

The Monthly Magazine of the Texas Military Forces

March 2011

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**Cover—Utah National Guard Soldiers conduct rappel training together with Texas National Guard Soldiers and local EMT in Dallas, Texas on Saturday, Jan 30, 2011. The interagency collaboration supported the security efforts of Super Bowl 45. Photo by Sgt. Josiah Pugh, 100th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)**

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## The DISPATCH

Vol. 6, No. 3 March 2011

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## • *DoD Seeks TRICARE Fee Increase*

The Pentagon wants to slow that growth and ultimately chip away at the costs over the next five years, beginning next year with increases in the annual membership fees for military retirees under 65. Family memberships would go up from \$460 to \$520 per year; enrollment for single people would go from \$230 to \$260 per year. The increases do not apply to active-duty military families and members, or retirees past age 65.

## • *Report on Homeless Veterans*

For the first time, the VA and the Department of Housing and Urban Development have released the most authoritative analysis of the extent and nature of homelessness among veterans. According to HUD and the VA's assessment, nearly 76,000 veterans were homeless on a given night in 2009 while roughly 136,000 Veterans spent at least one night in a shelter during that year. HUD's report, *Veteran Homelessness: A Supplement to the 2009 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress*, at <http://www.hudhre.info/documents/2009AHARVeteransReport.pdf>, has an in-depth examination of the data in the department's annual report to Congress. Read more about the Administration's strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness in America at <http://www.usich.gov/PDF/OpeningDoorsOverview.pdf>.

## • *Pets for Patriots*

Pets for Patriots, Inc. is a not-for-profit organization that helps military members and veterans honorably adopt adult and at-risk shelter pets. Its mission is to consistently give the gifts of fidelity, joy and companionship to both pet and person. The charity is a proud member of the Army AW2 Wounded Warrior Program national community support network, a national partner of the Real Warriors Campaign and is listed by the National Resource Directory for ill and wounded veterans. For more information, visit the Pets for Patriots website at <http://www.petsforpatriots.org/>.

## • *Veterans Sports Clinic*

September 18 - September 23, 2011 - San Diego, California 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 (858) 642-6426.

## • *Support for Caregivers*

The VA is providing enhanced benefits and services to caregivers of veterans of all eras who are already enrolled in VA care, including: (1) access to VA's toll-free Caregiver Support Line: 1-855-260-3274; (2) expanded education and training on caring for veterans at home; (3) counseling, support groups and referral services; and (4) an enhanced website for caregivers. Additional benefits are available to the caregivers of the most seriously ill and injured Post 9/11 veterans. Each VA medical center has designated caregiver support coordinators who will assist eligible veterans and caregivers in understanding and applying for the new benefits. The VA also has a Caregiver Support webpage at <http://www.caregiver.va.gov/>.

## • *Vacation Deals for Soldiers*

Leisure Travel, a division of the Army's Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation, offers discounted travel, hotel and event rates to places and events around the world. Anyone holding a military identification card can take advantage of these deals. Leisure Travel offices exist at each Army installation, and the staff specializes in local deals. For example, soldiers can also receive up to four free tickets at any SeaWorld or Busch Gardens park and Sesame Place in a "Here's to the Heroes" salute at <http://www.herosalute.com/>. For more information, contact your base's Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) or Leisure Travel office.

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.

*The Dispatch* is a funded monthly newsletter published in the interest of the members of the Texas Military Forces. Contents of *The Dispatch* are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the Department of Defense, the National Guard Bureau, the State of Texas or the Adjutant General's Department of Texas. Content is edited, prepared and provided by the Texas Joint Military Forces Public Affairs Office, Bldg. 10, 2200 W. 35th Street, Camp Mabry, Austin, Texas. 78703.

# CSTs work together with Dallas first responders, support Super Bowl XLV

**Story and photos by Sgt. Josiah Pugh  
100th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment**

DALLAS -- Cowboy Stadium holds up to 111,000 fans inside its three million square foot facility. Safety is probably the last thing game-goers think about while watching their favorite teams play on Super Bowl Sunday. Behind the scenes, military troops and civil servants work together to ensure attendees never have to worry about it.

In 1998, President Bill Clinton established the concept of Civil Support Teams. According to the National Guard website, CSTs "assess suspected weapons of mass destruction attacks, advise civilian responders on appropriate actions through on-site testing and expert consultation and facilitate the arrival of additional state and federal military forces."

Five CSTs from outside Texas came to assist with security operations at Cowboy Stadium and the surrounding Super Bowl event areas. Soldiers of Oklahoma's 63rd CST, for example, ensured the safety of fans at the NFL Experience Center.

"Our whole mission and purpose," said Army Capt. David Dickerson, Operations Officer for the 63rd CST, "is to provide surveillance and preemptively detect any threat if possible while keeping a low profile."

CST service members place a priority on their discretion and typically wear civilian clothes to better integrate into their civilian surroundings.

Dallas-Fort Worth Airport firefighter Capt. Daniel White, a nine-year veteran of his department, has never before had this rare opportunity to work with the military.

"In a post-9/11 world we have to be

ready for anything," said Captain White. "We're going to have so many people coming in, large amounts of people in dense places, so we have to be prepared for anything."

Possible threats include chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear or explosive incidents.

During the course of Captain White's rescue operation training, he discovered the value in working with the military.

"I think this is really good," Captain White said. "Not only does this display in terms of what we have for resources, things we can count on, but now we know first-hand that when working with these guys, we can count on them if the worst happens."

Captain Dickerson said this interagency cooperation proved useful for his troops as well.

"It's been a great experience for us," said Captain Dickerson. "We've been

able to try out some things in the communications and surveillance arena that we've never tried before and just really push the limits of what a civil support team can do in a large metropolitan area."

"These guys we're working with at the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport are incredible, awesome firefighters," said Army Lt. Col. Tyler Smith, Commander of Utah's 85th CST. "They're well trained, they're well equipped and they're very appreciative that we're here. We're learning from each other as we go."

Super Bowl fans should feel safe knowing that military and first responders are combining efforts to ensure their safety on the big day.

"We're always ready," said Colonel Smith. "We don't anticipate any problems or incidents, but it's always critical to be prepared for the worst. We expect to go home with no incidents. The people of this great nation can enjoy the Super Bowl without having any concern for their safety."



