

The DISPATCH



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Gov. Rick Perry was sworn in on the South Capitol steps by the Honorable Wallace B. Jefferson, Chief Justice Supreme Court of Texas for his third full term as Texas Governor.

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In a special “This Month in Military History,” the Siege of the Alamo begins.



Cover - Texas Governor Rick Perry salutes family, friends, invited guests and most importantly - Texans, after his inauguration on Jan. 18 in Austin Texas. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Eric Wilson, Texas Military Forces Public Affairs)

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The DISPATCH

Vol. 6, No. 2 February 2011

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TXARNG Maj. Steven Keihl

TXANF Capt. Wade Aubin

TXARNG 2nd. Lt. Laura G. Childs

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Jeff Hunt

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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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• *TRICARE Announces New Program*

DoD announced the new premium-based TRICARE Young Adult program (TYA), which extends medical coverage to eligible military family members to age 26. TYA is expected to be in-place later this spring, but premium costs are not yet finalized. Adults who are no longer eligible for TRICARE, but need health insurance coverage, may wish to explore the Continued Health Care Benefit Program (CHCBP). CHCBP offers temporary transitional health coverage for 18 to 36 months. Coverage must be purchased within 60 days of loss of TRICARE eligibility. For more information on TYA and CHCBP, visit the TRICARE website at <http://www.tricare.mil/>.

• *Report on Women in Combat*

Congress has established the Military Leadership Diversity Commission (MLDC) to study the role of women in combat. The commission's report is expected in March and will include its findings and conclusions, as well as its recommendations for improving diversity within the armed forces. Defense Department officials will review the recommendations when the report is complete. A draft of the final report is available on the MLDC website at <http://mldc.whs.mil/>.

• *Army Explosives Safety Training*

The U.S. Army Defense Ammunition Center (DAC) offers more than 25 explosives safety courses, through self-paced distance learning and instructor-led training at locations throughout the world. Four new distance learning courses provide tutorials and self-paced instruction on explosives safety quantity distance (ESQD) principles and other topics. For more information, visit the Defense Ammunition Center Training Directorate website at <http://ammo.okstate.edu/>. Click on Course Catalog, then click on a specific course title to register for instructor-led training. For distance learning registration, click on Online Training, then click the specific course title to self-register. Learners must have AKO accounts and CAC cards to register for distance learning.

• *AF Issues Geotag Warning*

The Air Force is cautioning airmen against geotags and location-based services. As more airmen and their family members use smartphones to take pictures and access social networking sites, they could be inadvertently posting information showing the exact geographic location of their home, work location, or daily travel patterns through technology known as "geotagging." Many phones are automatically set up to capture this information by default, and users will have to navigate through their phone settings to disable this function. For more information, see the top 10 tips for social media on page 17 of the "Social Media and the Air Force" handbook available at www.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-091210-043.pdf.

• *United Through Reading*

United Through Reading offers servicemembers the chance to read to their children every day. The reading is recorded onto a DVD and sent with a copy of the book to the servicemember's child. Deployed servicemembers can go to more than 60 USO locations, or 200 other Department of Defense sites, to record themselves reading a book to their children. Deployed servicemembers are not limited to just one book on one occasion. Servicemembers can read a book for each of their children, and participate at as many locations as they like. For more information and to find participation locations worldwide, visit the United Through Reading website at <http://www.unitedthroughreading.org/military/>.

Overcoming Resistance and Building Resiliency

Maj. Steven Keihl
TXMF JFSS Resiliency Team

It is an ever present reality in our world that people are resistant to change, challenges, turmoil, and especially to pain. It is also equally true that much of what we do that is worthwhile, noble, and important requires effort, commitment, and energy. In other words, very few critical things happen with ease but rather are a result of good old fashioned hard work. When asked to choose, we appear much more likely to select the fast road, the quick fix, or the easy answer rather than to passionately pursue, battle, and engage in a time-consuming process requiring dedication and perseverance. Therein lies the difficulty... will we settle for mediocrity or will we demand the amazing?

It is my take that a "highly developed person", as Einstein calls one, would be someone who would pursue the best, in spite of the potential peril or difficulty. The one who is truly enlightened would be aware of the reality that very few things of real value are obtained in a moment but rather through a laborious and often time consuming effort.

The mature among us realize that relationships will not be solved in a 30 min sitcom, but rather through difficult, vulnerable, honest intimacy that includes significant risk of rejection or deep pain. The successful among us remember that obtaining contentment in a professional world does not happen by accident or inheritance... The get rich plan is really no plan at all. Rather, such success requires a careful look inward, an assessment of passions, skills, strengths, weaknesses, and shortcomings.

This success requires an ongoing and devoted effort to obtain the necessary skills and training to effectively reach for our goals and a persistent engagement and pursuit.

