other cemetery infrastructure at locations nationwide; and
- Nearly \$6 million for equipment purchases for cemetery operations.

VA operates 131 national cemeteries in 39 states and Puerto Rico and 33 soldiers' lots and monument sites. More than three million Americans, including Veterans of every war and conflict — from the Revolutionary War to the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan — are buried in VA's national cemeteries on more than 19,000 acres of



**Above left— The National Soldiers' Monument at the Dayton National Cemetery. (Veterans Affairs photo)**

**Above right— a stereoscopic plate of the Dade Pyramids in St. Augustine, Fla. (from the Robert M. Dennis collection)**

# News Briefs

## Texas Veterans Commission awards a \$1 million grant to TX VFW

At the February commission meeting, the Texas Veterans Commission awarded the Texas Veterans of Foreign Wars Foundation \$1 million from the Texas Veterans Commission Fund for Veterans' Assistance. The grant will be used to provide emergency assistance to veterans in need.

In May, the second round of grant funds totaling \$3 million will be awarded to qualified charitable organizations, Veterans Service Organizations and local government agencies to address nine areas of concern for veterans and their families. Some of the services to be funded include transportation to medical facilities, counseling for posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), housing assistance for homeless veterans, and family and child services. Detailed information about all nine service areas can be found

at <http://www.tvc.state.tx.us/about/fund-for-veterans-assistance>.

"1.7 million veterans live in Texas, including over 100,000 who served in Iraq and Afghanistan," says James Nier, Executive Director of the Texas Veterans Commission. "They have paid a high price for keeping our country free. These grants fund services to ensure that our veterans and their families receive the services they need and deserve."

The Texas lottery scratch-off game, Veterans Cash, has been the primary source of funds for Texas Veterans Commission Fund for Veterans' Assistance. Since its introduction on Nov. 11, 2009, sales of Veterans Cash scratch-off tickets have provided over \$4 million to the Texas Veterans Commission Fund for Veterans' Assistance.

## Army Releases March Suicide Data; Prepares Several Surveys

By **Wayne V. Hall**

**OCPA Media Relations**

WASHINGTON (April 14, 2010) -- The Army released suicide data today for the month of March.

Among active-duty Soldiers in March, there were 13 (11 active Army; one Army National Guard; one Army Reserve) potential suicides: one (active Army) has been confirmed as suicide, and 12 (10 active Army; one Army National Guard; one Army Reserves) remain under investigation.

For February, the Army reported 14 potential suicides (11 active Army; one Army National Guard; two Army Reserve) among active-duty Soldiers. Since the release of that report, two of those (two active Army) have been confirmed as suicides, and 12 (nine active Army; one Army National Guard; two Army Reserve) remain under investigation.

During March, among reserve-component Soldiers who were not on active duty, there were eight (eight Army National Guard; no Army Reserve) potential suicides: none have been confirmed; all eight remain under investigation.

For February, among that same group, there were eight (six Army National Guard; two Army Reserve) potential suicides. Of those, five (three Army National Guard; two Army Reserve) were confirmed as suicides and three (three Army

National Guard) are pending determination of the manner of death.

For reference, the Army's total for 1st Quarter Calendar Year 2009 (period January 1 through March 31) was 53 for active-duty and 23 for not-on-active-duty. For first Quarter Calendar Year 2010, the totals were 39 for active-duty and 32 for not-on-active-duty.

"In partnership with the National Institute of Mental Health and civilian research institutions, the Army is preparing to launch several large representative surveys of Soldiers as a major component of an ongoing five-year study," said Col. Chris Philbrick, director, Army Suicide Prevention Task Force. "The goal of the study is to provide the tools and information that will not only help the Army mitigate suicides and suicidal behavior, but will help our country address the problem of suicide among all Americans."

The Army Suicide Prevention Task Force is completing a review of more than 600 programs related to health promotion, risk reduction and suicide prevention, Philbrick said. The Army intends to refine programs and focus on those that provide commanders the best tools to address the key issues that cause behavioral health concerns.

The Army's comprehensive list of Suicide Prevention Program information is located at [www.armyg1.army.mil](http://www.armyg1.army.mil).

