

The DISPATCH

The monthly magazine of the Texas Military Forces

October 2011



DIGNIFIED TRANSFER—
THE FINAL JOURNEY HOME

367th AB BACK IN TEXAS

On the Line of Fire



TXANG security forces



6th CST trains



Dignified transfer

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36th ID home!



On the fire line

Cover- A Texas Army National Guard Chinook helicopter drops water on the Batrop Complex Fire in early September 2011. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Malcolm McClendon, Texas Military Forces Public Affairs)

The Bulletin Board

The DISPATCH

Vol. 6, No. 10 October 2011

White House Announces New Vets Job Plan

The White House unveiled a plan to help Iraq and Afghanistan veterans translate the health care skills and experiences gained during their enlistment into nursing jobs when they return home. The first step is a partnership between Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi College of Nursing and Health Sciences and the Medical Education and Training Command in San Antonio, Texas to find ways to align enlisted health care training and nursing academic credit. The second step will be to give funding priority to nursing schools that offer pro-veteran learning environments, recruit and support veterans interested in pursuing nursing careers and offer academic credit for enlisted health care training and experience.

Guard to Join GoArmyEd

Beginning Oct. 1, the Army National Guard will join the active Army and Army Reserve in using GoArmyEd as a central entry point for their educational needs. GoArmyEd users can use the program to handle applications for admission to participating schools, use centralized applications for tuition assistance (TA), receive online course registration, check the recording of grades and benefit from customer relationship management and help desk support. NG Soldiers can now apply, within a 60-day window, for classes that begin after Oct. 1 through GoArmyEd. For more information, visit the GoArmyEd website at <https://www.goarmyed.com/login.aspx> or call the Human Resources Command, anytime, at 888-ARMYHRC (276-9472).

New Gulf War Study

Stars and Stripes and USA Today report that a new study shows more veterans who deployed to Iraq in 1991 and took anti-nerve-agent pills suffer from symptoms of Gulf War Syndrome than those who did not receive injections. Also, the illness is more prevalent in troops who used pesticides on their uniforms or skin. An abstract of the study by the Midwest Research Institute appears in the Environmental Health Perspectives journal.

TRICARE Promises Continued Service

TRICARE wants its beneficiaries to know that a dispute between Walgreens and a TRICARE contractor will not stop beneficiaries from getting their prescriptions filled, despite a Walgreens ad campaign to the contrary. Even if contract renewal negotiations fall through and Walgreens drops out of TRICARE's retail pharmacy network on Jan. 1, beneficiaries will still have plenty of other options for getting their prescriptions filled using a TRICARE military treatment facility or the mail-order and home-delivery plans. For more information on TRICARE options for getting prescriptions filled, visit the TRICARE Pharmacy Program webpage at www.tricare.mil/mybenefit/home/Prescriptions/PharmacyProgram.

VA Extends Traumatic Injury Benefits

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is extending retroactive traumatic injury benefits to servicemembers who suffered qualifying injuries during the period Oct. 7, 2001 to Nov. 30, 2005, regardless of the geographic location where the injuries occurred. Effective Oct. 1, the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) Traumatic Injury Protection benefit (TSGLI) will be payable for all qualifying injuries incurred during this period. This retroactive benefit is payable whether or not the servicemember had SGLI coverage at the time of the injury. Applications are currently being accepted by branch of service TSGLI offices. To find out if you are eligible, visit the VA website at www.insurance.va.gov/sgliSite/TSGLI/Retro.htm.



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The Dispatch printed a story about Operation Lone Star in error in the September 2011 Dispatch. The story was on Operation Lone Star 2010, and did not give credit for the hard work and dedication of the staff and workers of Operation Lone Star 2011. The correct story may be found at <http://www.txmf.us/dispatch/2011/sep.pdf>. The staff of the Dispatch deeply regrets this error.

Lackland medics enhance warfighter training at Fort Bliss

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Phil Fountain
149th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

FORT BLISS, Texas (Sep. 15, 2011)—Training activities at the Texas Air National Guard's 204th Security Forces Squadron, at Fort Bliss, Texas, showcase a collaborative effort between Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve medical personnel to accomplish a mission.

Aerospace medical technicians, Staff Sgt. Robert Turner, with the Air Force Reserve's 433rd Airlift Wing, and Senior Airman Luz Rivera, a member of the Texas Air National Guard's 149th Fighter Wing, both located at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, have joined a half dozen other medics assigned to the Security Forces Regional Training Center (RTC).

In addition to the inherent risks of combat readiness training, students at the 204th endure the realities of the West Texas and New Mexico climate and terrain at Fort Bliss.

There is always the potential danger for heat-induced dehydration, as well as lacerations from large nail-like thorns on mesquite bushes and the effects from being attacked by aggressive black ants that permeate the landscape.

The RTC requires at least one medic to be on each range involving training maneuvers.

While most interventions are routine, 204th medics are "prepared to handle all field medicine, minus surgeries," Turner said. "Our vehicles are just like any metro ambulance, and include IV's, splinting and bandaging to handle anything that happens in the field normally."

Additionally, 204th medics help prepare the soon-to-be deployed troops to provide basic tactical combat casualty care through a multi-day Combat Lifesaver Class (CLS).

Senior Master Sgt. John Ramirez, an aerospace medical technician that serves in an advisory role at the 204th, said the organization worked with the instructor cadre at the 204th and Army medics at Fort Bliss to develop the four-day CLS course curriculum.

"Crawl, Walk, Run" is how the training model is described. By the end of the fourth day, students are proficient in handling a large variety of potential injuries they may encounter in a real-world situation.