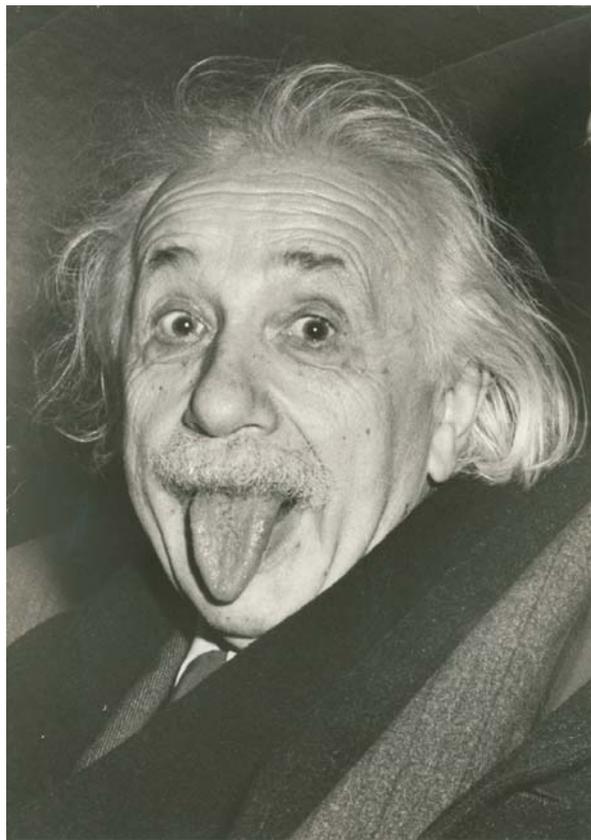
Being highly developed requires a

very real risk of deep pain, but also the potential of lasting joy, happiness, and contentment.

Pursuing such greatness will require a significant battle with virtually everything in our world. We have stubbornly accepted the notion that speed is our real ally and that getting what we want should be without real heartache and obtained in an instant. Our microwaves, cell phones, internet, instant movies, etc. all compel us to toss aside the real fight and learn to settle for what we can have right now. And so too many have naively accepted the idea that real value is not found in a complicated journey but rather a quick solution. We want personal depth and maturity in a one session mind meld, relational harmony in a 10 step guide, health in a pill, professional success following a 30 minute seminar and donation of \$39.99.

Guess what... the quick fix doesn't work! Not only does it fail to provide the lasting depth we desire, it contributes to a total lack of resiliency. You see, taking our time and working through challenges helps us build our strengths and internal abilities... when we have to struggle and fight to obtain our desire, we build resiliency, we mature, we learn to successfully navigate challenges and overcome obstacles.

Don't settle for the quick fix! Don't accept the mediocre! Roll up your sleeves, fight the good fight, get into the fray and stay engaged in the battle. You might just find that the pursuit not only bears fruit but helps you develop as well. May your journey be long, difficult, full of many twists in the trails and many ascents and descents through the hills!



*Highly developed spirits
often encounter resistance
from mediocre minds."*
- Albert Einstein

Resource of the Month

Pockets of Peace
By Patsy Swendson

Resiliency Update

P2P training returns to Brownwood in February. Join us 19-20 February at Ranger College and learn to (1) IDENTIFY potential struggles, (2) INTERVENE and provide direct support, and (3) INITIATE the long term continuum of care with the members of YOUR unit. Contact SSG Anderson at penny.anderson@us.army.mil for all the details!

Share the Road!

1

Over half of all fatal motorcycle crashes involve another vehicle. Most of the time, the motorist, not the motorcyclist, is at fault. There are a lot more cars and trucks than motorcycles on the road, and some drivers don't "recognize" a motorcycle - they ignore it (usually unintentionally).

2

Because of its small size, a motorcycle can be easily hidden in a car's blind spots (door/roof pillars) or masked by objects or backgrounds outside a car (bushes, fences, bridges, etc). Take an extra moment to look for motorcycles, whether you're changing lanes or turning at intersections.

3

Because of its small size, a motorcycle may look farther away than it is. It may also be difficult to judge a motorcycle's speed. When checking traffic to turn at an intersection or into (or out of) a driveway, predict a motorcycle is closer than it looks.

4

Motorcyclists often slow by downshifting or merely rolling off the throttle, thus not activating the brake light. Allow more following distance, say 3 or 4 seconds. At intersections, predict a motorcyclist may slow down without visual warning.

5

Motorcyclists often adjust position within a lane to be seen more easily and to minimize the effects of road debris, passing vehicles, and wind. Understand that motorcyclists adjust lane position for a purpose, not to be reckless or show off or to allow you to share the lane with them.

6

Turn signals on a motorcycle usually are not self-canceling, thus some riders (especially beginners) sometimes forget to turn them off after a turn or lane change. Make sure a motorcycle's signal is for real.

7

Maneuverability is one of a motorcycle's better characteristics, especially at slower speeds and with good road conditions, but don't expect a motorcyclist to always be able to dodge out of the way.

8

Stopping distance for motorcycles is nearly the same as for cars, but slippery pavement makes stopping quickly difficult. Allow more following distance behind a motorcycle because it can't always stop "on a dime."

9

When a motorcycle is in motion, see more than the motorcycle - see the person under the helmet, who could be your friend, neighbor, relative, or Soldier.

10

If a driver crashes into a motorcyclist, bicyclist, or pedestrian and causes serious injury, the driver would likely never forgive himself/herself.