**Utah National Guard Soldiers conduct rappel training together with Texas National Guard Soldiers and local EMT in Dallas, Texas on Saturday, Jan 30, 2011. The interagency collaboration supported the security efforts of Super Bowl 45.**

# Iraqi Air Force pilots learn 9-Line and Litter Management Training

Story and photo by Sgt. Jeremy Spires  
36th Inf. Div., USD-S Public Affairs Office



***Pilots from the Iraqi Air Force practice loading a “wounded patient” into the cabin of a helicopter in preparation for a training event testing their knowledge on medical evacuations. The Iraqi pilots worked in conjunction with Navy corpsmen from the 2515<sup>th</sup> Navy Air Ambulance Detachment and officers from the Enhanced Combat Aviation Brigade for USD-S.***

**CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE BASRA, Iraq** – Like a scene from an Iraqi version of the blockbuster movie “Top Gun,” Iraqi Air Force pilots gathered for a briefing from members of the 2515<sup>th</sup> Navy Air Ambulance Detachment. The pilots were not briefed for a tactical mission, but for something just as important: basic 9-Line Medical Evacuation and Litter Management Training.

“Today we taught the Iraqi Air Force the procedure that we use for the 9-line MEDEVAC calls so that they can establish their own (tactics, techniques, procedures) and move forward after we are gone,” said Chief Petty Officer Jason Pollock, a native of Lakeland, Fla., and a hospital corpsmen chief for the 2515<sup>th</sup> NAAD.

The standard 9-line MEDEVAC request is used by military personnel to call for assistance when a Soldier is sick or wounded and needs medical attention.

“The Iraqi Air Force benefits from the contributions of new information about medical evacuations from the battlefield to the evacuation area for medical treatment,” said Lt. Col. Taher F. Wafy, Squadron 4 Commander for the Iraqi Air Force.

This exercise gave the pilots more experience and information that they can use in the future, he added.

The Iraqi Air Force pilots spent a few hours receiving classroom instruction before heading out to the flight line to get hands-on experience. There they learned how to load and unload litter patients onto a helicopter.

The Iraqi pilots put their training to the test in the exercise’s culminating scenario. They received a 9-line MEDEVAC request and were tasked with locating a “wounded” Soldier. The Iraqis flew to the site, treated the Soldier, and evacuated him via helicopter.

“This is a primary mission of Operation New Dawn,” said Lt. Col. Fernando Guadalupe, the USD-S Deputy Commanding Officer for the Enhanced Combat Aviation Brigade. “The 9-Line and Litter Management Training strengthens a critical skill set that will be necessary for the Iraqi’s force protection and mission accomplishment.”

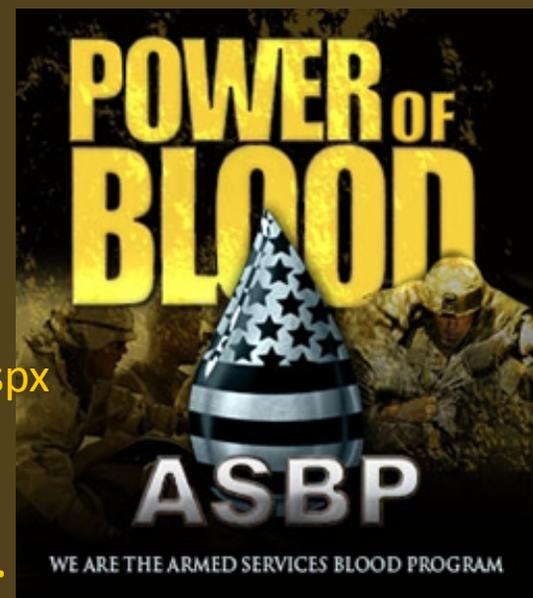
“I would like to see them take over their own MEDEVAC program once we are gone,” said Petty Officer Pollock. “We are providing a service that is pretty valuable for the end user, the guy on the ground, and for them to prepare their own TTPs and take over the mission for themselves.”

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

For more information or schedule an appointment, visit: [www.militaryblood.dod.mil/Donors/default.aspx](http://www.militaryblood.dod.mil/Donors/default.aspx)

Donation centers located at Ft. Hood, Ft. Sam Houston and Lackland Air Force Base.



# Beethoven in Basra

Photos and story by Staff Sgt. Chanelcherie K. DeMello  
305th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment  
USD-S Public Affairs Office

**BASRA, Iraq** – Soldiers of the 36<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Band at Contingency Operating Base Basra dedicated a day of instrument familiarization and music rehearsals to 10 students of the Basrah University arts and music academy.

From the French horn to the Bass guitar, the band kicked-off the day with a musical workshop on different instruments and genres of music.

“We thought we could help them with resources and also teach them how to play,” said Austin, Texas, native Chief Warrant Officer Jeffrey Lightsey, band commander.

“We showed them a little bit about every ensemble that we have; the different styles that we perform and classes on each individual instrument,” said Spc. Carlos Meda a native of Austin, Texas, and a tuba player with the band.

The band members played music ranging from a spiritual hymn

and a Dixieland style of “Amazing Grace” to a merengue march from the Dominican Republic.

To give back to their teachers (the band) who volunteered their time, the students played some of their finest Arabic melodies as well as an innovative excerpt from Beethoven’s “Symphony No. 9.”

“I think that they played very well,” Mr. Lightsey said. “Their style is very different and, modified to their style, it sounded great and they had fun doing it.”

A wealth of musical knowledge was exchanged as Soldiers and students shared comments, questions, ideas and personal experiences related to music.

“Everyone loves music and can understand a feeling through music,” said Specialist Meda. “It is an expressive way for anyone.”

“The interaction

with music, you can do a lot with it,”

Lightsey said. “We

are looking to continue this, do a lecture series and play a little bit and explain some historical pieces, as well as get them to use computer programs and get them up to par with unfamiliar equipment.”

The reemergence of music education in Iraq looks promising, he added, and the introduction of American music would add to the Iraqi students’ repertoire and serve as a bridge between their cultures.

“It shows that we are here for peace,” said Specialist Meda. “We are here to start a good relationship and music helps with that aspect.”