"We have a really good team [of medics], and everyone brings unique skills to the table," Ramirez said. "We're able to train each other [as we train the students]."

This training has been proven effective on the battlefield.

"An Airman recently lost his leg in battle, but due to the quick response of some Security Forces trained at the 204th they were able to quickly stabilize the injury and save his life," Turner said.

After the arriving at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, where he was further treated, the Airman was said to have requested follow-on assignment to Fort Bliss "showing how important CLS training is" and that "he wants to be proof that it works and saves lives."

"This is about making sure people come home," said Turner.



Senior Airman Luz Rivera, an aerospace medical technician with the Texas Air National Guard's 149th Fighter Wing at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, prepares an ambulance before training operations begin at the 204th Security Squadron at Ft. Bliss, Texas on Sept. 13.

DID YOU KNOW?

Beginning October 1st you can use your
**POST-9/11 GI Bill for on-the-job training,
apprenticeships, and non-college
degree programs.**



Houston-based brigade keeps focus on soldiers, families

Story and photo by Sgt. Suzanne Carter
100th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

SAN ANTONIO, Texas - Leadership with the 72nd Infantry Combat Team, 36th Infantry Division, gathered in the courtyard of the Alamo for a change of command ceremony as heavy clouds cast shadows on the participants, much like the prospect of unemployment has overshadowed many Guardsman's long-awaited return home of late.

Appropriately, soldiers' employment ranked high among topics of discussion for the brigade's leadership as they attended the annual family readiness conference in San Antonio, Texas, Sept. 16-18, 2011 held in conjunction with the change of command. This FRC continues the campaign Col. Mark Campsey, outgoing 72nd IBCT commander, ran to make family readiness a top priority, bringing military, Family Readiness Group and brigade leaders together to synchronize their training plans every year.

Many state emergency response missions marked Campsey's command, as well as one of the largest deployments the Texas National Guard has seen since World War II.

In the fall of 2009, more than 3,000

72nd IBCT troops deployed out of Houston to locations throughout Iraq. Campsey worked diligently to meet the needs of those troops' families through FRG-specific training exercises focusing on how best to address situations that could arise before, during and after the deployment.

"I think we've removed the separation between the FRG and the units," Campsey said. "We run an integrated brigade activity." As he passed the brigade standard to Col. Charles Aris Saturday morning, Aris echoed the necessity of maintaining this integrated standard of operation while the brigade relearns its basic Soldiering and technical skills. "I really think the key to any unit is if you can keep the families involved and help answer their concerns," Aris said. "It helps the whole unit run better."

Aris plans to continue growing the FRG programs within the brigade, with a focus on finding Soldiers the right employment through the Job Connection Education Program. "The JCEP is a great program because it helps match people who are underemployed or unemployed with job positions," Aris said. "I just came back from Iraq last week and

a lot of the guys didn't have jobs to come back to. So they were really worried. It causes amazing amounts of stress."

The 72nd IBCT hosts this accessible and valuable tool within the brigade's armory in west Houston. A recent National Guard initiative, JCEP provides Guard and Reserve service members and their spouses resume assistance, interview skills development, higher education opportunities and job matching services.

"Prior to coming back, I polled my soldiers," Campsey said about the brigade's return to Texas in 2010. "I had 300 in my location. Almost 70 soldiers coming back from Iraq said: 'I'm unemployed or underemployed, and I'm concerned.'"

The pressing nature of unemployment "hampers your ability to take a career development perspective of 'Where do I want to go,'" said Jay Rudolph, JCEP training and development specialist, on how job search becomes your temporary job. "We have a lot of things to do to help leverage and raise the bar for them to become better job seekers, but it's a lot of intense work." Soldiers faced with mounting bills and insufficient means to pay them can rely on JCEP to highlight the advantages of hiring service members to employers, seeking to match employers' needs with soldiers' education and skills acquired through military training and experience.

Finding employment for soldiers comes with challenges that extend beyond those of the typical job seeker in a difficult market, but Aris said that making connections with local businesses and communities could bridge that gap.

"People don't understand the Guard story, don't understand how many people are serving in their communities and what we've done," he said. "So, I think the more we can get out and tell all our stories to the community, the more employers will know that we're available."



Soldiers stand at attention as the color guard enters during the change of command ceremony for the 72nd Infantry Combat Team in San Antonio, Texas.

DIGNIFIED TRANSFER—THE

Story by Laura Lopez
Texas Military Forces Public Affairs

DOVER AIR FORCE BASE, Del. – With the Department of Defense reporting more than 6, 200 servicemembers killed since the Global War on Terror began 10 years ago, following the September 11, 2001 terror attacks on the United States, one member of the Texas Army National Guard recently returned from a yearlong deployment working with families of those who have fallen.

Assigned to Air Force Mortuary Affairs in Dover, Del., Maj. Charles Wallace of Fort Worth, Texas, chaplain with the 141st Chaplain Detachment, 36th Infantry Division spent that time providing pastoral care to all Army Families able to travel and witness the dignified transfer of their loved one.

“I have served two tours in Iraq with units from the 56 IBCT, and those experiences were challenging, but emotionally this was the most difficult assignment I have experienced,” said Wallace.

A process conducted for every United States military member who dies in theater while serving his/her country, a dignified transfer is a solemn event that involves

the transfer of the servicemember from the theatre of operation back to American soil, where his/her remains are then transferred by service specific teams from the aircraft to a waiting vehicle before being taken to the port mortuary. With the only spoken words coming from the presentation

“I DID NOT KNOW THESE SOLDIERS PERSONALLY, THEY WERE NOT IN MY IMMEDIATE UNIT, BUT WE WERE ALL IN THE LARGER SENSE A PART OF THAT SACRED BAND OF BROTHERS...”

of military honors and the Chaplain’s prayer, Wallace emotionally prepared for each transfer by putting himself in the family member’s position.

