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## The Cover



The Traveling Vietnam Wall Memorial at Camp Mabry on display for TXMF Open house and American Heroes Air Show. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Andrew Oeffinger).

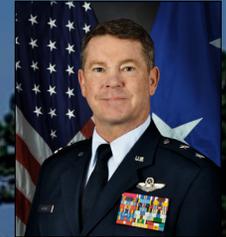




A French national dressed in an authentic World War II U.S. Army Airborne uniform visits the graves of "Big Red One" Soldiers buried at the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial in Colleville-sur-Mer, France, to show his gratitude for the sacrifices they made on D-Day. (U.S. Army photo by Master Sgt. Cecilio Ricardo).



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# The Adjutant General's Philosophy

Maj. Gen. John F. Nichols, The Adjutant General, Texas

As the Adjutant General of Texas, commander of the Texas Military Forces and head of the Texas Military Department, I would like each of you to know it is an honor and privilege to serve with such a fine group of Soldiers, Airmen, civilians and families. This document forms the foundation from which all other policies and guidance flow. Additionally, it provides my vision and details my philosophy on leadership. In the absence of a specific policy in a particular area, leaders will find guidance that will enable them to act within my intent regardless of the situation.

## Vision

America's premier state military organization comprised of professional mission-ready forces, fully engaged with our communities, and relevant through and beyond 2035

## Mission

Provide the Governor and the President with ready forces in support of state and federal authorities at home and abroad

## Priorities

**P**ut People First - invest in our human capital. Put people first; with no exceptions! As leaders, our number one task is to act in the best interests of our subordinates and their families.

- (1) Know our people. Give high priority to actions that will help us serve people better; prove, by your actions, that our people are your top priority. Every Soldier, Airman and civilian should feel like the valued service member he or she is. I will not accept anything less. Neither should you.
- (2) Develop strong ethical leaders. Part of taking care of our Soldiers and Airmen is helping them grow professionally. Mentor them; delegate (but verify accomplishment); guide them in their appropriate career path
- (3) Start with trust-expect the best. When we deploy in support of our state or nation, we cannot requisition a climate of trust-we must foster that today. Engender trust through operating with integrity, communicating with transparency, and staying true to our promises and responsibilities. Cultivate trust every day.
- (4) Family Readiness. A key component to our readiness is the preparation of our families. Single parents and dual military couples need to have a proper family care plan and those with a spouse need to ensure that they are fully integrated into their unit's family readiness support structure.

**B**e Relevant - become the force provider of choice. It is critical that we continue to find new ways to distinguish ourselves as the force provider of choice. We cannot fail to recognize current threats and ignore opportunities to expand our capabilities. It is critical that we refine the tasks for which we are particularly well suited; demonstrate the cost effectiveness of the Texas Military Forces and market the unique skill sets we can provide. We are at the center of change.

- (1) Think long term. I think and plan 35 years in the future. All of us need to think well beyond our current assignments in order to construct the best possible future for troops, families, the state and nation. Think about what you should be doing today to construct that future. Think of the impact of your actions in the long run. Help create the organization that you would be proud to have your children and your friends' children join. At a minimum, when you are re-assigned, leave your areas of responsibility better off than you received them, and provide your replacement with a cogent plan for the road ahead.

(2) Be open to new ideas, help leaders stay on course. I charge my staff: give me expert advice. No leaders are perfect. We need accurate counsel to stay on the right azimuth. Listen to one another; have the courage to speak up. Do it all professionally, with mutual respect.

(3) Don't be afraid of failure-it means you are trying. If leaders are afraid to make mistakes, we won't improve as an organization. Do the risk analysis; assess the variables; but be prepared to underwrite the mistakes of your people and take responsibility for them.

**B**e Ready - Provide the right forces at the right time. As we go forward we enter an ever changing and more uncertain environment in terms of our politics, budget, and the constant change that shapes the environment in which we operate both at home and overseas. Leaders at all levels must make maximum use of our resources and find creative ways to change, train, adapt and ensure that we remain ready to answer all challenges and missions.



(1) Be good stewards. As TAG, I secure relevant missions and equipment sets for the future. To do that well, I need your help. First of all, we need to take prudent care of the budget and equipment we have today. Secondly, the Texas Military, judged by any standard, must be widely and consistently regarded as a model of outstanding stewardship. Our reputation as stewards must be the very best. Thirdly, our citizens and political leaders must become familiar with the great services our Soldiers and Airman render our state and nation. In short, we must clearly demonstrate that we merit the public trust.

(2) Keep the Public Trust. Conduct business in a professional, ethical and legal manner. I will tolerate nothing less.

**C**ommunicate - get our message out. We must have effective communication between all four components of the Texas Military Forces; Army, Air, State Guard and the Texas Military Department. Not only must we continually improve our internal communications it is critical to our success in the new operating environment that we improve our ability and willingness to communicate with our State Agency partners, first responders and external agencies.

**P**artner - build relationships that matter. We must never forget that our organization's success is dependent on effective multi-national, joint, interagency, public, and private sector collaboration; we cannot accomplish our mission without the support of our partners, both within and outside the government. We must continue to foster strong relationships with our State leadership, with the Department of Defense and among all components of the Texas Military Forces.

If we work together, we can achieve all this and more. I am confident that the proud tradition of excellence earned by the Texas Military will continue into the future. Thank you for your service and your sacrifice.



  
**JOHN F. NICHOLS**  
Major General, TXANG  
Adjutant General



1975  
1W 1E

Courtesy photo.

# Memorial Day Reflections

Commentary by Capt. Martha Nigrelle

The Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall visits Camp Mabry in Austin annually during the Texas Military Forces Open House and American Heroes Air Show. It's one way the event pays tribute to those that went before us.