**Ten students from the Basrah University arts and music academy performed some of their finest Arab melodies as well as an innovative excerpt from Beethoven’s “Symphony No. 9” during a musical workshop held by the 36th Infantry Division Band at Contingency Operating Base Basra.**



*Until they all come home.*

# Crunching the numbers: FREE tax preparation

**Story and photo by Laura Lopez**  
**Texas Military Forces Public Affairs**

**CAMP MABRY, AUSTIN, Texas**— As the April 18th tax deadline looms, members of the Texas Military Forces are teaming up with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program to help service members and retirees prepare their taxes for free.

For Staff Sgt. Juan Garza of B Co., 3rd Battalion of the 141st Infantry from Laredo, spending the last week to become a certified tax preparer for the VITA program is one way he has chosen to give back to his fellow Soldiers and ensure his own taxes are done correctly.

“As I was talking to the instructor I realized that when I came back from my deployment in 2006 I actually discovered the man who did my taxes did them wrong,” said Sergeant Garza. “I ended up paying him twice and then I had to pay the government back and it was just something that would not have happened if he knew what he was doing.”

With the growth and demands of the Texas Military Forces increasing at a rapid pace, those with the Joint Force Legal Office are excited to continue being a part of this program and encourage all service members, retirees and eligible dependents to sign up for a free appointment. Certified through a classroom or online course under the direction of the IRS, each volunteer is taught to work with military law and the various aspects of combat/drill pay and moving expenses.

“In legal assistance office you see the different walks of life that come in all the time, people who have been through many different things and that’s



**Tax Consultant with the Internal Revenue Service, Jamie Stewart, works with Staff Sgt. Juan Garza of B Co., 3rd Battalion of the 141st Infantry during the four day Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program training held on Camp Mabry. During either the classroom or online training volunteers have the choice of becoming certified on various levels ranging from basic to advanced.**

especially true with the military, so this is just one of the benefits we can provide service members” said Capt. Dana Collins, Legal Assistance Attorney Advisor with the Joint Force Office of the General Counsel.

Any service member, retiree, or eligible dependents interested in setting up an appointment for tax preparation assistance can contact 512-782-1169 to schedule an appointment. Appointments are available on Monday, Thursday, or Friday from 9:00a.m. to 4:00p.m. through April 25, 2011. Everyone is advised to bring all documents related to their income, as well as social security cards/military identification cards for everyone being claimed on the tax return.

# Korean War veteran receives medals after six decades

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

**Austin, Texas**— Although Ruben Espinoza couldn't wait for the age of majority to enlist, he would have to wait 61 years to receive medals earned during combat in the Korean War. On Feb. 15, 2011, at Camp Mabry in Austin, Texas, surrounded by family and friends, Espinoza was finally awarded seven medals, including the Purple Heart, earned during wartime service over six decades ago. Waiting so long to be presented with medals isn't usual, but then, very little about Espinoza is.

For Mr. Espinoza, his eighteenth birthday wouldn't come

fast enough, so at 17 he paid a virtual stranger, who could neither read nor write, the princely sum of \$100 to put an X on the consent forms that would allow him to enlist in the United States Army on Jan. 24, 1947. Following Basic Training, Private Espinoza, a native of Lockhart, Texas, joined the 27th Infantry Regiment (Wolfhounds) at Camp Sakai in Oasku, Japan.

When war broke out on the Korean peninsula, then-Corporal Espinoza had just re-enlisted, and the 27th Inf. Reg. was chosen to lead the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division into combat. On July 10, 1950, the 27th Inf. Reg. landed at Pusan, Korea and immediately commenced combat operations.

Corporal Espinoza was severely wounded in combat on Aug. 3, 1950 during the Battle of Pusan, one of the first major offensives of the Korean War.

He was evacuated to Japan to recover from his injuries, although he rejoined his regiment in Korea on Nov. 24, 1950. Later,

Espinoza returned to the US--stationed at Ft. Polk, La. as a training instructor and promoted to sergeant. He would leave the Army shortly thereafter.

Never one to turn his back on service, Sergeant Espinoza joined the Air Force in 1953, serving at various bases both at home and in France. He retired as a technical sergeant in June 1967 after twenty years of distinguished service.

Mr. Espinoza joined the security force at the Texas Military Forces headquarters, at Camp

*Below left— Ruben Espinoza on Feb. 15, 2011. (Photo by Air National Guard Staff Sgt. Eric Wilson, Texas Military Forces Public Affairs.)*

*Below right— A young Private Espinoza. (Family photograph)*





protected as part of the security force at Camp Mabry. "Ruben didn't say a lot, but his sheer presence spoke volumes," said Mr. McCormick. "Ruben Espinoza is one hell of a man and a true warrior."

After the awards were presented, it was time for Mr. Espinoza to speak. A shy man who hardly speaks of the past but with a love of country that knows no bounds, he said "I am not a good speaker, but I do want to share with you-- a Soldier never dies," which earned him a standing ovation and a roomful of nods in agreement.

Mabry in Austin, serving with distinction until his recent retirement at age 81.

Chuck McCormick, the former Provost Marshal for the Texas National Guard had high praise for the young Corporal Espinoza, as well as the man he grew into.

"Courage is not absence of fear, but the judgment that something else is more important," said Mr. McCormick. "Bravery doesn't mean you're not scared, but you go anyway. The [infantrymen] in Korea in 1950 learned a lot about fear, and they went anyway."

An act of courage and bravery becomes a defining moment for an individual, man or woman," he said, and "becomes a catalyst for the way they live the rest of their lives."

That Mr. Espinoza had earned so many awards came as no real surprise to Col. (Ret.) Dennis Morreale. Although Espinoza had a quiet demeanor and friendly personality, those that know him recognize inner confidence and dedication to his job, he said.

"Whether serving on the gate [at Camp Mabry] or manning the security desk, Ruben had a reputation for accomplishing his duties with professionalism and pride," said Mr. Morreale.

McCormick counts Espinoza's retirement as a true loss to the state and to the men and women he



The awards presented to Espinoza on Feb. 15, 2011 include the Purple Heart, the WWII Victory Medal, the Army of Occupation Medal with Japan clasp, the National Defense Service Medal, the Korean War Service Medal with silver star attachment, the United Nations Service Medal, and the Combat Infantryman's Badge. Espinoza has five children: Gilbert Cisneros, Ruben Espinoza, Jr., Rodney Espinoza, Mark Espinoza, and Jeffery Espinoza. He is also the proud grandfather of 12.