“I did not know these soldiers personally, they were not in my immediate unit, but we were all in the larger sense a part of that sacred band of brothers and I consider it a great honor that it was my responsibility to be there to assist their families,” he said.

Most recently established

at Dover Air Force Base in December 2009, the process of dignified transfers have been taking place since 1993, with a total of 385 transfers occurring since January 2011. Ensuring that both immediate and continued support is provided to the family members, support occurs on the Campus for Families of the Fallen which encompasses the Fisher House for Families of the Fallen, the Meditation Pavilion and surrounding gardens, as well as the Center for Families of the Fallen.

An experience that allowed Wallace to give back to his country, hear the stories of those young Soldiers who joined the military after 9/11, comfort families, as well as be honored with the Quilt of Valor for his work in supporting families of fallen servicemembers; it was the news of the 30 Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen, as well as eight Afghans soldiers, killed when their Chinook was shot down by enemy fire that broke just weeks before his scheduled departure from Dover that allowed for reflection.

“Every loss of a service member is significant and sacred,” said Wallace adding that the Chinook incident with the SEALs was

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painful in that so many were lost at the same time and that only three months earlier the Nation was celebrating with this specific elite special operations team their successful mission. “When more than one service member falls, the grief is not double; it is exponentially greater.”

While the yearlong deployment was surrounded by grief and sorrow, Wallace’s not so typical deployment was encouraging due to the stories of patriotism, the desire to serve one’s country and the care and concern demonstrated for the Nations’ Fallen and their families.

“What I experienced at Dover on a macro perspective was the great depth of love our young men, women and their families have for our country,” said Wallace. “Even in the midst of grief, many mentioned that the service was their loved one’s calling and they would not do anything else. [It reminds me of] an ancient passage which relays that there is no greater love than for a man to lay down his life for his friend’s.”

For more information about the Air Force Mortuary Affairs Division or dignified transfers, visit www.mortuary.af.mil/index.asp.



A U.S. Army carry team transfers the remains of Spc. Emilio J. Campo Jr., of Madelia, Minn., at Dover Air Force Base, Del., June 8, 2011. He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Fort Riley, Kan. (U.S. Air Force photo by Roland Balik)

Background image— An Air Force honor guard team participates in a burial ceremony honoring Maj. Bruce Lawrence Sept. 24, 2011 at a cemetery in Easton, Pa., approximately 43 years after his aircraft was shot down in Vietnam. Lawrence’s remains were recovered and positively identified through the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command. (U.S. Air Force Photo by 2nd Lt. Michael Gibson)

Texas National Guard marks decade of post-9/11 service

*Story and photo by Spc. Luke Elliott
100th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

AUSTIN, Texas - Texas National Guard Soldiers and Airmen, dignitaries and community members gathered at Camp Mabry in Austin, Texas, Sept. 10 to commemorate a decade of Texas military support to the Global War on Terror with the opening of a new historical exhibit.

Texas Adjutant General Maj. Gen. John F. Nichols hosted the ceremony, which celebrating a new exhibit called "9-11 and Beyond: The Texas National Guard in the War on Terror" at the Texas Military Forces Museum at Camp Mabry.

"The Texas National Guard has deployed more soldiers than any other national guard to this war," said Nichols, who noted that the Texas National Guard has mobilized more than 29,000 Soldiers and Airmen since 2001, with about 23,000 of them deploying overseas to Iraq and Afghanistan. "The Texas Military Forces have sacrificed greatly."

The exhibit includes displays on the Texas National Guard's support to Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, major Texas National Guard deployments, and many interactive displays and

presentations.

"We're very proud of our troops, especially for all the sacrifices that the members of the guard and their families make on behalf of our nation," said Texas State Sen. Jose Rodriguez, District 29, El Paso, Texas. "I believe that Texas has always honored and supported its veterans. We're a proud state. We like to brag about our state, and we like to brag about our troops."

"I think it's extremely significant on the tenth anniversary to open up an exhibit like this at Camp Mabry because it is important, as General Nichols said, to make sure people remember this day, remember the people who gave their lives," said Rodriguez.

Brig. Gen. William Smith, who returned from Iraq a few days before the ceremony, said he was surprised about the emotions the event brought him.

"It just makes me respect our soldiers and the abilities that they have and the things they are doing," said Smith. "It's always a good thing to see other people acknowledge what those soldiers are doing."

Smith, who served as the as-

sistant division commander for maneuver, 36th Infantry Division, also deployed with the 49th Armor Division shortly after Sept. 11, 2001.

This deployment was the first large-scale mobilization of the National Guard since World War II.

"It was a huge challenge," said Smith. "It's been an almost continuous cycle since. If you go back in time, you'll find that since Sept. 11, we have had somewhere between 3,000 and 5,000 Texas National Guardsmen deployed every year. That's a tribute to the sustainability of our system and more importantly to our soldiers."

Smith added that the Texas National Guard has changed significantly since 2001.

"We have had a couple of major events in the military that have changed the course of how we do business," said Smith. "For instance, if you find a regulation that was written before 1989, before the fall of the wall... it is probably not valid. If you find something that was written before 2001, it probably is suspect at least because everything has changed for us since 2001."

"This is not our fathers' National Guard," he added. "It's a marketable different organization that we're in."