TXMARKS

Story and photos by Sgt. Jennifer D. Atkinson
Texas Military Forces Public Affairs

For Sgt. 1st Class Charles F. Blackwell marksmanship goes past a military proficiency into a passion, one that keeps him competing among the best in the world, and he proved that at the 2010 Winston P. Wilson Marksmanship Training Exercise, taking the first place overall trophy home to Texas.

Although marksmanship is judged, the ability to hit a target while in on a firing line isn't all the matches test. Since 2007, the matches have included courses of fire to test competitors, both Army and Air Guard, on the effective use of their individual and crew-served weapons. Accuracy is, as always, important, but so is the ability to work as a team, move and shoot and overall familiarity and expertise with an assigned weapon.

Sergeant Blackwell's proficiency doesn't just rest on a bench either. To keep sharp, Sergeant Blackwell spends a great deal of his own time practicing, with a range on his own



tion he also travels around the state teaching other Texas National Guard members how to increase their skills with their assigned weapon.

Any unit can take advantage of the SARTS and glean knowledge while completing marksmanship training. SARTS is available to teach "train the trainer" clinics for units, as well as unit level competition programs for both the Army and Air Guard. SARTS provides marksmanship instruction for mobilizing units, as well.



property. As a member of the Small Arms Readiness and Training Sec-

If you are interested in taking advantage of the talent and skill of the TXMARKS members, or the SARTS, visit www.txmarks.org, or come to one of their many clinics and matches. The next marksmanship clinic is May 13, 2011 at Camp Swift, and a rifle match will follow on May 14-15, 2011.

Top— Sgt. 1st Class Charles Blackwell holds the plaque for his first place finish in the pistol category at the Winston P. Wilson Marksmanship Sustainment Exercise in Nov. 2010.

Center— Brig. Gen. Joyce Stevens, Assistant Adjutant General of Texas Army National Guard, congratulates Sergeant Blackwell and presents a coin.

Bottom— Sgt. 1st Class Charles Blackwell with the Individual Aggregate Champion trophy.

RIGHT ON TARGET!

...The eyes of Texas are upon us, and we will not fail.

BASRAH, Iraq — Jan. 2 marked the beginning of a new chapter in the distinguished history of the Texas military forces. In a contingency operating base (COB) outside this city, the U.S. Army 1st Infantry Division transferred authority of U.S. Division-South to the 36th Infantry “Arrowhead” Division of the Texas Army National Guard.

With the return of the “Big Red One” to Fort Riley, Kan., the capable citizen-soldiers of the 36th Infantry headquarters are now responsible for a vital two-fold mission in support of Operation New Dawn: to supervise the deliberate drawdown of U.S. forces in the nine southern provinces of Iraq and to advise and assist the Iraqi security forces in their noble struggle for a stable, sovereign, self-reliant Iraq.

When our mission here is complete, we will stand down U.S. Division-South and transfer its responsibilities to a new U.S. State Department consulate general here — an event unprecedented in the history of the National Guard.

The 688 men and women of the 36th Division headquarters serving here are uniquely qualified for this mission. They come from all corners of Texas and all walks of life: teachers, cops, doctors, lawyers, engineers, civil servants and college students. Many of them have already served in Iraq or Afghanistan and were eager to be a part of this historic deployment.

In fact, since its reactivation in 2004, the 36th Division has deployed more than 20,000 soldiers to overseas contingency operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Balkans, including a deployment of the division headquarters to Kosovo in 2005.

At the same time, National Guardsmen provided the backbone of the state's swift response to natural disasters like Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Ike and the federal government's border security mission along the Rio Grande. Far from taxing the resources and ability of the Texas National Guard, these state and federal missions served to enhance the knowledge, capabilities and professionalism of our citizen-soldiers.

Just as their previous experiences in support of Texas are benefiting our work in the nine southern provinces of Iraq, so too will the experience gained here. Working side by side with Iraqis in the ISF and provincial governments as well as civilians from the Provincial Reconstruction Teams and the State Department will benefit the people and government of Texas in future missions across our great state.

With supportive families and friends behind us, and a uniquely Texan tradition of excellence to uphold, the men and women of the 36th Division know there is nothing they can't achieve. The eyes of Texas are upon us, and we will not fail.



Maj. Gen. Eddy M. Spurgin
Commander, 36th Infantry Division
Texas Army National Guard



Until they all come home.
<http://www.uso.org/howtohelp/>

Texas ADT Conducts Unified Mission

Story by 2nd Lt. Laura G. Childs

Texas Agribusiness Team IV

Members of Texas Army National Guard Ghazni Agribusiness Development Team-IV joined Polish Battle Group A to conduct a unified mission in three villages outside Ghazni City Jan. 17-18. The mission was to perform site assessments and build relationships with the local population in the villages of Qalati, Zargar and Pir Shabaz close to Forward Operating Base Ghazni.

In each village, local leaders were invited to discuss concerns and grievances with Coalition Forces, as well as share details and progress of ongoing repair projects previously addressed by Ghazni ADT-IV.

From prior discussions with the village leaders, Ghazni ADT-IV was aware of a consistent and well-known problem: a lack of water. Many areas in Afghanistan, including Ghazni province, have faced years of drought conditions which have significantly reduced the water table. In May 2010, Mohammad Asif Rahimi, the Afghan minister of agriculture, irrigation and livestock, was quoted in *USA Today* saying, "In Afghanistan, 85 percent of the population relies on agriculture to earn a living."