**Above left— The Purple Heart, the WWII Victory Medal, the Army of Occupation Medal with Japan clasp, the National Defense Service Medal, the Korean War Service Medal with silver star attachment, the United Nations Service Medal, and the Combat Infantryman's Badge presented to Ruben Espinoza. (Photo by Air National Guard Staff Sgt. Eric Wilson, Texas Military Forces Public Affairs.)**

**Above right— Ruben Espinoza with his sons Mark Espinoza, Gilbert Cisneros, Rodney Espinoza, Ruben Espinoza, Jr., and Jeffery Espinoza. (Photo by Air National Guard Staff Sgt. Eric Wilson, Texas Military Forces Public Affairs.)**

# Operation *Shining Star*: Mortars and tanks and flares, oh my!

Story and photos Sgt. Jeremy Spires  
36th Inf. Div., USD-S Public Affairs Office

**BASRA, Iraq** – A green star cluster flared in the night sky, marking the beginning a complex night maneuver by the 14th Iraqi Army Division on the banks of Tea Leaf Island located north of Contingency Operating Base Basra.

The night’s event, called Operation Shining Star, displayed the 14th IA Div.’s combat and security capabilities by combining mortars, tanks and a river crossing into a live-fire exercise.

“Today we are going to view 52nd Brigade, 14th Iraqi Army Division’s water crossing exercise,” said Maj. George S. Sellers, an officer in the Iraqi Security Forces Cell for the 36th Inf. Div. “It is a dynamic night river live-fire exercise that is com-

pletely planned and executed through the 14th Iraqi Army Planning cell. So we are looking forward to a dynamic exercise utilizing mortars, river crossing, and T-55 Tanks operated by the Iraqi Army.”

The live-fire exercise demonstrated the ability of the 52nd IA Bde, 14th IA Div.’s ability to plan and execute training for the most difficult combat operation, projecting combat power across a water obstacle.

“We (USD-S) provided a mentor relationship with the 14th IA Division to help in developing the concept of the exercise and then going through some of the planning events that lead up to the execution of the exercise,” said Brig. Gen.

Len Smith, Deputy Commanding General – Maneuver for the 36th Inf. Div., who was a

guest of honor at the event.

The 14th IA Div. had been conducting rehearsals from the

platoon and company level all the way up to the battalion and brigade level for weeks to show the Iraqi people that they are committed to making the exercise a success.

“This exercise, more than anything, is to show

***“This exercise is more than anything else that the Iraqi Army is required to execute here. It is a complex mission in a safe environment.”***



***The night sky is illuminated by multiple flares during Operation Shining Star, an exercise in which the 52nd Iraqi Army Brigade, 14th Iraqi Army Division demonstrates its ability to conduct a complex combat operation and project combat power across a water obstacle.***

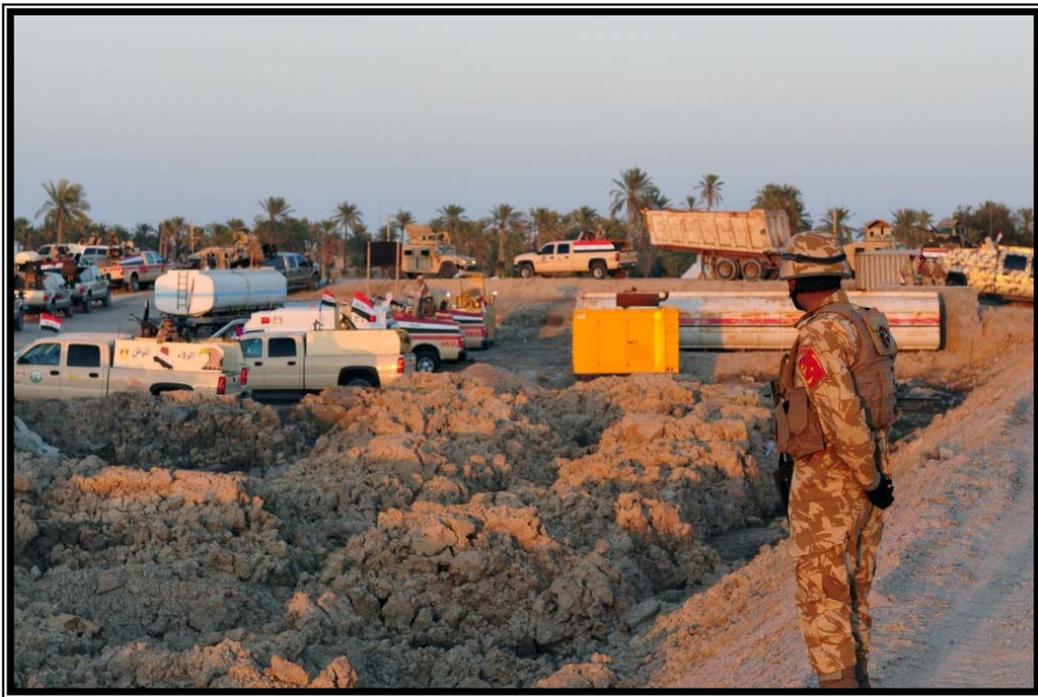
the Iraqi populace that the Iraqi Army is ready to execute highly complex missions in a safe environment,” said Major Sellers. “To control live-fire executions while utilizing tanks, mortars as well as infantry movements all succinctly planned and executed. Not since 2003 has the Iraqi Army conducted an exercise of this extent at night, so this is truly an epic operation on the part of the 14th Iraqi Army Division.”

**Exercise, more than anything, is to show the Iraqi people they are ready to take on highly complex missions in a safe environment.”**

The exercise also culminated more than a year’s worth of advising, training and assisting efforts between the 14th IA Div. and battalions from United States

Division – South. Upon completion of Operation Shining Star, the 14th IA Div. will begin preparing for another, more complex mission, later this year.

“After successfully completing this exercise they will move onto Operation Lions Leap, which is the next evolutionary step in the Iraqi Army



*Iraqi Soldiers with the 52nd Iraq Army Brigade, 14th Iraq Army Division provide security during Operation Shining Star on Feb. 14. This exercise culminates a year's worth of advise, train and assist efforts between the 14th IA Div. and the United States Division - South. The display of capabilities included mortar fire, support by fire operations and an assault river crossing.*

planning processes,” said Major Sellers. “It is now a joint exercise involving Iraqi Special Operations, Iraqi Navy, Iraqi Aviation, and the command battalion for the 14th Iraqi Army Division; all in one succinct exercise in Umm Qasr here in USD-South.”