A common theme at the event was the display of gratitude toward Soldiers and Airmen for all they have accomplished during the past decade.

"What you do is inspirational. I appreciate you," said Texas Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst. "God bless every one of you all in our Texas Army and Air National Guard. Thank you all the men and women that serve abroad, and may we never forget the 3,000 innocent men and women who lost their lives on 9/11."



Texas Adjutant General Maj. Gen. John F. Nichols speaks during a commemoration of the National Guard's decade of service after 9/11.

ON THE LINE OF FIRE IN TEXAS

*Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Malcolm McClendon
Texas Military Forces Public Affairs*

BASTROP, Texas- Small plumes of smoke rose through the ashes in what looked like a scene from an apocalyptic movie. House after house burnt down to nothing, leaving only small traces of their existence; a flowerpot, a wheel barrow, an old shell of what used to be a car.

As the road wound up through the branchless, blackened trees, pockets of houses and property still stood, untouched; the only thing separating this and the destruction were cleared dirt paths through the brush and trees.

Texas National Guardsmen from the 111th Engineer Battalion responded to what has been referred to as one of the most destructive wildfires in Texas history. The Soldiers used bulldozers to create firebreaks in the Bastrop County Complex fire this past month, helping keep the wildfires confined.

“Basically you follow the black, where the fire has already burned, and you push the trees into the green and make a line of only mineral soil, so there’s no fuel for the fire,” explained Sgt. Richard Castro of the 822nd Engineer Company out of Abilene, Texas. “If a fire comes up to our line, it stops.”

The engineers work closely with local, state and federal agencies to battle fires, and make sure the firebreaks are placed where they will do the most good, Castro explained.

“Placing the fire breaks and working with the air support we have, dropping water and fire retardant on our line, and one the actual fires, is very effective” Castro said. “A couple of days ago when we arrived

the fire was crazy, but with everyone working together and doing their part we have got it under control.”

The tireless men and women in the various engineer units of the Texas National Guard have either been on standby or actually fighting fires since early this summer. In the past month alone, they have cut over 146 miles of firebreaks under the direction of the Texas Forest Service. Castro and his team were on a 10-day streak when they were called out to Bastrop.

“We have been working all over Texas fighting these fires, seems like non-stop,” said Castro. “One day you might be fighting one fire and the next day off to another in a different part of the state.”

Castro explains that despite the hard work and endless hours, it’s all worth it. “When I see a house standing and everything around it is black,” he said, “it makes me feel good to know that our efforts will be appreciated, long after we leave, by the people who live there.”



Spc. Brady Burton with the 111th En. Bn., TXARNG, clear trees and brush to create a firebreak during the Bastrop County Complex fire in near Bastrop, Texas.



T-PATCH SOLDIERS RETURN

*Story and photos by Master Sgt. Brenda Benner
36th Infantry Division Public Affairs*

FORT HOOD, Texas – Following their year long deployment to Iraq, hundreds of Texas Army National Guard Soldiers from 36th Infantry Division Headquarters finally departed Contingency Operating Base Basrah. Their temporary desert home, which lacked grass, trees and any color besides multiple hues of brown and a blue sky, offered very little green.

In fact, the most green the Soldiers viewed on a daily basis was in the uniforms they wore.

Upon their return to Central Texas during a history making drought, their faint hopes of familiar green grass were dashed, but they couldn't have been happier. They could see the Texas Hill Country and thousands of struggling trees from the airplane's windows.

Texas never looked better.

"The drought has made everything brown and yellow and it shot visions of Iraq into my mind," said Spc. Mikael Lopez, an intelligence analyst from Company B, Division Special Troops Battalion. Lopez, returning home from his first deployment, admitted he happily kissed the pavement of the tarmac and that he considered it the best kiss he's had in a year. "We're coming from one hot and dry country to another, but this one is home."

Another Soldier was happily taking in the sights while at Fort Hood. Staff Sgt. Diana Hawarden, a human resources specialist with Co. B, DSTB, put her camera to good use. "As a matter of fact, I actually took three photos of a tree because at Basrah, the most vegetation I saw was a little leaf under a shower trailer," she explained. "This was such a beautiful tree."

Approximately 700 T-Patch Soldiers returned home in waves via Fort Hood over the course of two months following their history-making deployment supporting Operation New Dawn.

For nearly a year, the 36th Inf. Div. headquarters element provided command and control for active duty and reserve forces in southern Iraq. The Texas-based division is only the third National Guard division headquarters to do so since the beginning of combat operations in Iraq and the subsequent reduction of U.S. military personnel.

Lt. Col. Charles Schoening, the division engineer, said the Soldiers can be proud of their many accomplishments. "Our deployment was historic due to the drawdown of forces, the closing and



36th Infantry Division band member Spc. Carlos Meda, reunites with his wife, Erica, at Fort Hood following their year-long separation while he supported Operation New Dawn in southern Iraq.

FROM HISTORIC DEPLOYMENT

turning over of 17 bases to the government of Iraq and the transition of the U.S. Consulate in Basrah, which is the largest in the world," he emphasized. "We can be especially proud of our counter-IED (improvised explosive device) program which kept Soldiers and other personnel safe."

Understandably, celebrating their numerous missions wasn't on most of the Soldiers' minds as they waited for the slowly-moving buses to finally reunite them with their loved ones at the barracks area.

One of the many noticeable reunions was that of Erica Meda, who held her large colorful homemade sign aloft for her husband, band member Spc. Carlos Meda, to see from the bus windows. "We were married right before this deployment ... now we can make it through anything," he said while embraced in his wife's arms.