This year, a Vietnam veteran came to see the wall, with a long list of names. He knelt before each name and spent a few moments with each of his brothers who never came home. He said that whenever the wall comes to Texas, there he is, visiting his friends.

Each year during the same event, a wall honoring those lost in the Global War on Terror is set up as well. And each year, I too, go to the wall and seek out my friends.

To some people, the name Staff Sgt. Travis Atkins is a name on a list, just one of many service members who lost their lives in a war. To others, the name symbolizes the price we pay for the freedom we enjoy. To an even smaller group of people, the name represents a life lived.

When I see the wall with my friends' names on it, I remember the lives I was so blessed to share.

I think of how Travis convinced my husband to ask me out on our first date, how he welcomed me into their group of friends and I think of the wedding photos that will always have a hole where the best man should have stood.

Then I think of Capt. Joshua Lawrence. I think of basmati rice and jelly donuts. I think of the time he accused me of "being allergic to man," after I informed him that I did not appreciate the smell of Brut cologne that the guys had

sprayed all over the office. I think of how every time stupid seemed to happen, which when you are working 20 hour days, seven days a week, does seem to happen often, I could just look at him and roll my eyes. I think of his combat toothpicks - a reshaped paper clip - and his oath to change the brigade headquarters company's call sign to Honey Badger, after taking command. I think of carrying his body to a Blackhawk, just weeks before he was scheduled to take that command. And I think of the empty desk that sat next to me for what seemed like an eternity.

For many of us who have worn the uniform, things like the Vietnam Memorial Wall and days like Memorial Day are so much more than a tribute or a day to barbecue with family. For us, it is a time to stop and remember the lives of our friends, our brothers and sisters in arms - the ones who never came home as well as those that came home, but are no longer with us.

It doesn't matter when we served or what combat theater we served in, we are all connected by those we've lost - perhaps the deepest battle wounds we carry.

It's true what they say - Freedom isn't Free. It has been paid for by the blood of so many. But each man and woman, who paid that price, first lived a full life; they did not just have a death.

This Memorial Day, as we roll out the grills and enjoy the beginning of summer, may we all pause to remember those who went before and those who never came home to their families. Take a minute to remember their sacrifice and toast the lives they lived. - **DISPATCH**

# C-130

## Tactical Airlift Ideal for Texas sized Disasters

Story by Lt. Col. Travis Walters  
Texas Military Forces Public Affairs

# HER

**J**OINT RESERVE BASE FORT WORTH, TEXAS—The scene at Louis Armstrong International Airport that day could only be described as complete chaos.

Hurricane Katrina, the costliest hurricane in U.S. history and one of the deadliest, decimated the Gulf Coast region in 2005. Just hours after the hurricane's landfall, the levee system in New Orleans became the real harbinger of destruction when it catastrophically failed causing widespread flooding.

As the Texas National Guard C-130 landed, the aircrew witnessed more than 30 commercial airliners waiting to transport thousands of storm victims to safety. But, Col. George W. Holt, a 136th Airlift Wing pilot who now serves as the unit's commander, remembers those whom the airlines could not take.

"The needs were overwhelming; many were just dropped off at the airport," Holt said. "Incapacitated, sick and elderly patients were everywhere. In many cases, the medics on site were uncertain of their medical condition, and the patients could not communicate to us. Their only chance of survival was for us to get them out of there."

National Guard tactical airlift assets like the C-130 Hercules play a vital role not only in federal missions overseas, but also in civil missions right here in Texas. However, the state's aging C-130H models are in need of upgrades or replacement before 2020.

Federal Aviation Administration requirements outline new communication, navigation, surveillance and air traffic management standards by 2017 for flights over Europe and 2020 for those in the U.S., standards that the C-130H's in Texas and several other states do not yet meet. Unfortunately, time is running out, and budgets are limited.

"The Air Guard's aircraft require avionics upgrades to comply with new air traffic control requirements and to ensure their systems remain compatible with the latest

command and control architectures," said Lt. Gen. Stanley "Sid" Clarke, Air National Guard Director, during Congressional testimony earlier this year.

The U.S. Air Force has proposed replacing Texas Guard C-130H's in recent years. In the Fiscal Year 2013 President's Budget, these planes were slated to be replaced by MC-12s, an Air Force surveillance aircraft, but Congress blocked the action.

"The loss of the Wing's C-130s would remove a powerful airlift asset that in the past has saved the lives of citizens along the Gulf Coast who have found themselves in harm's way," wrote the Texas

Congressional delegation in a letter to former Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta. All 34 members of the delegation signed the letter, and the 2013 National Defense Authorization Act ultimately did not include the change.

Hurricane Katrina was a stark reminder of the life-saving power of tactical airlift. Nonambulatory patients from Armstrong International Airport were loaded in the



# REQUIREMENTS



Opposite page: Texas Air National Guardsmen participating in a mass casualty evacuation exercise. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Master Sgt Elizabeth Gilbert).

Above: A 136th Airlift Wing C-130 Hercules flies over the Ft. Worth skyline. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt Charles Hatton).

Below: Col. George W. Holt interviews with a local news media station during an exercise in Corpus Christi, Texas. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Master Sgt Elizabeth Gilbert).

C-130H on litters. Holt and his crew flew them to Houston's Ellington Field, where they were met by a fleet of ambulances, doctors and nurses to care for the patients.

"The hangar in Houston was full of volunteers there to make a difference," said Holt. "Thankfully, our C-130s are stationed in close proximity to the Gulf, so we can respond rapidly with airlift capability that is self-contained and ideal for operating in an environment riveted by disaster."

Over the past decade, these planes have supported more than a dozen domestic support missions transporting thousands of passengers to safety and moving hundreds of tons of cargo in the wake of hurricanes, wildfires and floods.

"Our state has always had close ties with other states in the region," said Holt. "We're not just there for Texas; we're there for our neighbors as well."