“I think it was great,” remarked General Smith on the successful completion of the operation. “I think they really took to heart a lot of guidance and mentorship that we gave them. They were able to do a

lot of things that were not normal or traditional in the way of doing things. In this military, a lot of their officers were trained under some of the Soviet models from the Cold War days. So what they have been able to do is take those things that they were trained on and then apply what we are teaching them as our model, and they are actually blending the two together to come up with something that is workable for them but is also of a standard that we would recognize in the United States.”

# COB Basra, 36th Inf. Div. celebrates Black History Month

Story and photo by Sgt. Jeremy Spires  
36th Inf. Div., USD-S Public Affairs Office

## CONTINGENCY OPERATING

**BASE BASRA, Iraq** – Every year the U.S. Army celebrates the contributions of African Americans, and this year the 36th Infantry Division continues that tradition by honoring the men and women who fought for the promise of justice and equality in the Civil War.

Tens of thousands of African Americans enlisted in the U.S.

Army and Navy, making extraordinary sacrifices to help unite a fractured country and free millions from slavery.

“Each year in February, the Army honors and recognizes the remarkable contributions of African American men and women to our nation’s security,” said Capt. Lisa A. Lerma, a Copperas Cove, Texas native and Equality Opportunity and Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program Manager for U.S. Division – South.

“This year, we have highlighted the distinguished military heritage of African Americans who committed themselves to this nation’s defense during the Civil War.”

This year’s remembrance ceremony included readings from a number of literary works by artist linked to the African American’s struggle for

equality: “No More Words!” by Franklin Lushington, “The Welcome Table” by Alice Walker, “On Spring” by George Moses Horton, and a speech given by President John F. Kennedy at the White House in 1963.

Omala Okadet, a civilian contractor from Uganda, was one of many in attendance at the night’s event.

“It was really nice and I enjoyed it,” said Okadet. “It was great company, great people. I enjoy it when all different kinds of people get together for something like this.”

The “T-Patch Blue” brass quintet and the Basra Gospel Choir performed musical melodies throughout the ceremony, which centered on the Civil War era.

“Their sacrifice and accomplishments helped transform our Army and our Nation,” said Captain Lerma, “and all Americans should realize that the efforts of African American Soldiers and Civilians contributed greatly to the preservation of our country.”



Members of the Basra Gospel Choir perform "Amazing Grace" during the 36th Infantry Division Black History month celebration on Contingency Operating Base Basra on Feb. 20.



FALLS CHURCH, Va. – The U.S. Army, with oversight by TRICARE 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

offers behavioral health tools, information

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.

# SOLDIERS ANGELS GERMANY

Soldiers' Angels Germany is a group of volunteers - military and civilians - living in Germany. They are supported by the Soldiers' Angels Foundation and many private donors.

As part of the Soldiers' Angels Medical Support Team, their mission is to support wounded and ill soldiers being treated at the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center facilities.

**[HTTP//SOLDIERSANGELSGERMANY.BLOGSPOT.COM/](http://SOLDIERSANGELSGERMANY.BLOGSPOT.COM/)**

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

# BAND OF BLOGGERS



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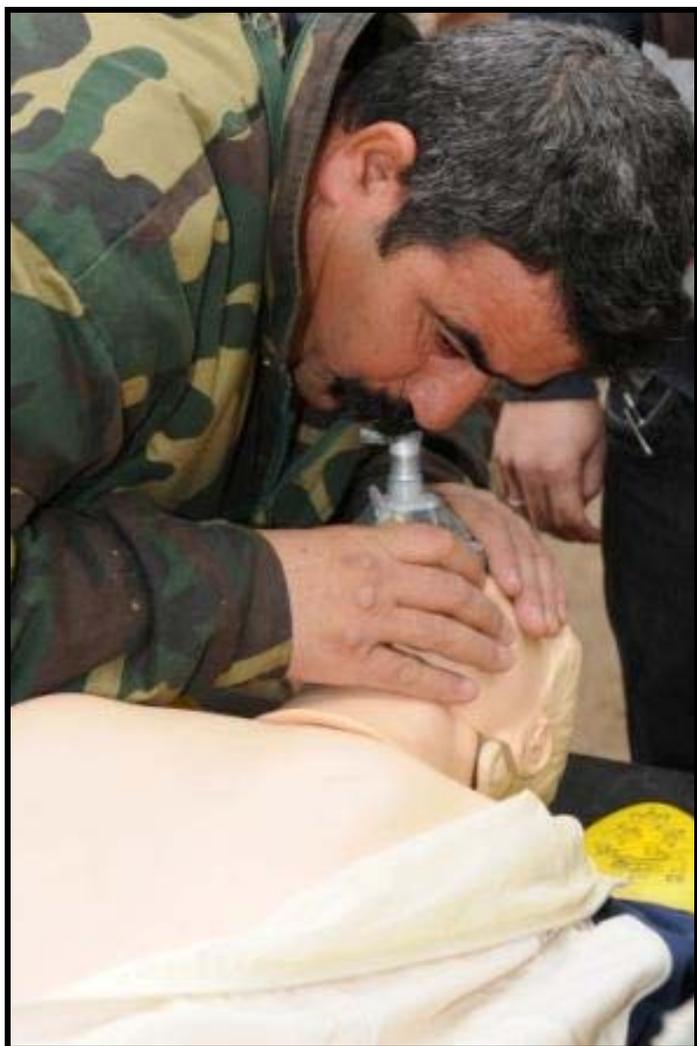
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## Iraqi soldiers graduate from US led first-aid training course

Story and photos by Sgt. James Kennedy Benjamin  
305<sup>th</sup> MPAD, USD-S PAO

**BASRA, Iraq** – After a week of Power Point presentations, extensive hands-on training, and a written exam, Iraqi soldiers graduated from a basic first aid and life-saver course at the Iraqi compound on Contingency Operating Base Basra, becoming the 162nd Area Support



Medical Company's first batch of graduating students.

The five-day course, which lasted approximately three hours per day, is intended to build the soldiers' skills and confidence to provide first aid in a tactical environment, part of the U.S. mission of advising, training and assisting the Iraqi Security Forces.