Although eager to return home, the T-patchers remained at Fort Hood a few additional days to complete their critical demobilization process. They patiently endured numerous pre-separation briefings, various medical screenings and many administrative stations – all provided with their best interests in mind. Vital information was offered regarding their education benefits, health insurance, financial assistance, Veterans

Administration benefits and how to make wise decisions during reintegration with their families and employers.

"Coming from the human resources world, I'm very impressed with the reintegration information offered to us," said Hawarden. "It's so important, especially for our younger Soldiers, to make sure all of their personnel files are up to date to help with their promotions. I've been in for nine years and I'm absorbing education and re-employment information I can later share with others when they return from their deployments. These briefings are important."

Step-by-step, day-by-day, the Soldiers' return home inched ever closer. Soon, they would feel more like husbands and wives, like mothers and fathers, like college students or simply – more like their old selves before their deployment to the desert.

Although deployments can be difficult for everyone involved, Lt. Col. J. Craig Combs, the 36th Inf. Div. chaplain, said it was encouraging for him to see most of the Soldiers doing well and knowing their families were being taken care of during the past year.

"Some folks who encountered difficulties and family emergencies were able to find the help and resources they needed through our family

readiness group which provided phenomenal assistance and helped right away," said Combs. "Support eases the minds of our Soldiers, because if their family is doing poorly, it's hard to keep their attention on their jobs. Overall, it was a good deployment for most folks."

The support offered back home by the family readiness group was appreciated by many, especially by Hawarden and her husband, Master Sgt. Thomas Hawarden, the non-commissioned officer in charge of the Analysis and Control Element. While deployed together, they left behind five children in the care of their families and a supportive ex-husband and ex-wife who all worked as a team.

"We were blessed," said Staff Sgt. Hawarden. "Our FRG (family readiness group) kept in contact with our loved ones and sent them updates. My husband and I were impressed with their (efforts)."

Now that the Citizen-Soldiers have successfully completed their historic one year mission, it's time for most of them to become ... citizens again. They return home with unique memories of Iraq and its people and a better understanding of the world and its many cultures far outside the borders of Texas.

Texas ANG Security Forces sharpen spear of Total Force

by Staff Sgt. Phil Fountain
149th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

FORT BLISS, Texas (Sep. 14, 2011) -- In the picturesque desert of West Texas and New Mexico, members of the Texas Air National Guard's 204th Security Forces Squadron prepare U.S. Air Force, Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard warfighters as they head toward forward operating locations across the globe.

A geographically-separated unit of the 149th Fighter Wing at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, the combat training unit conducts missions that range from law-and-order, base support operations, and area support operations (ASO), as well as sniper training.

Tech. Sgt. David Butler of Dallas, an instructor and combat veteran with more than 12 years of service in the U.S. Marine Corps and four years active-duty in the U.S. Air Force, was responsible for building the ASO program, and seeks to bring the reality of the war fight to his students based on his and others' experience.

"We push them mentally and physically here in the field," said Butler. "They're going to be out by themselves [once they deploy]; they have no support once they leave the wire - that's it. Some response times might take up to an hour. If they're sitting there in a fire fight, they need to learn how to hold their own."

Part of the training requires the students to learn to properly identify hidden hazards.

Phillip Blackmon, a U.S. Army combat veteran who twice received the Purple Heart, now works with the 204th Security Forces Squadron in a civilian capacity to

train students to identify and locate improvised explosive devices, and homemade explosives laboratories.

"This course is designed to frustrate you," Blackmon tells his students. "I would rather you to have it and not need it than need it and not have it."

As the program continues to build, the 204th has been able to draw on the multi-service experience of its professional instructor cadre, as well as the assets and infrastructure available at its location, Fort Bliss, Texas, a major U.S. Army installation.

"It's a mutually beneficial training environment," Butler said. "The Army is real good about asking, 'What do you guys need?'"

Joint-training activities have included medical evacuation maneuvers involving Army Black Hawk helicopters, and the potential for increased joint exercises is on the horizon with national defense restructuring that is bringing new operations for the Army to Fort Bliss.

The training provided to students is designed to be as realistic as possible to limit as many surprises as possible before they deploy overseas.

"We want make sure everyone who comes through here gets pushed as hard as we can, so they can push just as hard down range and not have to worry about 'Can we do this?'" Butler said. "I want them to know: 'Yes, we can! Because we did it here [at the 204th].'"

Below—Members of the Texas Air National Guard's 204th Security Forces Squadron conduct training operations at Fort Bliss, Texas on Sept. 13, 2011. (Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Eric L. Wilson)



Austin and Little Rock based civil support teams train for success

**Story by Staff Sgt. Melissa Bright
Joint Task Force 71**

TEXARKANA, Texas – The distinctive whine of thousands of cicadas competed with multiple vehicle sirens as the 6th Civil Support Team arranged their vehicles in a defensive pattern down a back road of the Red River Army Depot. The noise level rose with the East Texas heat as the team participated in a joint training exercise with area civilian authorities and emergency responders.

The Austin based unit worked quickly to gather intel for the incident commander as to the cause of several unconscious individuals, an overturned military vehicle and a small crater in the road. Moving as carefully as is possible in bulky, air-tight hazmat suits, they sampled the air for chemicals and radiation levels, observed the physical reactions of the casualties and photographed the site. Once they finished determining the type of agent used, the team leader informed the incident commander on how best to manage response techniques and mitigate the danger.