However, measures can be taken to offer immediate relief to current problems. Director of Public Works



Spc. Oscar T. Alvarez from Garland, Texas, a security force Soldier with the Texas Army National Guard Ghazni Agribusiness Development Team-IV, pulls security during a village assessment in Pir Shabaz Jan. 18. (Photo by CPT Wade L. Aubin, ADT-IV)

Nezamuddin shared how a main drainage system and two culverts in the village of Qalati were crushed by Coalition Forces' vehicles on a previous visit to the village in December. Commander's Emergency Relief Program funds were used to repair the drainage system and culverts. "Using bulk CERP funds in this way offers quick solutions to immediate problems, giving villagers increased confidence in their local leaders and Coalition Forces," said Capt. Wade L. Aubin from Austin, Texas, CERP funds manager for Ghazni ADT-IV.

During the assessments conducted during the patrol at Qalati Village, Ghazni ADT-IV found the supplies had been purchased and work had begun. Because village leaders were attending a funeral during the site assessment, they were unable to meet with the CF. However, one of the village residents, Mohammad Wali, reported the village leaders had decided to place the completion of the project on hold until the weather warms in the spring. This repair will greatly improve water management in the village.

On the second day of patrols, the combined units conducted a village assessment of Pir Shabaz, located on the banks of the Ghazni River on the east side of Ghazni City. Most villagers of Pir Shabaz are farmers who grow radishes, leeks, onions and potatoes, which they sell at the local market or at the bazaar in Ghazni City.

While the water levels are much lower than usual due to the ongoing regional drought, this village is able to access the water in the river to irrigate their crops and trees during the winter.

Despite the low water levels, village resident Jaleed, a farmer who sells his produce in the local market, said his crop output was good and business was steady.

"We demonstrated our willingness to listen to their problems, hear their concerns, and try to find solutions by facilitating their issues through their leaders and governmental officials," said 2nd Lt. Grant Gillaspay of Fort Worth, Texas, Ghazni ADT-IV project manager.

Shoulder to Shoulder

I WILL NEVER QUIT ON LIFE



Prevent Army Suicides
Ask ★ Care ★ Escort

Talk to your Chain of Command, Chaplain or Behavioral Health Professional or call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

www.militaryonesource.com

www.preventsuicide.army.mil

...upon the occasion of his promotion

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

CAMP MABRY, AUSTIN, Texas (Jan 20, 2011) – In front of an overflowing auditorium of distinguished visitors, family, friends, Army and Air Guard personnel, Brig. Gen. John F. Nichols, Assistant Adjutant General-Air and Commander Texas Air National Guard, became Maj. Gen. Nichols here Wednesday.

After the pinning by his wife Denise and his daughter Alexa, Maj. Gen. Jose Mayorga, The Adjutant General of Texas, performed the swearing in ceremony followed by the traditional presentation of the two-star flag.

“Looking at the number of people in the audience, it is obvious that you have a lot of supporters and you certainly

have my utmost respect,” said Maj. Gen. Moyorga to Maj. Gen. (Select) Nichols, prior to the official ceremony. He continued: “John, you are a person of character and honor and there is no more deserving of this promotion than you.”

Mrs. Denise Nichols and Ms. Alexa Nichols joined the general on the stage to perform the pinning ceremony while Col. Russell Malesky, Director of Texas Air National Guard Staff, read the order. The usually solemn ceremony was briefly interrupted by a ripple of laughter from the audience when Mrs. Nichols asked the general whether the stars were placed correctly, and Maj. Gen. Nichols replied: “Any which way is right Lieutenant General Nichols.”

Next Maj. Gen. Mayorga read and Maj. Gen. (Select) Nichols repeated the oath of office:

“I, John F. Nichols, do solemnly swear that I will defend the Constitution of the United States and the constitution of the State of Texas against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the Governor of Texas, that I make this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office of Major General in the Air National Guard of the State of Texas upon which I am about to enter. So help me God.”



Above left— Brig. Gen. John F. Nichols is pinned by his daughter, Alexa and his wife Denise.

Right— Maj. Gen. Jose S. Mayorga reads the oath of office for Maj. Gen. John F. Nichols.

Opposite page— Maj. Gen. Jose S. Mayorga presents Maj. Gen. John F. Nichols with the two-star flag. (Photos by Staff. Sgt. Eric Wilson, Texas Military Forces Public Affairs)



on...

Texas House of Representative Mr. Dan Flynn presented Maj. Gen. Nichols with a flag flown over the capitol and said, "It is always a privilege to honor people you have high regard for, whose service, dignity and integrity you respect. It is always good to give a flag to somebody like that, and," he joked: "General it was not me flying that plane over the governor's inauguration yesterday. I promise it was flown on a post, as it was supposed to be. Pass that on to the governor if you will."

When it was time for Maj. Gen. Nichols to speak, the consummate story-teller gave an uncharacteristically short speech. Visibly humbled by the occasion, Maj. Gen. Nichols said: "Thank you all for being here. First of all I want to say thank you to my wife, for putting up with me, for loving me, for allowing me to do what I love and frankly to pick up the pieces sometimes. You are my friend and mentor," and speaking to his daughter he said, "to the princess, thanks for filling our house with sunshine and song and excelling in school. Thank you to both of you for keeping me around. Donna thank you for putting up with your son-in-law."