"To help commanders with local con-

cerns regarding suicides, the Army recently established a Specialized Suicide Augmentation Response Team, Philbrick said. "This is a team of experts that can be dispatched to augment local command response to an increase, identify gaps in policies and procedures, and offer recommendations for improvement."

Soldiers and families in need of crisis assistance can contact Military OneSource or the Defense Center of Excellence (DCoE) for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury Outreach Center. Trained consultants are available from both organizations 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

The Military OneSource toll-free number for those residing in the continental U.S. is 1-800-342-9647; their Web site address is [www.militaryonesource.com](http://www.militaryonesource.com). Overseas personnel should refer to the Military OneSource Web site for dialing instructions for their specific location.

The DCOE Outreach Center can be contacted at 1-866-966-1020, via electronic mail at [Resources@DCoEO Outreach.org](mailto:Resources@DCoEO Outreach.org) and at [www.dcoe.health.mil](http://www.dcoe.health.mil).

Information about the Army's Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Program is located at [www.army.mil/csf](http://www.army.mil/csf).

# This Month in Military History: May

**1837-** In May 1837, fearful of military insurrection and anxious to reduce government spending, President Sam Houston furloughed most of the 2500 members of the Texas 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.

**1838-** Houston's successor, Mirabeau B. Lamar, favored an aggressive Indian policy, and to protect the frontiers and to provide bases for offensive action, in 1838 Congress provided for a line of military posts along the republic's northern and western frontiers, to be manned by a regiment of 840 men and supported by a military road stretching from the Red River to the Nueces.

Skirmishes, then an expensive three-year campaign against the Comanche and Cherokee followed.

**1859-** Brief attempts to establish reservations in Texas failed, and the army launched a series of offensives against hostile Indians. In the most significant of these campaigns, Bvt. Maj. Earl Van Dorn led Texas-based detachments, stiffened by allied Indian scouts and auxiliaries, to victory against Comanche encampments across the Red River at Crooked Creek (May 13, 1859). But Texans wanted even more action, and a ranger force led by John S. "Rip" Ford defeated a sizable Comanche encampment on May 12, 1859, near the Antelope Hills in the Indian Territory.

**1846-** Battle of Palo Alto, Texas, during the Mexican War.

**1856-** USS Supply delivers 50 Turkish camels to the US Army at Indianola, Texas.



**1942-** Killeen, Texas native, Col. Oveta Culp Hobby named commander of the Women's Army Corps.

## New scholarship for the children of fallen service members

WASHINGTON – The children of military personnel who died in the line of duty since Sept. 11, 2001 can apply for an educational scholarship similar to the new Post-9/11 GI Bill. Benefits are retroactive to Aug. 1, 2009.

The scholarship, which is administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs, are named after Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry, 28, a Texas native who died in Iraq in 2006 while disarming an explosive. He was survived by three young children.

"The Fry scholarship represents this nation's solemn commitment to care for children whose mothers and fathers paid the ultimate price for our country," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki.

VA begins accepting applications for the Fry scholarship on May 1, 2010. For more information or assistance applying, call toll-free 1-888-GIBILL-1 (1-888-442-4551), or visit the VA GI Bill Website at [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov).

VA estimates nearly 1,500 children will receive benefits under the Fry scholarship program in 2010. Recipients generally have 15 years to use their benefits, beginning on their 18th birth-

day.

Eligible children attending institutions of higher learning may receive payments to cover their tuition and fees up to the highest amounts charged to public, in-state students at undergraduate institutions in each state. A monthly housing allowance and stipend for books and supplies are also paid under this program.

VA will begin paying benefits under the Fry scholarships on Aug. 1, 2010. Eligible participants may receive benefits retroactively to August 1, 2009, the same day the Post-9/11 GI Bill took effect.

Eligible children may be married. Recipients are entitled to 36 months of benefits at the 100 percent level.

When dependents also serve in the military, the reserves or are Veterans in their own right, or are eligible for education benefits under the Montgomery GI Bill for Active Duty, the Montgomery GI Bill for Selected Reserves or the Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP), then they would relinquish their eligibility under those programs to receive benefits under a Fry scholarship.



*Michael T. McFadden, Lee R. Chesney, and Devin S. Morris, all Austin natives, demonstrate the firing of American Revolution rifles at the 4th Annual American Heroes Celebration on Camp Mabry.*