But how much longer will they be there? The Defense Department is projecting reductions in their number of tactical airlift platforms according to next year's President's Budget submitted to Congress in February. Newer C-17 and C-130J models comprise much of the tactical airlift fleet. As a result, units with older C-130H's are at greater risk for receiving replacement aircraft, especially if they do not get much needed upgrades.

For now, however, the men and women of the 136th Airlift Wing are prepared with their current aircraft to answer the call of their state or nation, both at home and aboard.

"We're from here. When disasters affect our region, we're ready to respond. When our nation needs us overseas, we're ready to go," Holt said. - **DISPATCH**

# OPEN HOUSE AT MABRY

CAMP MABRY HOSTS ANNUAL TXMF OPEN HOUSE AND AMERICAN HEROES AIR SHOW



Story by Sgt. Praxedis Piñeda  
100th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

**A**USTIN, TEXAS – Highlighting more than three decades of local, state and federal partnership, the Texas Military Forces and first responders demonstrated teamwork during the Texas Military Forces Open House and American Heroes Air Show at Camp Mabry in Austin, April 18-19, 2015. The free two-day event welcomed the local community to view this partnership.

“We host this event to thank our friends and neighbors,” said Maj. Gen. John F. Nichols, the adjutant general of Texas.

Because of operational tempo and mission requirements, it’s not usually possible for visitors to interact with the service members and first responders.

“We’re always in such a hurry,” said Patrick Phillips, flight paramedic with the Travis County Start Flight. “When we’re operational there’s not an opportunity to visit.”

The open house lets agencies



U.S. Army National Guard  
photo by Sgt. Josiah Pugh.

slow down to demonstrate their capabilities.

“People can see what we do in a friendly environment,” said Phillips. “It’s an opportunity for us to display our equipment.”

Displays included helicopters, trucks and boats used during combat and emergency operations. Some visitors

touched and even operated some of the equipment.

“My kids can connect the things they see in the movies with reality,” said Jessie Metcalf, community member who lives in the surrounding neighborhood.

Agencies clarified many myths and misconceptions visitors had in regards to their capabilities.

“This is a great insight to different emergency services, and not just fire,” said Lt. Jarrett Jobes, a member of the Austin Fire Department special operations rescue team. “The unit responds to hazardous material, cave rescues and water rescues.”

The event endorsed the “Partnerships That Matter” theme and informed the community of the teamwork performed between agencies.

“We learned about the camaraderie and connections between the volunteers,” said Metcalf. Throughout the year, the Texas



The Texas Military Forces Color Guard presents the Texas and American flags as part of the opening ceremonies for the Texas Military Forces Open House and American Heroes Air Show at Camp Mabry in Austin, Texas, April 18, 2015. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Josiah Pugh).



Texas Military Forces and first responders show visitors their capabilities during a helicopter demonstration at the Texas Military Forces Open House and American Heroes Air Show at Camp Mabry in Austin, Texas, April 18, 2015. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Josiah Pugh).

Military Forces and first responders work together to strengthen their partnerships.

“We work pretty close with the Texas Military Forces and the police,” said Phillips.

Modern equipment and weapons were the spotlight this weekend, but the show wasn’t complete without reminders of the past.

“To me it is very important because we’re also remembering those who came before us,” said Nichols.

Visitors traveled through time with activities like the WWII reenactment

and multiple vintage weapons demonstrations.

“We learned how they shoot the big guns,” said Miguel Ornelas, Palm Elementary School student.

While some displays advertised history, other events were dedicated to the future. A naturalization ceremony gave some veterans their American citizenship.

“There are some that are Americans by birth, [these veterans] are Americans by choice,” said Mayor of Austin Steve Adler.

This opportunity gave the citizens

other options and benefits.

“This was possible because I enlisted,” said Pvt. Carlos Hernandez Del Bosque, Texas Army National Guard. “Now, I’m a U.S. citizen. Now, I can finish school.”

The spirit of the event flowed from veterans, to newly naturalized citizens, to children that wanted to share their experience with others.

“Try to come next year because it’s a lot of fun,” said Phillips. - **100th MPAD**



Texas Army National Guard Pvt. Carlos Hernandez Del Bosque kisses his daughter before the Service Member Naturalization Ceremony at the Texas Military Forces Open House and Air Show at Camp Mabry in Austin, Texas, April 18, 2015. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Praxedis Pineda).

# CRACKING DOWN

## OPERATION CRACKDOWN RETURNS TO LAREDO

Story and photo by Master Sgt. Kenneth Walker, Texas Joint Counterdrug Task Force Public Affairs

**L**AREDO, TEXAS - Operation CRACKDOWN, a Texas Joint Counterdrug Task Force program, known for demolishing houses connected with illegal drug trade, making neighborhoods safer and helping prepare students to make good decisions, returned to Laredo, April 9, 2015.

The Texas Joint Counterdrug Task Force partnered with the city of Laredo, the Laredo Police Department and the U.S. Customs and Border Protection to clean up the city and rid the community of crime associated with drugs after thirty-three properties in Laredo were selected for demolition over the course of two weeks, through a carefully planned, legal process that identified, qualified and validated inclusion of each site.

Following an anti-drug presentation at their school, about 20 fourth grade students from Santo Niño Elementary School walked to a demolition site, less than two blocks from their school playground, and participated at the demolition of the dilapidated and burned out house on South Louisiana Avenue, by screaming “knock it down, knock it down,” giving workers a loud and clear order to start the demolition.

“If we take down this house, and other houses like it that are being used for drug purposes or other illegal purposes, we could turn it into a home for people who really need it or we could turn it into recreational areas,” said local fourth grader Mia Ramirez, 10, before one building was demolished.