Sgt. Justin Ball, the training noncommissioned officer in-charge of the 162nd ASMC, was one of several instructors for the course.

"We are teaching them [Iraqi soldiers] some basic first aid and lifesaving skills for them to use on the battlefield," Sergeant Ball said. "It is important because a lot of these guys have not gotten this training before."

Omran Jabar, a participant, said learning how to stop the bleeding was what he enjoyed most about the class.

Ahmed Ala'uddin Kadhem, another participant, said cardiopulmonary resuscitation, or CPR, was his favorite subject. Going through the lectures and getting hands-on training helped him better understand the role of CPR.

"This is a great coordination for the Iraqi Army and the American Army," said Dr. Sarmad Abdulkader Almayiahi, flight clinic commander. "Thank you for the American troops."

At the end of the course, participants were expected to demonstrate their knowledge and ability to save the life of a wounded soldier. Once they had done that, the soldiers received a certificate of completion from the class.

"I have learned that they [Iraqi soldiers] are intelli-

gent, thoughtful, and, most of all, capable of understanding if given the chance," Sergeant Ball said.

The course criteria, similar to the Army's Combat Lifesaver course, covered topics like tactical combat casualty care, respiratory breathing management, extremity injury and CPR.

Even as U.S. forces prepare to leave Iraq by the end of this year, Ball and his team have taken steps to ensure that the medical training continues after they are gone.

"[We] have given them training aids and slide shows," Sergeant Ball said, "and have been including them in the training whenever possible, giving them the skills to teach and thus sustain the program."

The medical company is scheduled to conduct more basic first aid and lifesaver classes for Iraqi soldiers in the upcoming weeks. "They have responded very well," Sergeant Ball said. "If these soldiers take this training to heart and use it and save even one life, then I feel like [we] have made a great contribution to the reconstruction of Iraq."



**Right—** Soldiers from the 162nd Area Support Medical Company taught Iraqi soldiers how to give rescue breaths to an unconscious victim during a basic first aid and lifesaver's

**Opposite page—** An Iraqi soldier demonstrates how to properly give rescue breaths to an unconscious victim during a basic first aid and lifesaver course at the Iraqi compound on Contingency Operating Base Basra, U.S. Division-South Soldiers with the 162nd Area Support Medical Company out of San Antonio, Texas, taught the weeklong class, part of the U.S. role of advising, training and assisting the Iraqi Security Forces.



Find out more about the Veterans of Foreign Wars at <http://www.vfw.org/> With 250 posts within a 200 mile radius of Austin, and over 500 posts statewide, there's a VFW post near you. Join to help your fellow veterans.

*The VFW continues to be the nation's strongest voice for veterans and the catalyst for change in improving veteran's benefits.*

The Veterans of Foreign Wars has a rich tradition in enhancing the lives of millions through its community service programs and special projects. From providing free phone cards to our nation's active-duty military personnel to raising money for the World War II memorial, the VFW is there, "honoring the dead by helping the living."



# Spring into wellness...

**Maj. Steven Keihl**  
**TXMF Resiliency Team**

I love the Spring! It is a time of renewal, new life, new energy, a fresh start for our earth and an opportunity for ourselves. We can allow the brighter days to bring better attitudes and a perfect opportunity to recommit to resiliency and better mental health! But this is a choice not everyone makes.

Many people believe that the holiday season is the time of year with the highest suicide rates, this is a MYTH!!! The Center for Disease Control and Prevention reminds us that the holiday season is actually the time of year when there are the least amount of suicides with December as the lowest rate of the year by month.

In fact, the highest suicide rates actually appear during the Spring with an additional peak during the Fall. (PAY EXTRA ATTENTION ALL YOU TRAINED PEER TO PEER INTERVENTION SPECIALISTS) So, we have a choice... new life and energy or greater aggression and depression. I say, we choose life!

Our choice is often based on our focus and our behaviors. We can zero in on all the negative stuff and indulge in self-destructive behaviors or develop a positive outlook and a healthy lifestyle. Here are three tips to help us focus on new life and maintain a healthy and happy perspective:

## ONE : Exercise Your Mind

Many of us exercise our bodies to stay physically fit. We stretch, we stress, we lift, we flex, we sweat and we work hard to push our muscles to develop and to chase away all the unwanted fat.

Guess what, your brain needs the same type of exercise! Take the opportunity this Spring to begin a new exercise regimen for your brain! Take a class at a college or online (we have tons of educational benefits available to us), read a book, do some crossword puzzles, play Trivial Pursuit... anything to get us thinking, to challenge and stretch our brain.

Stimulating the brain helps us grow, can improve our self-esteem, and can even help reduce memory loss. So turn off the ridiculous reality TV show, eliminate all the background

noise, and find something new get the brainwaves flying!

I talked with a soldier recently who joined a book club. It might sound silly, but he swears it totally changed his life to begin reading, thinking about what he was reading, and sharing the story with others. Not a bad move!

## TWO : Reduce Your Stress

This can be a little bit complicated for many of us. Life can be pretty crazy, hectic, and uncooperative. Most of us fail to realize just how much stress we are actually dealing with.

The Holmes & Rahe Stress Scale is an instrument the Resiliency Team uses during Peer to Peer training (if you want a copy, just ask). Many people are surprised to learn that their current stress level places them in a category with elevated risk of illness or worse.

We learn to shoulder and sometimes ignore the stress in our world, but it has a cumulative impact on our entire being. It wears away at us even when we fail to acknowledge it. Stress can impact our mood, memory, immune system, etc.

Bottom line, it is not a good idea to just ignore stress... especially when there are methods to reduce, mitigate, or even eliminate stress.

Too many of us just simply plan too much, work too many hours, spend too much time with the pedal to the metal... it will eventually lead to problems, maybe serious ones.

My first recommendation is to take a look at your calendar. Look over the next week. How much time do you have scheduled to take care of yourself? Maybe you need to drop a few things and reduce your schedule. Here is a simple one... take a LUNCH BREAK.