“We are here for a couple different reasons,” said Army Maj. Bobbie Jackson, 6th CST commander, in a phone interview after the exercise. “The Red River Army Depot provides the facilities for us to fulfill our annual training requirement on essential collective tasks. This allows us to sustain relationships with our response partners here in Texas and those from Arkansas through joint training exercises. We are also fortunate to have members of U.S. Army North here able to give us guidance in preparation for our external evaluation.”

The RRD facilitates scenario-driven training exercises like this; encompassing coordinated and synchronized unit efforts at the soldier, leader and collective task level in support of a Federal Certification Process. All CSTs are required to go through this certification process every 18 months, this fall just happens to be the renewal time frame for the 6th CST.

In addition to the federal observers,

Jackson worked with the Red River Police and Fire Departments and the 61st CST of Arkansas for a total of three days of exercises.

“Conducting joint training with the 61st CST allows us to become more familiar with coordinating multiple team missions,” said Jackson, “in addition to just getting together with a well established team to re-evaluate our tactics, techniques and procedures. We also spent time sharing what works for each of our teams and incorporating new approaches to old problems.” The Department of Defense established Civil Support Teams, also known as Weapons of Mass Destruction CSTs, to rapidly deploy to assist a local incident commander in determining the nature and extent of an attack or incident. This allows them to provide expert technical advice on WMD response operations and help identify and support the arrival of follow-on state and federal military response assets.

“The bulk of CST training is usually in-state but most units try to accomplish joint training with sister states at least once a year,” said Jackson. “This year we have worked with New

Mexico, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Louisiana for several real-world and training events.”

When the “call” came in to dispatch, the Austin team fell in under the incident commander, a local fire captain. Upon arriving on-site, Jackson directed her team to quickly integrate with the Arkansas unit and the depot’s emergency teams to meet the IC objectives.

“This simulated training event involved a vehicle, an IED and a blood agent,” said Lt. Col. Stan Evans of the 61st CST commander. “But it could just as easily been a dirty bomb or nuclear device.”

There are hundreds of scenarios in which a CST can operate and this particular training allowed deeper familiarization and smooth transitions from single unit function to multiple unit function.

“Our two teams synched together,” said Evans, “to support the incident commanders’ mission. We made joint entry using survey people and achieved all the incident commanders’ objectives in less than three hours. It was a very successful integration of our two CSTs doing a joint operation.”



Members of the 6th Civil Support Team gather information during training near Texarkana, Texas during a joint exercise with 61st CST of Arkansas. (Photo by Pamela Barnett, Red River Army Depot)

Falling down, getting back up and...finding Yoda?

By Maj. Steven Keihl
Texas Military Forces Resilience Team

I finished up a meeting early this past week and found myself taking a few minutes to enjoy a cold water bottle in my vehicle before returning to work. I positioned myself in a shady spot and enjoyed the AC and the quiet.

About 300 yards from where I was sitting, a Middle School football team was practicing. They were running some type of sprinting drill and I noticed quickly that they were practicing on a very messy field. Since Texas is experiencing a serious drought season, I can only guess that a sprinkler line must have burst because there was serious mud on the field.

Anyway, one of the less stellar athletes on the field was having serious difficulty finding traction during the drill and he found himself face down in the mud. The fall itself appeared less than comfortable, but to be flat on his face in the middle of

a muddy field in front of all of his peers must have been worse than the fall itself.

I continued to watch the drama unfold. My initial questions regarding a potential injury were quickly dismissed as the young player pushed himself up onto all fours.

As to be expected in football practice, the player was met by the cheers, yells, encouragement and mockery of both players and coaches imploring the player to get on his feet and finish the sprint. I found myself intrigued and engaged in this microcosm of life.

Would he get up or would he quit? Would he make it through the drill or fall again? Would he demonstrate resilience and personal strength or wallow in self pity and negativity?

A smile crept over my face as this young middle school player mustered up the will and the inner strength to jump to his feet and awkwardly com-

plete his muddy sprint. After he crossed the line and completed the drill, one other player gave him an encouraging helmet slap while another player "gave him five" (at least that is what it was called in my day).

As I reflected on this middle school football scene, I found myself thinking about resilience and the men and women I serve with in the U.S. military. This two minute real life scenario was an extremely powerful reminder to me regarding one facet of resilience... bouncing back from failure.

That's right, resilience is not only learning to overcome challenges, it is also learning to recover when we fail. And guess what? We all fail! The story also helps illustrate the first three critical components of learning to recover from failure:

(1) **GET UP!** Our young football hero had a choice. He could lay face first in the mud or get up.

Each time we fail, we face that same choice. We are forced to choose between surrender or recovery. This is a difficult choice at times because sometimes failure really, really hurts. Sometimes failure is very, very public. Sometimes the failure is a monumental personal disappointment.

The pain, humiliation, and disappointment can spur on a wide assortment of negative self-criticism and unpleasant emotions that may make giving up seem like the best option. And yet, lying face first in the mud doesn't seem like a very good option. It might even be possible to literally drown in a



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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 military life and history 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

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2011—2012 TXMF WHITETAIL HUNTING SEASON OPENS

From October 01, 2011 through January 15, 2012, the hunting seasons for the State of Texas, Texas Military Forces will open Camp Bowie Training Center, Camp Maxey Training Center and Fort Wolters Training Center for limited hunting of Whitetail deer.

Texas Military Forces personnel, their family members, DOD civilians of all military services, Active and Reserve personnel, Retired military and family members, all other Adjutant General's Department employees are eligible to register for the 2011–2012 Hunting Season.