Anti-drug messaging programs like this one and a presentation made right before the demolition, afforded law enforcement agencies the opportunity to educate the local community on the seriousness and extent of illicit drug activity in the neighborhoods, explained Supervisory Border Patrol Agent Jose Monserrate.

“Educational programs such as this are essential for our school,” said Marissa Quiroga, the head fourth grade teacher at Santo Nino Elementary. “When the law enforcement and the military communities come together, a strong message is being sent to our young students. Choices will impact them throughout their lives, so we as adults have a responsibility to guide our students to make good decisions.”

This operation is a program in which Texas Military Forces soldiers and airmen demolish structures that have been connected with illegal drugs and related criminal activities. These drug houses, open air drug markets and other neighborhood drug hubs pose serious threats to neighborhoods, largely because they often lead to spillover crimes – robberies, gang violence, homicides and other problems - that go hand-in-hand with drug addiction. The crimes make it hard to live and grow up in the neighborhoods, and they drive down property values.

Operation CRACKDOWN also brings law enforcement partners and community members together for a common purpose and allows the service members to keep their military skill set honed.

A two-week mission costs the task force about \$30,000. The city pays for the debris removal, asbestos testing and abatement, landfill use and permit costs. The city must also clear the demolitions with the Texas Historical Commission.

“It’s ironic that we use drug money to knock down drug houses,” said Col. Suzanne Adkinson, task force commander.

“We use asset forfeiture funds from apprehensions of illegal activity,” said Brig. Gen. Patrick M. Hamilton, Domestic Operations commander, Texas Military Forces. “They have money, they have houses and they have cars that are forfeited. We get a portion of that money to rent the equipment, purchase the fuel, lodging and personnel to actually tear down the houses.”

According to a task force presentation to the City of Laredo, 83 percent of abandoned dwellings showed signs of drug abuse, prostitution or other criminal activity had taken place there. Crime rates are twice as high on blocks with abandoned or open buildings as on other blocks. Police Chief Richard Palomo from the Laredo Independent School





District Police Department reminded the young audience that those who wear a uniform – policemen, first responders and the military – are the guardians and gatekeepers of our community. He encouraged all students to reach out and thank them for keeping our communities safe.

Local resident Minerva Castillo said she was happy to have the ugly burned out house torn down because people in the neighborhood would feel much safer.

“There were people sleeping there at night,” said Castillo. “We were worried because we didn’t know who they were or what kind of people they were.”

Neighbor Rosario Munoz agreed. She said that when she was about to buy her house, her family was scared to buy there because she heard that neighbor-

hood drug addicts were sometimes in the house.

“Before today, residents did not want to walk their kids to school or walk to our neighborhood church on this street because everyone knew the drug people were sometimes there,” Munoz said. “Thank God the City of Laredo and the Operation CRACKDOWN service members are tearing the house down. No more bad people around our neighborhood. It is now safer for our children.”

To date, Operation CRACKDOWN has demolished 1,462 structures, varying from frame houses to an abandoned warehouse in 25 communities across Texas. - **TXJCDTF PAO**

*For more information about Operation CRACKDOWN, call the Texas Joint Counterdrug Task Force at 512-782-5670.*



Thank God the City of Laredo and the Operation CRACKDOWN service members are tearing the house down No more bad people around our neighborhood It is now safer for our children.

A heavy 45,000 pound Deere excavator tears down a house identified by local law enforcement as being used for illicit drug activity in Laredo, Texas, April 9, 2015.

# State Communicators

Texas State Guard signal unit prepares for emergency response

*Story and photos by Capt. Esperanza Meza, 19th Regiment Public Affairs*



**D**ALLAS, TEXAS - With natural disasters a constant threat, coordinating emergency response efforts is important to provide assistance and resources to communities.

The Texas State Guard, 19th Regiment signal unit conducted a three-day field communications exercise at the National Guard armory there, Feb. 6-8, 2015.

The exercise tested the unit's ability to communicate over great distances, as well as across the local community to effectively manage operations and provide support to the communities and officials involved.

"During actual emergencies, there is a strong likelihood that the Texas State Guard will be working hand-in-hand to pass emergency radio traffic and digital messages back and forth," said Maj. Glen Fowler, the regiment's communications officer. "This means that establishing relationships in advance preparation is a good idea."

Guardsmen worked with communications equipment powered by an 8,000 watt generator, emergency battery backups, and digital equipment that enabling high frequency messaging capabilities, for both near and remote locations, without the need for Internet access.

Guardsmen were able to connect with other state emergency resources without internet or phone communications, using mobile dual band very high frequency and ultra high frequency transceivers with vertical antennas and high frequency transceivers, something that is often needed in the event of a disaster, said Fowler.

The field exercise involved voice and digital modes, using high frequency and very high frequency transceivers, communicating with other military stations and Military Auxiliary Radio System volunteers across Texas and several other states.

MARS volunteers are amateur radio operators, licensed

by the Federal Communications Commission and trained by the Army to operate as government auxiliary radio stations on the high frequency spectrum provided by the Department of Defense. The 19th Regiment has three Army MARS station licenses issued by Army MARS headquarters in Fort Huachuca, Arizona.