Turning to the audience he said: "I thank our State Representative Dan Flynn for being here and I thank The Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Mayorga, past Adjutant Generals and commanders and one most special commander for being here. Twenty years ago to the day, we received a mission to Baghdad and frankly speaking we got our butts whooped. We got more handed to us than anybody predicted. We were lucky enough to get out of there mostly intact, but we left two of our friends behind. By God's Grace they were captured and lived through it. Afterward I said: 'Boss I don't know if

you still have faith in me, but this commander said: 'Go to bed, get up and do it again tomorrow.'

Thank you Colonel Nelson for being here today."

He then turned his attention back to the audience and continued: "Today is about family, whether you are wearing blue or green, whether you are a supporting spouse, whether you are going downrange or staying here to take care of things. I would not be here, if it was not for the folks who mentored me along the way. Those who kept me in my lane and sometimes let me go out of my lane but always pulled me back in to give me some private mentoring. I am really blessed with all the people of this organization. Everybody I have ever served above or served for, I owe you some more. I owe you diligence, I owe you perseverance and a future mission and I ask you that you continue to serve with me because that is what got this person where he is today.

We have a good organization – Texas Army, Air, and State. Thank you for coming and allowing me to say thank you to you. I am slightly embarrassed to wear these stars because throughout my career I have looked over my shoulder expecting somebody to say: 'Lieutenant colonel there was a mistake. You should be a major, but I managed to stay a step ahead of them. Thank you for helping me to stay ahead of them.' I promise

to continue serving you to the best of my ability and thank you again for sharing this special day with us."

Maj. Gen. Nichols received his commission through the U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colo. in 1979. His flying assignments started at Reese Air Force Base, Texas as a First Assignment Instructor Pilot in the T-38. He transitioned to the F-16 at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz., and was subsequently assigned to Nellis Air Force Base, Nev. After completing the USAF F-16 Fighter Weapons School in 1988, he was assigned to Torrejon Air Base, Spain. He was then assigned to Project Checkmate on the Air Staff at the Pentagon. Maj. Gen. Nichols joined the Wisconsin Air National Guard in 1992 and in April 2000 he joined the Texas Air National Guard 149th Fighter Wing. He served as the vice-commander and commander there from March 2002 to March 2009. He was appointed the Assistant Adjutant General-Air and Commander of the Texas Air National Guard in March, 2009.

Maj. Gen. Nichols is married to the former Denise Tankersley. They have one daughter, Alexa Nichols. Maj. Gen. Nichols and his family reside in Spring Branch, Texas.



Texas Governor Rick Perry



Austin, Texas (Jan. 18, 2011) -
in on the South Capitol steps
B. Jefferson, Chief Justice Sup
for his third full term as Texas
gural Address he recognized p
of the Texas Military Forces. T
nied by his wife Anita, daught
daughter-in-law Meredith.

(Photos by Staff Sgt. Eric Wilson, Texas Milita

sworn in for third full term



- Gov. Rick Perry was sworn in by the Honorable Wallace Beason-Held, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Texas here in Austin, Texas, as Governor. During his Inauguration, Perry and his wife, Stacey, and their four children, Sydney, Griffin and

(Courtesy of the Texas Army Forces Public Affairs)



QUICK TIPS: Riding safely

BE VISIBLE:

- Remember that motorists often have trouble seeing motorcycles and reacting in time.
- Make sure your headlight works and is on day and night.
- Use reflective strips or decals on your clothing and on your motorcycle.
- Be aware of the blind spots cars and trucks have.
- Flash your brake light when you are slowing down and before stopping.
- If a motorist doesn't see you, don't be afraid to use your horn.

DRESS FOR SAFETY:

- Wear a quality helmet and eye protection.
- Wear bright clothing and a light-colored helmet.
- Wear leather or other thick, protective clothing.
- Choose long sleeves and pants, over-the-ankle boots, and gloves.
- Remember – ***the only thing between you and the road is your protective gear.***

APPLY EFFECTIVE MENTAL STRATEGIES:

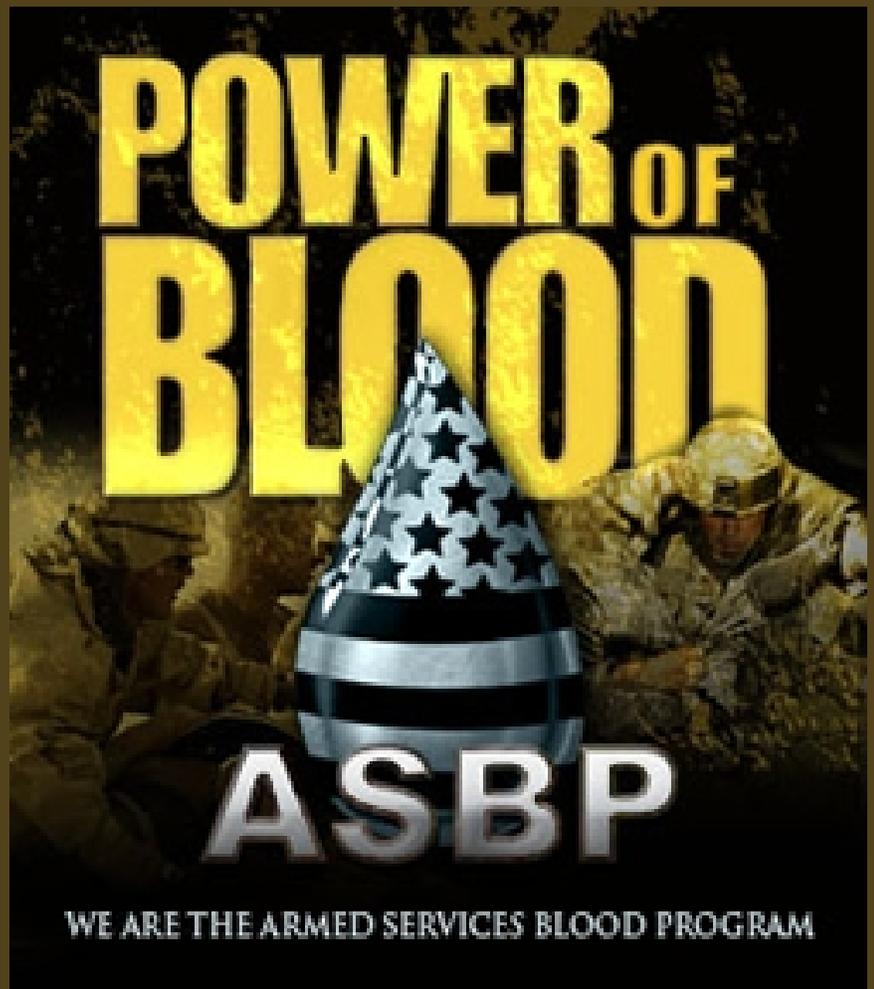
- Constantly search the road for changing conditions. Use MSF's Search, Evaluate, Execute strategy (SEESM) to increase time and space safety margins.
- Give yourself space and time to respond to other motorists' actions.
- Give other motorists time and space to respond to you.
- Use lane positioning to be seen; ride in the part of a lane where you are most visible.
- Watch for turning vehicles.
- Signal your next move in advance.
- Avoid weaving between lanes.
- Pretend you're invisible, and ride extra defensively.
- Don't ride when you are tired or under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.
- Know and follow the rules of the road, and stick to the speed limit.

KNOW YOUR BIKE AND HOW TO USE IT:

- Get formal training and take refresher courses.
- Call 800.446.9227 or visit www.msf-usa.org to locate the Motorcycle Safety Foundation hands-on RiderCourseSM nearest you.
- Practice. Develop your riding techniques before going into heavy traffic. Know how to handle your bike in conditions such as wet or sandy roads, high winds, and uneven surfaces.

REMEMBER: GIVE YOURSELF SPACE. PEOPLE DRIVING CARS OFTEN JUST DON'T SEE MOTORCYCLES. EVEN WHEN DRIVERS DO SEE YOU, CHANCES ARE THEY'VE NEVER BEEN ON A MOTORCYCLE AND CAN'T PROPERLY JUDGE YOUR SPEED.

- Most blood donations collected at Fort Hood are shipped to battlefields in Iraq or Afghanistan within four days of collection.
- Over 40 units of blood may be needed for a single injured soldier
- Your donation may save:
 - A servicemember injured in action
 - A child with cancer
- Donation centers located at Ft. Hood, Ft. Sam Houston and Lackland Air Force Base.
- For more information, or to schedule an appointment, visit: <http://www.militaryblood.dod.mil/Donors/default.aspx>



10,000 free hardwood seedlings in Lufkin

Jan. 24, 2011—LUFKIN, Texas— In an effort to replenish trees lost to storm damage, officials with Texas Forest Service, Angelina Beautiful/Clean and Campbell Timberland Management will give away more than 10,000 hardwood tree seedlings on Feb. 3.

The event— which is part of the Angelina County Arbor Day celebration that week— begins at 9 a.m. at the Lufkin Mall parking lot. It will last until all the seedlings are claimed, and Texas Forest Service officials say they go quickly.

“Hurricanes and other severe weather events wiped out many stately yard trees in Lufkin and Angelina county in recent years,” said District Forester Todd Nightingale. “We need to replace the ones we lost. In addition to beautifying the community, trees produce oxygen, clean the air, control noise pollution and provide shade.”

Several hardwoods will be available to choose from, including Cherrybark oak, Nuttall oak, Sawtooth oak, Shumard oak, White oak and more.

Contact: Todd Nightingale, District Forester in Lufkin
936-875-4400, tnightingale@tfs.tamu.edu



NEW FEATURE

ABU MUQAWAMA



Abu Muqawama is a blog dedicated to following issues related to contemporary insurgencies as well as counterinsurgency tactics and strategy. Abu Muqawama

aims to be a resource for students, counterinsurgents, academics, and the general public.