Sitting at your desk and inhaling a microwaved burger while typing and



# News Brief

## Frank Buckles, last US WWI veteran dies

### A MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

The passing of Frank Woodruff Buckles deeply saddens all of us at the Department of Veterans Affairs. The loss of Mr. Buckles is a great sorrow not only for his family, but for all Americans, as well. As the last known American Veteran of World War I, his passing ends our Nation's last personal connection to the 4,734,990 World War I Veterans who served our country with valor and distinction. In his later years, Mr. Buckles took it upon himself to be the champion of all Veterans from his generation and worked to ensure their service is never forgotten. His dedication never wavered; he took his fight to establish a national memorial for his comrades to the White House, Congress and all those who would listen.



On behalf of the Department of Veterans Affairs, I extend deepest condolences to his daughter, Susannah Buckles Flanagan, who cared for Mr. Buckles over the years, and to all his family members and friends. We pray for their strength and well-being during this difficult time. We join with Americans everywhere in honoring his service to our Nation, as a teenage Soldier in World War I, as a civilian prisoner during World War II, and as a vibrant advocate for the memory of his fellow doughboys.

answering the phone is a really bad idea. Thirty minutes away from the madness makes a huge difference. You can even pack your own lunch and eat some fresh veggies and fruits instead of a greasy burger.

Stress can also be managed by engaging in stress reduction behaviors like the use of deep breathing or muscle tension and relaxation exercises. Cut back on caffeine, nicotine, energy drinks, and other stimulants that can exasperate stress. Take a bath, go for a walk, write in a journal, learn to meditate... there are a million ways to reduce stress!

If you need help, give us a call. We would love to help!

### THREE : Reduce Your Alcohol Intake

Spring signals more outdoor activities to include BBQ and beer! Too many people significantly increase their alcohol intake during the Spring months. And remember, alcohol is a DEPRESSANT! In other words, if you are feeling a bit down or depressed, it isn't going to help you feel better. In fact, it will do just the opposite.

Alcohol also impairs our thinking and our activity. Too much alcohol often leads to really stupid choices and clumsy behaviors.

Take advantage of opportunities to enjoy the outdoors and have fun with friends and family, but learn to have fun without getting intoxicated.

The truth is, if the only way you can enjoy yourself is under the influence, you have a PROBLEM and you should

seriously consider getting some help. Be especially careful to completely avoid self-medication.

In other words, when you feel bad, sad, depressed or stressed, avoid using alcohol as your coping mechanism. This is almost a sure fire way to find yourself in a mess somewhere down the line!

The Spring is here! I plan on running outdoors more, playing a little golf, pushing my daughter on her swing set, kiss my wife, and enjoying the beauty of blooming flowers and growing green grass. I want to focus on new life not new distractions! I want my Spring to be a fresh opportunity to grow, mature, continue to develop personal resiliency, balance, and inner peace. I hope you choose the same.

### Resiliency Team Update

*The Resiliency Team is happy to engage in some wonderful mind stretching of our own in March. We will be attending the Department of Defense Suicide Prevention Convention and a couple of us will be attending the American Counseling Association Annual Conference. Exercising our brains, learning new things, discovering new resources... we will bring them all right back to YOU!!!*

### Featured Resiliency Resource of the Month:

Stage Seven @ [www.stageseven.org](http://www.stageseven.org)

*Alternative Medicine for Veterans Acupuncture • Herbal Medicine • Massage Therapy • Meditation • Qi Gong • Tai Chi*

# THE ALAMO

FEBRUARY 23 - MARCH 6, 1836

The Rest  
of the  
Story...

## The Mexican Assault

During the night of March 5/6, most defenders of the Alamo – exhausted by the 12-day siege – fell asleep. At midnight, Santa Anna's battalions began forming for the assault. Texian sentries posted outside the walls were silently killed as the attackers took position. The Mexican troops – 1,305 strong, supported by a reserve force and cavalry – formed four assault columns. Their plan was to simultaneously strike the north and east side of the Alamo, as well as its northwest and southeast corners.

Once in place, the troops laid down in line of battle to rest. Santa Anna hoped his columns would get very close to the Alamo before the defenders knew what was happening. Around 5 a.m., however, a cold and anxious Mexican soldado cried out, "Viva Santa Anna!" The cry was taken up by hundreds of other men and the chance for surprise disappeared. As the assaulting columns sprang forward, the massed bands of the Mexican army played the Deguello – a blood-curdling signal of "no quarter."

Suddenly aware they were under attack, the Texians rushed to their posts. The Mexicans, meeting a hail of rifle, musket and cannon fire, suffered heavy casualties and were driven back. Colonel Travis, firing his shotgun into the mass of enemy troops charging the north wall, was stuck in the forehead by a musket ball and killed instantly – one of the first defenders to die. Also among the early casualties was Colonel Francisco Duqué, the leader of one of the Mexican assault columns.

Repulsed in their first attempt to storm the Alamo, Santa Anna's troops rallied and lunged forward once more. Under intense Texian fire, three of the four attacking columns merged together, taking shelter against the fort's north wall. Here they were somewhat safe from enemy fire, since the Alamo's cannon could not be depressed to reach them and defenders trying to shoot down into the disorganized mass became easy targets. For the moment, the battle was stalemated.

## THE MEXICAN ASSAULT FORCE

COMMANDER	NUMBER OF TROOPS	EQUIPMENT	TARGET
General Cós	355	10 ladders 2 crowbars 2 axes	Northwest Corner
Colonel Duqué	395	10 ladders	North Wall
Colonel Morales	125	2 ladders	Southwest Corner
Colonel Romero	430	6 ladders	East Side
Colonel Amat	350	None	Reserve Force
General Sesma	350	None	Cavalry Cordon

## The Alamo Overrun

Realizing the critical instant had come, Santa Anna ordered his reserves into the battle. As these reinforcements moved forward, the assault troops – most of their ladders lost or destroyed – began scaling the north wall where the repaired breach provided hand holds and footing. Other Mexican soldiers used crowbars and axes to break into doors and shuttered windows. About the same time, at the Alamo's southwest corner, Morales' men used ladders to scale the wall and seize the Texians' 18-pounder cannon. Overcoming desperate resistance, the attackers made it into the Alamo.

With the walls breached, the outcome of the battle was no longer in doubt. As more and more Mexican troops surged into the interior of the Alamo, the defenders retreated inside the fortified buildings lining its courtyard. From these posts they poured a withering fire into enemy troops who had little cover. The Mexicans turned captured Texian cannon against these strong points – blasting down walls and doors to clear the way for the final grapple.