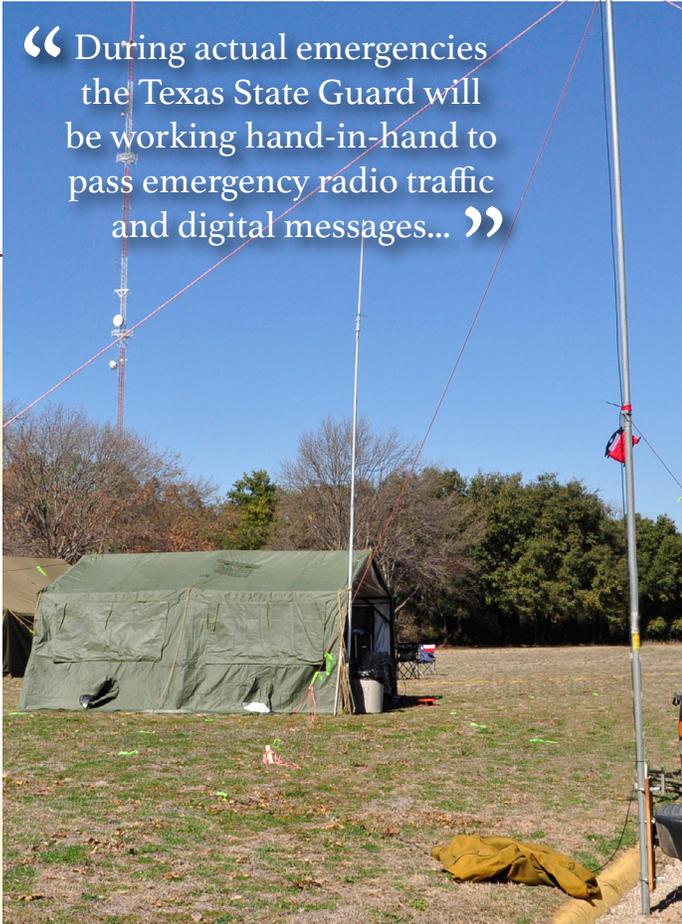
"The Texas State Guard has its own communication systems, but they need to be closely connected with other regional, state and national communications resources," said Fowler. "Such interoperability helps to ensure that we can reliably communicate over great distances as well as just across a local community to be able to effectively manage our own operations as well as provide support to the communities and groups that we serve."

The regiment's signal team sent digital messages between Dallas and Austin using high frequency messaging modes, during the three-day exercise, and made numerous voice and digital communications connections with components all over the state.

Warrant Officer 1 Lew Thompson, Texas Army MARS Texas Military Forces liaison officer, worked one on one with the regiment during this exercise, providing additional technical support and remote communications test message reception and transmission.

"The exercise was used to further the communications capabilities and individual knowledge and skills of members of the signals unit and to show that long-range high frequency communication is a valuable resource for the Texas State Guard that should not be overlooked," said Fowler. "It allows various components of the Texas Military Forces to be able to communicate state-wide to serve as the voice of command and carry out our important and diverse disaster and community support missions." - **19th REGT PAO**

“ During actual emergencies the Texas State Guard will be working hand-in-hand to pass emergency radio traffic and digital messages... ”



Above right: Cpl. Christopher Parrish, 19th Regiment signal unit, Texas State Guard, conducts a radio exercise.

Bottom: Members of the 19th Regiment signal unit, Texas State Guard, conducted a radio communications exercise at the California Crossing National Guard armory in Dallas, Feb. 6-8, 2015.

# DISASTER CITY

Texas National Guard trains with civilian authorities for disasters

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Jennifer Atkinson, JTF 136th MEB Public Affairs



partnerships and skills to help more Texas communities survive another hurricane season.

Soldiers and Airmen transitioned from home station armories to a field environment, testing their response time and mobility capabilities. By responding to a full-scale disaster and deploying their suite of life-saving capabilities, both civilian and military responders got the opportunity to truly see each other's capabilities.

The National Guard outfit, also called the "Minuteman Brigade," is the custodian of the Federal Emergency Management Agency homeland response force mission for FEMA Region VI, supporting local, state and federal assets throughout Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. This mission means the Round Rock-based unit can partner with agencies from all over the region and country.

"This is great preparation for hurricane season. It really exercises the complex nature of a large-scale disaster," said Brig. Gen. Patrick Hamilton, commander for the Texas Military Forces' Domestic Operations Task Force. "There are numerous inter-agency partners here. For some, it's the first time they've seen what we do."

Mobilized at the request of the governor and local civil authorities as fictional Hurricane Matthias barreled down on Houston, the troops refined their life-saving techniques

**C**OLLEGE STATION, TEXAS—The "Galveston Hurricane." Celia. Rita. Katrina. Ike. All of them were large-scale, deadly Atlantic hurricanes that touched the lives of hundreds of thousands of Texans; many of them triggering disaster responses across multiple military and civilian agencies to care for the communities in harm's way.

As the start of the 2015 Atlantic hurricane season approaches, the Texas Guardsmen of Joint Task Force 136 (Maneuver Enhancement Brigade) capitalized on the chance to work with other military and civilian agencies during their annual training in Austin, Camp Swift, and Disaster City, April 19-25. The nine-day training period was the latest in a long line of exercises to build

All photos: Texas Guardsmen of Joint Task Force 136 (Maneuver Enhancement Brigade) capitalize on the chance to work with other military and civilian agencies during their annual training in Austin, Camp Swift and Disaster City, April 19-25.

and improved inter-agency communication, ensuring that if disaster strikes, all support elements will be prepared to integrate seamlessly with units and personnel outside of the Texas Military Forces.

“It’s just so great for our Soldiers and our Airmen to get a chance to work with all of those different entities that they would see in a real world situation,” said Col. Lee Schnell, the commander for JTF-136 (MEB).

April 25, was the day for the Guardsmen to truly stretch their legs. Some worked with Texas Urban Search and Rescue to search for and extract casualties, while others went deep under collapsing structures to share shoring and rigging techniques with the Texas Task Force I structures crew. Experts from Texas A&M Veterinary School passed along canine decontamination procedures while



medical teams practiced triage and treatment on a variety of wounds.

According to Texas A&M Engineering Extension service, the agency in charge of Disaster City, more than 900 personnel took part in the exercise. These first responders were in turn supported by the 560 members of the Minuteman Brigade, bringing specialized military capabilities to the overall lifesaving efforts.