Hunters will have the following items when they arrive at the Training Center for their scheduled hunt:

- *Proof of a State Approved Hunter Education Course (MANDATORY REGARDLESS OF AGE!)*
 - *Valid Texas Hunting License*
 - *Valid Military (DOD) and State ID*
- (Hunters 17 or younger must have an adult escort who meets the above, no exceptions.)*

Open dates are as follows:

- *General: November 5, 2011–January 1, 2012*
- *Late Antlerless and spike: January 2–15, 2012*

Hunting will be done on a registration basis at each one of the sites. The POCs for each of the sites are as follows:

Camp Bowie– Call 512-782-7373

Camp Maxey– Sgt. Keli Gain, 903-732-3792 ext. 2586 or email keli.j.gain@us.army.mil

Fort Wolters– Staff Sgt. Joseph Pulido, 940-325-6872 ext 20 or email joseph.pulido@us.army.mil

Registration dates for the rifle seasons are October 1, 2011 to October 20, 2011 on a first come, first served basis for the rifle seasons. Please check with the Training Site for information regarding additional equipment that may be required. When registering, hunters need to provide to the POC a good contact number, preferably two numbers, mailing and email addresses, and the names of all the hunters in their party.

For questions, contact Capt. William Willett at 512-782-1959, or email at william.c.willett@ng.army.mil





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three inch puddle if we refuse to lift our face out of the water.

We can never clean up the mess associated with failure if we spend the rest of our lives living in our failure. So, we roll over, push ourselves up onto all fours, and then we get up! The first critical step to dealing with failure is to get up! In a therapeutic sense, that requires distancing ourself from the mess of failure... we are not our failures, we can recover, we can heal, we can change and we can learn and become better, stronger individuals.

(2) **Take a Step.** In order to further divorce ourselves from the muddy mess of failure, we must take that first step out.

Standing up is a critical first step, but life is a journey and recovering from failure requires that we get out of the mess and the mud. Too many people choose to pitch a tent in their failure and spend the rest of their lives loathing in self pity, destructive self talk and paralyzing guilt. We may even choose to define ourselves by our failures and our shortcomings.

The resilient answer is not to remain stuck in the mud, clearly identified with our failure. Instead resilience dictates that we get out of the mud, clean

off, learn from the fall and take some definitive steps in the right direction. In this kid's life, the goal was simply to cross a line.

In your life, it might be to learn to control your anger, find victory over a chemical addiction, find the courage to honestly address a relational conflict, etc. So, after choosing to get up out of the mud, make the next choice to take some definitive step in the right direction.

**“FEAR IS THE
PATH TO
THE DARK SIDE.
FEAR LEADS
TO ANGER, AN-
GER LEADS TO
HATE; HATE
LEADS TO
SUFFERING.”**

(3) **Find YOUR Yoda** (Positive Force). The young football player likely heard both the cheers (encouragement) and jeers (condemnation) of both his peers and "leaders." He had to choose which voices he wanted to listen to.

We face the same struggle when we fail. There will be plenty of people in our world who will rub our failure in our face in every manner possible... they will judge, criticize,

condemn, etc. If you listen to those voices in your world, it will become increasingly difficult to take positive steps.

My recommendation is that you find the voices in your world that utter words of encouragement and constructive advice. These positive Yoda like individuals can help us find our focus on the positive, the healthy, the progressive rather than a guilt laden focus on the past.

Trust me, when trying to get out of the mud of failure, you don't need the dark side of the force tossing anymore negativity in your mind or world. Find a positive focus and camp there. Allow the positive focus to inspire, encourage, motivate and spur you on to new challenges and new successes!

One more thought. Sometimes the fall associated with failure completely takes the wind out from under us. We may find ourselves trapped in the mud and literally feel as if we can't move. OK, if that is the case, you STILL have a choice. You can remain face down in the mud, or you can allow your teammates to step in and help you out of the mud! The Resilience Team can serve as a teammate and can help you out of the mud... give us a call 512-917-9355... we would love to help!

NEWS BRIEF

Deadline nears to apply for special stop loss pay

WASHINGTON (9/22/11) - Only a month remains for eligible servicemembers, veterans and their beneficiaries to apply for Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay.

Officials extended a previous deadline to Oct. 21 to allow more time for eligible people to apply.

"The nation has rallied behind this effort -- the military services have been joined by the White House, Congress, the [Veterans Affairs Department], veteran and military service organizations, and friends and family members around the world," said Lernes Hebert, the Defense Department's director of officer and enlisted personnel management.

"Despite these remarkable outreach efforts, some people may still not yet have applied. If you think you are eligible, and have not yet applied, now is the time to do so."

The special retroactive pay was established to compensate for the hardships military members encountered when their service was involuntarily extended under Stop Loss authority

between Sept. 11, 2001, and Sept. 30, 2009, officials said.

Eligible members or their beneficiaries may submit a claim to their respective military service to receive the benefit of \$500 for each full or partial month served in a Stop Loss status.

When the special pay began Oct. 21, 2009, the services estimated 145,000 service members, veterans and beneficiaries were eligible for the benefit.

Because the majority of those eligible had separated from the military, officials said, the services have engaged in extensive and persistent outreach efforts, including multiple direct mailings, public service announcements, and continuous engagements with military and veteran service organizations, social networks and media outlets.

To apply, or for more information -- including submission requirements and service-specific links -- go to the DoD stop loss website.

TRICARE reduces pharmacy home delivery co-pays

FALLS CHURCH, Va. (9/22/11) - Co-payments for some medications provided through TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery will be reduced to zero and as of Oct. 1, home delivery beneficiaries will be able to fill generic prescriptions at no cost to themselves.

Generic formulary drugs purchased through home delivery currently cost \$3 for a 90-day supply.