[WWW.CNAS.ORG/BLOGS/ABUMUQAWAMA](http://www.cnas.org/blogs/abumuqawama)

Today, more than ever, Soldiers rely on technology to bring the fight to the front lines. That technology doesn't just include high-tech weapons, body armor or Blue Force Tracker. It also included web logs, "blogs," that allow a more immediate glimpse into the front lines than ever before. Often funny, sometimes painful and poignant, these snippets of opinion, daily life, and commentary on war, the military, and life in general allow more people to see what our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines are thinking, experiencing and fighting for.

A VIEW FROM THE FRONT LINE

RAND OF BLOGGERS



**CHECK US OUT
ONLINE!!**

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News Brief

AIRMAN MISSING IN ACTION FROM KOREAN WAR IS IDENTIFIED

Jan. 21, 2011 — The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office announced today that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, missing in action from the Korean War, have been identified and returned to his family for burial with full military honors.

Air Force 1st Lt. Robert F. Dees, 23, of Moultrie, Ga., will be buried Jan. 22 at the Longstreet Historical Cemetery in Ozark, Ala. On Oct. 9, 1952, he was flying an F-84 Thunderjet, attacking several targets in North Korea. After he and the other three aircraft from the 430th Fighter-Bomber Squadron completed their attack on their primary target, they began their bombing run against enemy boxcars on the railroad near Sinyang. Other members of his flight reported seeing an explosion near the target they were attacking. They believed it to be the crash of Dees' aircraft and could not raise any radio contact with him. Airborne searches over the battlefield failed to locate him or his aircraft.

Following the armistice in 1953, the North Koreans repatriated 4,219 remains of U.S. and allied soldiers during Operation Glory. In November 1954, they turned over remains which they reported

were recovered from Sinyang. Accompanying the remains were portions of a pilot's flight suit and a pneumatic life preserver. But after two attempts, the Army's mortuary at Kokura, Japan, was unable to identify the remains. They were buried in 1956 as "unknown" at the Punch Bowl Cemetery in Hawaii.

Beginning in the late 1990s, analysts from DPMO and the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) undertook a concentrated review of Korean War air losses, as well as a review of the Kokura mortuary files. They made a tentative association to Dees, based on U.S. wartime records as well as the information provided by the North Koreans. These remains were disinterred from the Punch Bowl Cemetery in June 2010.

1st Lt. Dees' remains were identified by making extensive dental comparisons with his medical records.

For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for missing Americans, visit the DPMO web site at <http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo> or call (703) 699-1169.

VA Publishes Final Regulation to Aid Veterans Exposed to Agent Orange in Korea

WASHINGTON — Veterans exposed to herbicides while serving along the demilitarized zone (DMZ) in Korea will have an easier path to access quality health care and benefits under a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) final regulation that will expand the dates when illnesses caused by herbicide exposure can be presumed to be related to Agent Orange.

"VA's primary mission is to be an advocate for Veterans," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki "With this new regulation VA has cleared a path for more Veterans who served in the demilitarized zone in Korea to receive access to our quality health care and disability benefits for exposure to Agent Orange."

Under the final regulation published today in the Federal Register, VA will presume herbicide exposure for any Veteran who served between April 1, 1968, and Aug. 31, 1971, in a unit determined by VA and the Depart-

ment of Defense (DoD) to have operated in an area in or near the Korean DMZ in which herbicides were applied.

Previously, VA recognized that Agent Orange exposure could only be conceded to Veterans who served in certain units along the Korean DMZ between April 1968 and July 1969.

In practical terms, eligible Veterans who have specific illnesses VA presumes to be associated with herbicide exposure do not have to prove an association between their illness and their military service. This "presumption" simplifies and speeds up the application process for benefits and ensures that Veterans receive the benefits they deserve.

Visit these links to learn about Veterans' diseases associated with Agent Orange exposure at <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/diseases.asp> and birth defects in children of Vietnam-era Veterans at http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/birth_defects.asp.

http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/birth_defects.asp.

VA encourages Veterans with covered service in Korea who have medical conditions that may be related to Agent Orange to submit their applications for access to VA health care and compensation as soon as possible so the agency can begin processing their claims.

Individuals can go to website <http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/AO/claimherbicide.htm> to get a more complete understanding of how to file a claim for presumptive conditions related to herbicide exposure, as well as what evidence is needed by VA to make a decision about disability compensation or survivors benefits. Additional information about Agent Orange and VA's services for Veterans exposed to the chemical is available at www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange. The regulation is available on the Office of the Federal Register website at <http://www.ofr.gov/>.

THE ALAMO

FEBRUARY 23 – MARCH 6, 1836

“... the determined valor and desperate courage, heretofore exhibited by my men, will not fail them in the last struggle; and although they may be sacrificed ..., the victory will cost the enemy dear, and it will be worse for him than defeat.

Colonel Travis, March 3

Following the capture of San Antonio de Béxar, the Texian army divided into three major contingents. At Goliad, Colonel James Fannin, Jr. commanded 400 men. Further south, around San Patricio, 100 men of the Matamoros Expedition were making preparations to invade Mexico. This left about 100 men at San Antonio under the command of Colonel James Neill. The posts at San Antonio and Goliad marked the outer edge of the Texas colonies and their first line of defense against invasion from Mexico.