“In this particular scenario, really one of the highlights is working with our civilian first responder partners,” said Schnell. “Wednesday, we worked with Austin Fire Department, Williamson County Hazmat, Austin Hazmat, Austin Fire Department, Travis County Medical Examiner’s Office, and on Saturday, we got a chance to work with the Texas and Utah Urban Search and Rescue team.”

At the end of the day, the depth of knowledge gained by hands-on time with diverse partners allows everyone involved to better serve their communities and fellow Texans.

“Working with the Texas National Guard is one of the best parts of my job,” said Brett Dixon, TX-TFI, Helicopter Search and Rescue Program manager. “We all have a genuine shared interest in helping the citizens of Texas.” - **136th MEB PAO**



# **T**heater **I**nformation **O**perations **G**roup **Emerald Warrior**

**Texas Guardsmen provide Information Operations Support at the exercise**

*Story and photo by Maj. Joshua Amstutz, 71st TIOG Public Affairs*

**H**URLBURT FIELD, FLA.— Members of the 71st Theater Information Operations Group, Texas Army National Guard, provided information operation support during Emerald Warrior, an interagency and partner nation exercise, Hurlburt Field, Fla., April 15-May 1, 2015.

Emerald Warrior is an annual joint exercise to train special operations, as well as conventional and partner nation forces in combat scenarios designed to sharpen special operations air and ground combat skills. The operation is the Department of Defense's only irregular warfare exercise allowing joint and combined partners to train together and prepare for real-world contingency operations.

"Emerald Warrior opened up various opportunities for myself and the other Soldiers in the unit to work with the Army's special forces community as well as the Air Force's special forces community in a joint environment," said Capt. Larry Creighton, Headquarters Detachment Commander, 101st Information Operations Battalion, 71st TIOG, TXARNG.

The interagency exercise provided the 71st TIOG the opportunity to work with the 7th Special Forces Group, U.S. Army and 1st Special Operations Wing, Air Force Special Operations Command United States Air Force, and provide them with information operation support. This support gave the troops on the ground the knowledge they needed to understand the importance of information operations in the fight.

The second year for TIOG participation in the

exercise, members of the 7th Special Forces Group spoke highly of the Texas Soldiers.

"The 71st TIOG integrated quickly to our irregular and changing environment," said a member of the 7th Special Forces Group. "From the very beginning, they were able to assist our staff with a multitude of key tasks, ensuring the overall success of the joint training. The 2nd Battalion, 7th Special Operations Group and members of our SOTF and Coalition received invaluable insight into the non-lethal capability that exists within the 71st TIOG."

Emerald Warrior is designed to provide a unique opportunity for components of U.S. Special Operations Command, conventional, interagency and partner nation to train in a joint, realistic environment.

"One of the main training objectives for the 71st TIOG this year was to focus on working in a joint environment. Emerald Warrior provided this opportunity to the members of the 71st TIOG," said Col. Kevin Countie the commander of the 71st TIOG. "71st TIOG was able to demonstrate to the Special Forces community that included both Air Force and Army Special Forces what they bring to the fight, what support the unit can provide, and how to integrate them into a joint environment. "

The Emerald Warrior exercise incorporates live, virtual, constructive operational training that brings realistic combat training to the joint forces involved. - **71st TIOG PAO**





**“ 71st TIOG was able to demonstrate to the Special Forces community what they bring to the fight. ”**

Maj. Brent Kemp and Capt. Robert Kueber of the 101st Information Operations Battalion, 71st Theater Information Operations, Texas Army National Guard, discusses upcoming operational support with members of 1st Special Operations Wing, Air Force Special Operations Command United States Air Force, 2nd Battalion 7th Special Forces Group U.S. Army, and the 193rd Special Operations Group Pennsylvania Air National Guard during Emerald Warrior at Hurlburt Field, Fla., April 24, 2015.

# A Common Path

Texas Army National Guard Pathfinders reunite after 25 years

Story and photo  
by Master Sgt.  
Kenneth Walker  
Texas Military  
Forces Public  
Affairs



**A**USTIN, Texas - More than two dozen members of the 1136th Pathfinders Detachment, 36th Airborne Brigade, Texas Army National Guard formerly headquartered at Camp Mabry, in Austin, celebrated their first reunion April 17th, 2015, 25 years after being disbanded.

Three generations of pathfinders attended the reunion ranging from veterans of the Vietnam and Cold War eras to present day, to include Air Bear, the unit mascot from G Company, 143rd Long Range Surveillance Company, wearing jump wings from three continents.

Pathfinders first appeared in World War II and continue to serve an important role in today's modern military, providing commanders with greater flexibility in employing air assets.

A pathfinder is typically inserted or dropped into place in order to set up and operate drop zones, pickup zones and helicopter landing sites for airborne operations, air resupply operations, or other air operations such as sling-load operations in support of the ground unit commander. Pathfinder units often fill roles across the spectrum of their typical missions, along with other

roles outside of their prescribed task lists.

"The Pathfinder course changed over the years as the strategic and tactical mission changed," said retired Master Sgt. James Borum. "Explosives and land navigation, once the bedrock of finding and clearing a drop zone, became victim of budget cuts and advanced technology. One thing that has not changed is the weather, sometimes we were in freezing conditions and other times it was hot as hell, I guess that aspect will never change for today's trooper."

Most of the elite troops, attending the reunion, seemed to move around a little slower and have a little more gray hair than when they served in the Texas Army National Guard, but their loyalty and pride in being a Pathfinder appeared to be just as big; and their bond to each other, stronger than ever.

"It was great to see these guys, some of which I haven't seen in a decade," said Command Sgt. Maj. Rogelio Hernandez, Senior Enlisted Advisor, Texas Joint Counterdrug Task Force. "We went through one of the toughest military schools you can imagine; rarely did a Soldier make it through the first time around."