"These new copays make using TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery more affordable than ever," said Navy Rear Adm. Christine Hunter, the TRICARE Management Activity deputy director. "Home delivery offers a great value for patients taking maintenance medications for chronic conditions."

The following changes to the TRI-

CARE pharmacy co-payments are scheduled to go into effect Oct. 1:

- Generic formulary drugs purchased at retail pharmacies will go from \$3 to \$5.

- Brand name formulary drugs from retail pharmacies will go from \$9 to \$12.

- Nonformulary medications will go from \$22 to \$25 in both retail and home delivery.

Brand name formulary drugs purchased through home delivery will have the same \$9 co-payment. Co-payments for prescriptions filled through home delivery cover a 90-day supply, but only a 30-day supply when purchased at a retail pharmacy.

"This is the first change to TRICARE pharmacy co-pays since 2002," Hunter said. "Our goal is to keep costs as low as possible for our beneficiaries and (the Defense Department)."

Military members, their families and retirees are increasingly using home delivery to get their maintenance medications delivered through U.S. mail, saving TRICARE about \$30 million in 2010.

Use of home delivery has grown in 2011 by nearly 10 percent over 2010. More than 1 million prescriptions per month are filled through the service.

For more information about TRICARE pharmacy, the new co-payment rates and home delivery, visit the TRICARE pharmacy program website.

Texas Military History- October

The Battle of Concepción was fought on October 28, 1835 between Mexican troops under Colonel Domingo Ugartechea and Texian insurgents led by James Bowie and James Fannin. The 30-minute engagement, which historian J.R. Edmondson describes as “the first major engagement of the Texas Revolution” occurred on the grounds of Mission Concepción, two miles (3.2 km) from San Antonio de Bexar.

On October 13, the newly created Texian Army under Stephen F. Austin had marched towards Bexar, where General Martín Perfecto de Cos commanded the remaining Mexican soldiers in Texas. On October 27, Austin sent Bowie and Fannin, with 90 soldiers, to find a defensible spot near Bexar for the Texian Army to rest. After choosing a site near Mission Concepción, the scouting party camped for the night and sent a courier to notify Austin. After learning that the Texian Army was divided, Cos sent Ugartechea with 275 soldiers to attack the Texians camped at Concepción. The Texians took cover in a horseshoe-shaped gully; their good defensive position, longer firing range, and better ammunition helped them to repel several Mexican attacks, and the Mexican soldiers retreated just 30 minutes before the remainder of the Texian Army arrived. Historians estimate that between 14 and 76 Mexican soldiers were killed, while only one Texian soldier died.

Hoping to neutralize the Texian force at Concepción before the remainder of the Texian Army arrived, Cos ordered Colonel Domingo Ugartechea to lead an early-morning assault on October 28. At 6:00 a.m., Ugartechea left Bexar with 275 Mexican soldiers and two cannon. Heavy fog delayed their approach, and the Mexican soldiers did not reach Concepción until 7:30 or 8:00 a.m. A Mexican cavalry scout fired at Texian picket Henry Karnes; after returning fire, Karnes ran back to his company, frustrated because, as he put it, “Boys, the scoundrels have shot off my powder horn.” The Texians took refuge in the gully, firing from its edge before dropping the six feet (1.8 m) down to the river level to reload.

Colonel James Bowie led the Texian forces during the Battle of Concepción.

The Texian position was surrounded by trees, leaving the Mexican cavalry no room to maneuver. The 200 members of the cavalry remained on the west bank of the river, behind the Texians, to foil any escape attempts. Lieutenant Colonel José María Mendosa brought the Mexican infantry and artillery across the river to a position below that of the Texians. In response, Texians trimmed undergrowth near their camp to provide better visibility and dug steps into the embankment so that they could more

easily climb up to fire. The two sides skirmished desultorily for two hours, until the fog began to lift. At that point, 50–60 Mexican infantrymen crossed the prairie to surround the Texians. Seeing their approach, Bowie shouted to his Texian forces, “Keep under cover, boys, and reserve your fire; we haven’t a man to spare!” At 300 yards (270 m) from the Texian position, the Mexican infantry halted and formed a line with the cannon in the middle. They began firing as they advanced toward the Texian positions, to little effect. For the most part, the Mexican volleys passed over the heads of the Texians.

In his official report to Austin, Bowie remarked that “The discharge from the enemy was one continued blaze of fire, whilst that from our lines, was more slowly delivered, but with good aim and deadly effect.” The Mexican infantry were assigned Brown Bess muskets, which had a maximum range of only 70 yards (64 m), compared to the 200-yard (180 m) effective range of the Texian long rifles. When Mexican officers ordered a charge on the south bend held by Fannin, Bowie sent Coleman’s company to help. Most of the Texian reinforcements maneuvered to their new position from below the river bank, but several rose from cover and dashed across the prairie. One of them, Richard Andrews, was hit in the side with grapeshot and died several hours after the battle.

The Mexican infantry attempted three attacks; all were repulsed. As the Mexican buglers called for a retreat, the infantry fell back beyond Texian rifle range. The Mexican cavalry was sent to retrieve wounded men and the cannon. As the cavalry approached, Bowie led a charge onto the prairie. The Texians quickly captured the cannon and turned it on the fleeing Mexican soldiers. Grapeshot killed one of the mule drivers, causing his caisson to go out of control and “careen[...] through the shattered Mexican ranks”. The battle had lasted only 30 minutes.



Misión Concepción, near present day San Antonio

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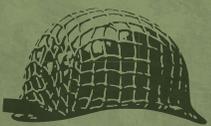
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