Some Texians slipped out of the Alamo, either individually or in groups, hoping to evade death or capture and live to fight another day. Santa Anna, anticipating these attempts, deployed his cavalry to intercept such a retreat. None of the breakout efforts succeeded, and all those who tried were cut down.

Inside the Alamo, Mexican soldados and Texians fought hand-to-hand and room-to-room as the remaining defenders were isolated and killed. The Chapel was the last bastion to fall. Despite orders that no quarter be given, a handful of the garrison were taken alive. Some accounts maintain Davy Crockett was among them, although, once again, historians disagree. General Manuel Castrillón urged Santa Anna to spare their lives, but in vain; the captives were cut down with swords. Among the occupants of the Alamo when the battle began, only a few women and children, in addition to Colonel Travis' slave, Ben, survived.

**With another such victory,  
we will all go to the devil.**

Lieutenant Colonel José Navarro,  
Mexican Army

## The Cost

The historical record is unclear as to the actual number of casualties suffered by both sides at the Alamo. The most common number of Texian dead is around 183, although some Mexican accounts put the figure at 250 or higher. Mexican losses were more severe. At least one-third of the attacking force was killed or wounded – for total losses of somewhere between 400 and 600 men. Since Santa Anna had attacked before the arrival of his medical units, perhaps a hundred or more lightly wounded troops died for want of medical attention.

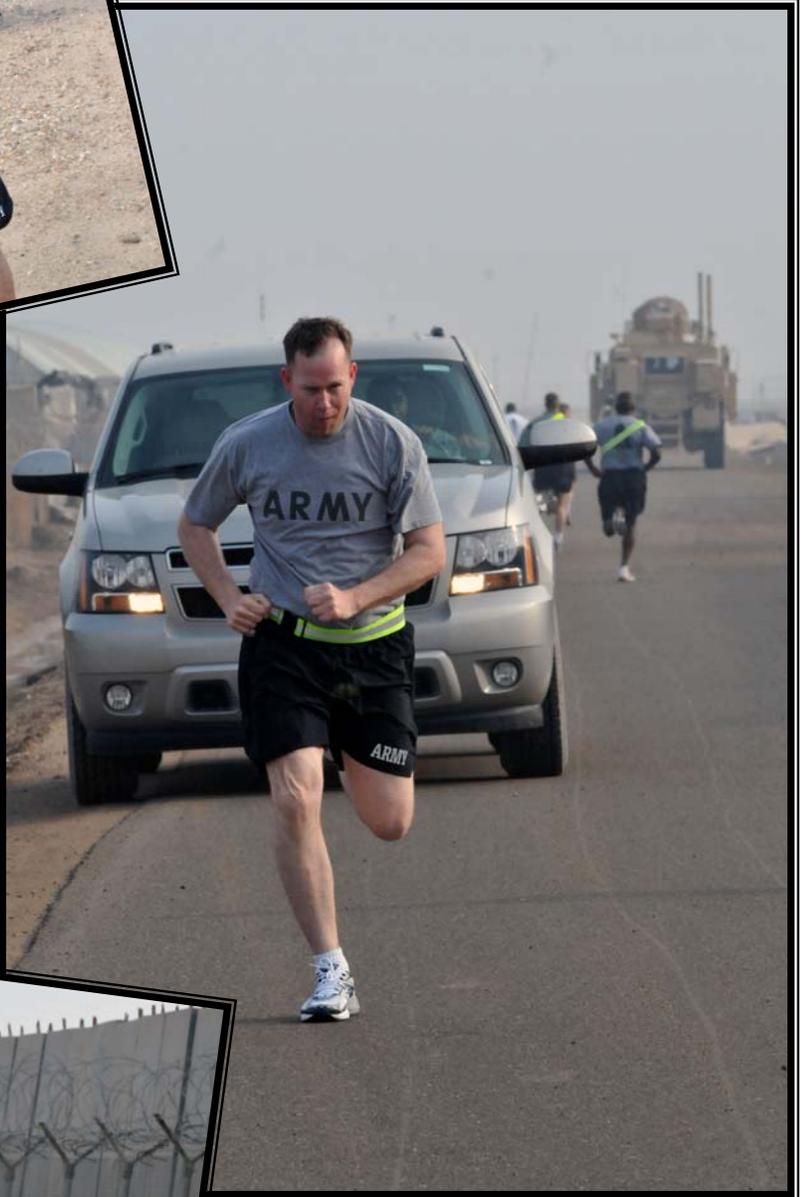
**Visit the new exhibit on the Texian Revolution  
at the Texas Military Forces Museum**

# 36ID FUN RUN!



Left— The first-place winners of the Morale, Welfare and Recreation five-mile team fun run, “The Remix Runners,” pose for a team photo Jan. 30 after completing the relay race with a combined time of 20 minutes and 30 seconds. From left: Chief Warrant Officer 2 Lisa I. Buckley, 36th Infantry Division property book officer, a resident of Austin, Texas and native of Corning, N.Y.; Spc. Chris Johnson of Indianapolis, Ind., an administrative clerk with the 300th Human Resources Co., an Army Reserve unit based out of Homewood, Ill.; Romel Voellm, the MWR entertainment coordinator, of Alexandria, Va.; and Sgt. Humberto Perez, a Chicago native and administrative clerk with 300th HRC.

Right— Capt. David A. Tuttle, an operations officer with the 36<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division and Austin, Texas native, “kicks into high gear” when he realizes he’s being closely followed by the Morale, Welfare and Recreation vehicle during the MWR five-mile relay fun run Jan. 30. The run was a four-person team event attended by 27 teams comprised of Soldiers, sailors, airmen and civilians from U.S. Division-South.



Left— Capt. Joshua E. Loh, a contract and fiscal law attorney with the Staff Judge Advocate office, 36<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, speeds up as he nears the end of the second leg of the Morale, Welfare and Recreation five-mile relay fun run Jan. 30. Loh’s team, “The Four Horsemen of the Basrahcalypse,” finished in second place in the four-person team run with a combined time of 20 minutes and 51 seconds. Loh, a native of Brooklyn, N.Y. currently residing in Washington, D.C., is a member of the Virginia Army National Guard who volunteered to deploy with the Texas division for Operation New Dawn. (All photos by Sgt. David A. Bryant, 36<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division)