“ We went through one of the toughest military schools you can imagine; rarely did a Soldier make it through the first time around. ”

TXARNG Pathfinders reunited after 25 years.

The 1136th started off as an airborne detachment in the 1970s after it split off from the 71st Brigade, but was disbanded in 1990.

At its peak, the Texas Military Forces boasted an entire airborne brigade. Force structure changes saw this capability pared down to three smaller units in the late 1980s with Airborne missions including the 1136th Pathfinder Detachment, G Company 143rd Long Range Surveillance Company and the 49th Armored Division Long Range Surveillance Detachment.

By the early 2000s, Texas Airborne forces consisted of only the 65-man 49th Armored Division LRSD, but as the Global War on Terror progressed, the Texas Guard has been able to grow its airborne capability exponentially.

Now, Texas boasts the only airborne battalion in the Army National Guard, 1st Battalion, 143rd Infantry housing a long range surveillance company, two Special Forces companies, a rigger company, and two other airborne elements.

The three-day reunion kicked off Friday evening at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8787 in north Austin

with first formation, a BBQ dinner and static displays of memorabilia contributed by attendees.

Dinner was followed by a video presentation and the unveiling of the original unit parachute sign that was autographed by the Pathfinders in attendance. The hand painted vintage sign, dating back to the 1970s, will be added to the airborne exhibit in the Texas Military Forces Museum at Camp Mabry in Austin.

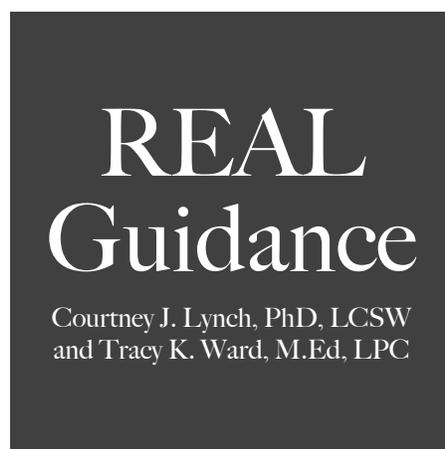
Saturday, the reunion moved to Camp Mabry for the Texas Military Forces Open House and American Heroes Air Show. Pizza and fellowship followed at the pavilion behind 36th Infantry Division headquarters. Reunion festivities concluded Sunday morning with a visit to Camp Swift.

As the weekend came to an end, old friends and new friends, all sharing the prestigious title of Pathfinder, said their goodbyes and made plans to meet again in a year for another Pathfinder reunion. - **DISPATCH**



# DIVORCE

Six Tips For Navigating the Process of Separation and Divorce:  
A Legal Perspective by Maj. Sam Denton, Chief of Legal Assistance, TXMF



Going through a divorce is a very stressful time. Therefore, it is necessary to educate yourself with real guidance in order to proceed through the process with integrity and fairness for both parties. In many cases, however, the opposite occurs, and individuals are quick to react out of emotion, either fighting over everything or giving up everything. There are other options. If you are a service member, or are the spouse of a service member, and are considering divorce, the Legal Assistance Office (Judge Advocate General, JAG) can be a helpful resource for you to explore these alternate options. For this issue of Real Guidance, we are pleased to offer expert and valuable information from Maj. Sam Denton, Chief of Legal Assistance for the Texas National Guard. 

Separation and divorce encompass some of the most turbulent times that we can go through and, unfortunately, a large portion of the population experience these things. As Chief of Legal Assistance for the Texas National Guard, I frequently receive requests for information and guidance on going through divorce. Here are six basic tips to help Soldiers and their spouses navigate through such events.

**1 Determine if you really want in a divorce.** Divorces are exceptionally costly in terms of time, emotion and finances. Some attorneys have estimated that the average divorce costs as much as \$20,000. However, often the expenses incurred during the separation and divorce process are merely the beginning of the expenditures that former spouses will be required to pay. Sometimes these expenditures will continue for years to decades. So the extremely tough initial question is: can you invest more time and effort to fix the relationship or have you reached a point where you must begin the divorce process? If you are willing to devote more effort to the relationship, counseling may prove invaluable. There are a host of free resources that can assist you in this effort.

**2 Try to Treat the Process as a Business Transaction.** This is some of the most challenging advice to follow. Often, by the time people have decided to divorce, there are a host of problems that have accrued and

a multitude of hurt feelings and bitterness on both sides. But one of the best things that divorcing spouses can do is to work with each other and to try to keep decisions clear of emotion. By working together, former spouses can find fair and collaborative solutions. They can identify concessions that they can make to satisfy the other party's needs and vice-versa. Keeping the process as free from emo-

tion as possible allows the former spouses to identify and make these needed concessions. Ultimately, this can lead to a much fairer and more equitable division of assets, can pave the way for a successful post-divorce relationship and can significantly reduce time spent in the divorce process and the overall costs of the divorce. Again, counseling at the outset of the process can help each party get to a place where they can effectively work with each other.

**3 Insist on Fairness During and After the Process.** Sometimes a former spouse will give the vast majority of their assets to the other spouse in order to end the divorce process as quickly as possible. Sometimes they will make other significant concessions both during the divorce process and afterwards. I would urge you to be fair to the other spouse but also to be fair to yourself. You may decide to give away substantial possessions in order to quicken the process, but such action should only be taken after careful reflection. Try not to let yourself get so caught up in ending the divorce or in creating a workable post-divorce relationship that you





give away assets that you will later regret having lost or that you allow the former spouse to abuse the terms of the divorce decree. Know the terms of the divorce decree and the penalties and abide by them. If spousal support is awarded, register with the designated governmental tracking agency to ensure that payments are being tracked and that delinquent payments (and only delinquent payments) can be enforced.