As intrigue and infighting engulfed the political leadership of Texas, President of Mexico and commander of the Mexican army, General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, ordered his forces to invade Texas. Disregarding the difficulties of a winter campaign, Santa Anna led his main army across the Rio Grande on February 16, 1836 – marching against San Antonio from the southwest. A second column, commanded by Colonel José Urrea, crossed into Texas at Matamoros on February 17, headed north toward Goliad.

The Defenders

Before the Battle of Béxar, General Cós had fortified the Alamo. As a result of their December victory, the Texians captured more than 20 cannon, as well as the old mission, making the Alamo the largest concentration of artillery in Texas. Nonetheless, Sam Houston believed San Antonio and the Alamo indefensible, fearing any force dedicated to holding it would be surrounded and destroyed. He ordered the old mission abandoned and rendered useless as a military installation.

The Governor of Texas, Henry Smith, as well as those commanding troops in San Antonio – Jim Bowie, William Travis and James Neill – disagreed. They saw San Antonio and the Alamo as a vital first line of defense, which should be reinforced and held. Houston’s orders were overridden and work began to strengthen the Alamo’s fortifications. Unhappy his advice was ignored, Houston left to negotiate a treaty with the Cherokee – ensuring their neutrality in the war between Texas and Mexico.

On February 8, 1836, the defenses of Béxar were bolstered by the arrival of former U.S. congressman and frontier legend, Davy Crockett, along with twelve mounted volunteers from Tennessee. A few days later, Colonel Neill took a leave of absence to attend to family matters. William Barrett Travis, a colonel in the Texas Regular Army, was left in command. However, most of the troops in San Antonio were volunteers – Travis had only 30 regulars – and they preferred to be led by Jim Bowie. The two men did not get along well, but on February 14, they agreed to share command of both the Alamo and the 150 or so troops in San Antonio de Béxar.

Surprise

Texian forces, confident the Mexican army would not invade Texas during the harsh winter months, conducted no reconnaissance patrols. Rumors that Santa Anna had crossed the Rio Grande were discounted. On the night of February 22, the Rebels held a huge party in celebration of George Washington's birthday.

The next morning, the hung-over defenders of San Antonio de Béxar were surprised to discover the Mexican army only a few miles from the city. Hurriedly grabbing what cattle and supplies were close at hand, the Texians fled into the Alamo – many with their families – just as Santa Anna's cavalry rode into town. The Mexican general ordered a red flag hoisted on top of the San Fernando Church, signaling that no quarter would be given to the rebels – no prisoners taken. The Texians responded by firing an 18-pounder cannon at Santa Anna's troops.

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The enemy has demanded a surrender at discretion, otherwise, the garrison are to be put to the sword, if the fort is taken – I have answered the demand with a cannon shot...

Colonel Travis, February 24

Siege

For twelve days the Mexican army laid siege to the Alamo. Santa Anna's artillery shelled the "fort" with varying intensity, while more of his army arrived in Béxar. Texian cannon replied for several days until ammunition began to run low. There were several parleys as each side sought to gain time or advantage, although none altered the situation. Travis, in sole command after Bowie fell desperately ill, sent numerous couriers with messages pleading for reinforcements, while vowing to defend his post to the last.

The Mexicans built earthworks for their artillery and launched several forays against the Alamo, all of which were beaten back. The Texians did not remain behind the walls of the old mission, but launched raids of their own to get food, water and destroy a village of ramshackle huts close enough to the Alamo for Mexican troops to use as cover. During this period most, but not all, non-combatants left the Alamo.

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A heavy cannonade has been kept up incessantly...

Colonel Travis to Sam Houston, February 28

No Help

The defenders of the Alamo never planned to make a sacrificial stand. Forced by circumstances to defend the old mission-turned-fortress, they hoped to be rescued by reinforcements. Once fellow Texians came to their aid, they would leave the Alamo and fight the decisive battle to drive Santa Anna back into Mexico.

Unfortunately for Travis and his men, the only outside help they received came on March 1, when 32 men – mostly from Gonzales – slipped through enemy lines to reinforce the Alamo. Sufficient numbers of troops could not be mustered and organized in the colonies in time to move to the Alamo's aid. Only support from the garrison at Goliad was a realistic possibility.

Travis expected that Colonel Fannin with his 400 men would rush to San Antonio. Indeed, Fannin began to do so on February 28, but moved less than a mile from Goliad before halting to repair a broken cart. Night fell before the job was finished. During the evening, Fannin's oxen, left untended, wandered off and most of the next day was spent rounding them up. During this delay, Fannin – seized with second thoughts – called a council of war. Aware that they were the only protection for the colonies of South Texas and that another column of Mexican troops was moving northward from Matamoros, Fannin's officers voted to return to Goliad. From a strategic point of view, Fannin's decision was not without merit. Nonetheless, it spelled doom for the Alamo.

On March 3, courier James Bonham brought news to Travis that Fannin had turned back. There would be no help.

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I call on you in the name of liberty, of patriotism and everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid, with all dispatch.

Colonel Travis to the People of Texas, February 24

American Heroes Weekend

Camp Mabry, Austin Texas

April 16-17



- Food
- games
- Traveling Vietnam Memorial
- aircraft
- WWII battle reenactment
- Buffalo Soldiers