**4 If You Separate, Army Regulation May Require You to Pay Spousal Support.**

Army Regulation 608-99 addresses spousal support, child custody, paternity testing and the complaint process for these things. It applies to Soldiers who are Active Duty or are on orders for more than 30 days. Each service has its own version of this regulation. Under this regulation, Soldiers are expected to provide adequate and continuous support to their spouse and dependents. A Soldier is required to begin making support payments on the first day of the month following the date on which the parties cease living together. AR 608-99 outlines the support that Soldiers are expected to provide if you separate from your spouse. If a written support agreement or court order exists then those take precedent over the support requirements outlined in AR 608-99. There are very few things that a Soldier can pay on behalf of their spouse that will count as going

towards the support payment. If a Soldier fails to fulfill their support obligations, their spouse may report them to their chain of command and their chain of command is required to investigate the report and render a response. Although the chain of command cannot withhold pay,

they can take punitive actions against the Soldier for failure to pay spousal support. Bottom line: Soldiers should pay their spouse the required support, do so by check or through some sort of traceable electronic means, and ensure that they keep proof of payment in an organized manner in case they need to show their records to their commander or to the courts. If you have any questions, look to our Legal Assistance Office website for resources or call the Legal Assistance Office.

**5 You Should Hire a Lawyer Unless It Is an Uncontested Divorce.**

Many divorces are contested in some manner. Frequently, as spouses go through the divorce process they find that irresolvable issues arrive where there did not seem to be any before. The uncontested divorce becomes contested.

If you truly do have an uncontested divorce, you can find information on the divorce process and forms that will help you through the process on [www.texaslawhelp.org](http://www.texaslawhelp.org). Such a divorce is preferable because it significantly reduces the costs in terms of money, time

**RESOURCES**

Texas Military Forces Legal Assistance Office:  
 512-782-1169  
 Email: [ng.tx.txarng.mbx.legal-asst-office@mail.mil](mailto:ng.tx.txarng.mbx.legal-asst-office@mail.mil)  
 Website: <https://www.txmf.us/txmf-legal-assistance>  
 Location: Bldg 34 (the building with the ID Card Section) on Camp Mabry

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Texas Military Forces Counseling Department:  
 512-782-5069

State Operations Chaplain:  
 512-782-5522

Strong Bonds:  
[www.strongbondsn gb.org](http://www.strongbondsn gb.org)

and emotion. If a divorce does become contested, ensure that you hire a lawyer. Sometimes one spouse will hire a lawyer and persuade the other spouse to rely on their same attorney. However, this can be seriously detrimental to the spouse that does not have representation. Again, if the divorce becomes contested, hire a lawyer.

**6** **You Should Ensure You Hire A Lawyer Who Is Familiar With Military Divorces.** There are peculiarities to military divorces that are not present in other divorces. There are unique assets that are available for division and there are sometimes very specific methods in which they must be divided. One example of a military benefit that can be divided during divorce is an annuity called the “Survivor Benefit Plan” or “SBP.” This is often deducted from monthly military retirement pay. The military retirement pay itself is another example of a military benefit that is a contentious item and that is often fought over. The Uniformed Services Former Spouses’ Protection Act allows state courts to divide military retirement pay during the divorce process. It does not require that military retirement be divided and so this is something that must be determined during the divorce process. In order to ensure that the divorce and post-divorce actions go as smoothly as possible, Soldiers and spouses should make sure that they hire an attorney that is versed in military divorces and can help them best navigate the process. For more information on the USFSPA and on military retirement divisions in a divorce proceeding, visit the Defense Finance and Accounting Services Website on the subject. This can be found at: <http://www.dfas.mil/garnishment/usfspa/legal.html>.

Divorce is not a pleasant process and can be a scary and emotional roller coaster. I understand that much of the

above advice is logical and good in theory, but that it may be hard to put into practice. However, by following these six points you will be looking after your own best interests, and you may be able to significantly cut down on the emotional and financial costs of the divorce. Again, I would urge spouses having difficulty working with the other party, invest the time at the outset to go through divorce counseling so that they can get to a place where they can minimize the costs of the divorce. Please feel free to contact the Texas Military Forces Legal Assistance Office if you need further guidance while going through the process. - **REAL Guidance**

MAJ Denton began serving as a Military Intelligence Officer on Active Duty in 2003. He became interested in law while serving as the Officer in Charge of a Political Section responsible for studying the Iraqi Government and subsequently graduated from the University of Texas School of Law in 2010. He completed a post-graduate internship at a law firm in Houston and then served for three years at the Special Prosecution Unit, during which time MAJ Denton tried and won 20 jury trials. In 2014 he transferred to the Texas Military Forces Legal Assistance Office where he serves as the Chief of Legal Assistance. In that capacity, MAJ Denton assists clients by drafting wills, powers of attorney and miscellaneous other documents; and providing advice on a myriad of legal subjects to include will and probate law, consumer law and family law. He also serves as the Command Judge Advocate for the 36th Sustainment Brigade.



Texas

STARBASE

Austin

# Summer STEM Camp

**WHO:** Children and Grandchildren entering 6th grade of Texas Military Department and/or Texas Military Forces Employees

**WHAT:** Positive approach to creating excitement and interest in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). The students will participate in challenging "hands-on, mind-on" activities and interact with military personnel to explore careers and observe STEM applications in the "real world."



**CAMP DATES:** June 15-19, 2015\*

\* an additional week in July may be available subject to demand

**WHERE:** Camp Mabry, STARBASE Building 31  
2200 West 35th St., Austin, TX 78756

**COST:** FREE!!! \*Tax-deductible donations gratefully accepted to Texas STARBASE Inc. 501(c)(3)

**Additional details and application process on reverse side.**

STARBASEAustin.org, 512-782-3454, [ContactUs@STARBASEAustin.org](mailto:ContactUs@STARBASEAustin.org)

