

# THE D

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THE MAGAZINE OF THE TEXAS MILITARY FORCES

**Texas State Guard**  
finds training opportunities

**TXARNG Engineers**  
in for the long haul

**TXANG Leadership**  
Discuss State of the Force





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## Contents

- 6 **Engineers in for the long-haul**
- 8 **Recruits volunteer time to help Texas athletes**
- 10 **Medics take the fight to the training**
- 12 **Teaching children to reach for the stars**
- 14 **36th ID continues its exchange in Honduras**
- 18 **TXSG guides cyclists**
- 20 **Texas Special Ops Detachment jumps into Key West**
- 22 **TXANG leaders talk state of the force**
- 24 **REAL Guidance - Not Alone**
- 27 **Key Leadership Announcements**

## The Cover



Newly joined Texas State Guardsmen conduct drill and ceremony movements at Regional Basic Orientation Training I in Austin, Texas, Aug. 14-16, 2015. Stay tuned for complete story next month.





A soldier from the 68th Engineer Company, 62nd Engineer Battalion, 36th Engineer Brigade excavates rock on the first major cut of the road project at Camp Bowie Training Center in Brownwood, Texas, July 20, 2015. (Texas National Guard courtesy photo by 111th Engineer Battalion)



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In Recognition of  
SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS MONTH

*A SPECIAL SCREENING OF THE  
OSCAR WINNING HBO DOCUMENTARY*

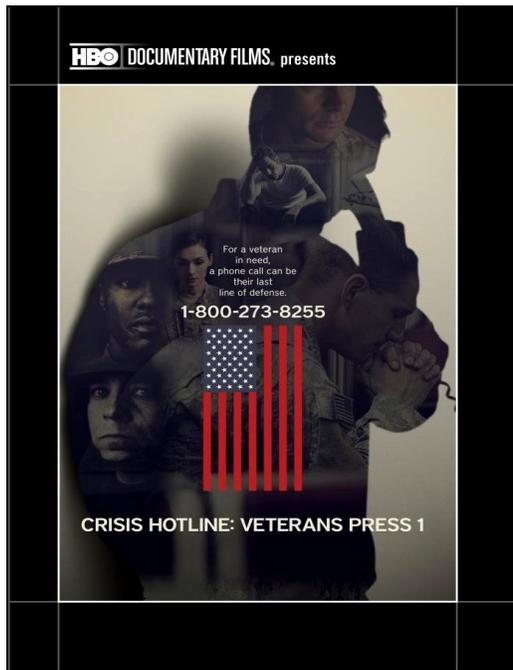
# **CRISIS HOTLINE: VETERANS PRESS 1**

Camp Mabry, ALAMO, BLDG 8 (Auditorium)

**WEDNESDAY, September 9, 2015 @ 10:00**

**TUESDAY, September 15, 2015 @ 11:30**

**TUESDAY, September 22, 2015 @ 1400**



Please join us for a special screening of this film that spotlights the traumas endured by America's Veterans, as seen through the eyes of VA trained responders.

A panel of TXMF Behavioral Health Professionals will be available for a question and answer session after the film.

*For more information, please contact the Suicide Prevention Program Office at 512-782-1204.*



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# Human Resources

Commentary by Col. Stanley E. Golaboff  
TXNG Human Resource Officer



**T**HE TEXAS NATIONAL GUARD Human Resource Office is the office of primary responsibility for managing and providing oversight for both Active Guard Reserve and military technicians programs for both the Texas Army and Air National Guard. So as we get ready for a new fiscal year, I thought this would be a good time to review the year we just completed and provide a little insight into the uncertainty we are facing heading into fiscal year 16.

The best way to describe fiscal year 15 is probably to paraphrase the classic line “it was the worst of times and it was the best of times.” There was bad news and good news for the Texas National Guard in FY15.

**Bad news:** The Army fiscal year 15 voucher was delayed and when finally published it was under-funded for the first time ever.

**Good news:** Air National Guard manning (both AGR and technician) was readily available and fully funded. Additionally, the Air was afforded bulk temporary funding for both the AGR and technician programs

**Bad news:** The Army National Guard experienced a planned reduction in AGR funding and unplanned reduction in technician funding-- to the tune of almost 100 persons in each employment category.

**Good news:** Both reductions were handled through normal workplace turnover/attrition and there was no need for a formal reduction in force. Critical mission requirements were still met even as we learned to do “less with less.”

**Bad news:** The Army side, both AGR and technician, experienced extended hiring freezes for most of fiscal year 15.

**Good news:** By the end of the year limited hiring authority and ability had returned to both Army AGR and



technician programs.

So after weathering the storm over the course of the year, I would like to tell you that fiscal year 16 is going to be a calm, peaceful and serene voyage. Unfortunately, I cannot. I have bad news and good news.

**Bad news:** Bulk temporary AGR and technician authorizations in the Air Guard have dropped from 15 and 59 to 1 and 57 respectively for fiscal year 16.

**Good news:** Permanent technician’s authorizations for all three wings increased to include formal authorizations for Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC) positions in

each of the wings.

**Bad news:** Both the AGR and technician programs in the Army are again facing planned reductions in fiscal year 16.

**Good news:** The AGR reductions for fiscal year 16 are half of what they were the previous year. Additionally, while authorization cuts are coming for the technician program, based the reductions taken in fiscal year 15 due to funding constraints, we should be able to absorb the planned cuts without a hiring freeze and will actually be able to hire to our fiscal year 16 numbers once the Army voucher is published. (Yes, it is delayed again.)

Rest assured that as in life, fiscal year 16 will be peppered with lots of bad news/good news opportunities. The Human Resource Office remains committed to assisting our leaders and our employees in navigating the rocky seas ahead. We have spent the last year working closely with the Director of Staff and the three wings on the Air side and working through the Full-Time Manning Career Management Board on the Army side to set up both the Air and Army in the best position to move forward in the coming year. The one certainty I can offer you is this: “FY16 will be the worst of times and it will be the best of times.” - **FROM THE TOP**



**B**ROWNWOOD, TEXAS –Army Engineers from across Texas came together during a 25-day roadway construction project spanning 17 miles along the perimeter of the Camp Bowie Training Center in Brownwood, July 6-30, 2015.

The multi-component project was planned and led by 111th Engineer Battalion “Roughnecks”, 176th Engineer Brigade, Texas Army National Guard. The multi-component element included active duty soldiers from the 62nd Engineer Battalion, 36th Engineer Brigade based in Fort Hood and U.S. Army Reserve soldiers from the 980th Engineer Battalion, 420th Engineer Brigade headquartered in Bryan.

While informal, a relationship between the three Texas engineer brigades has existed for some time. Recently, the Army adopted a “Total Force Policy” that encourages regionally aligned units from all components of the U.S. Army Engineer Regiment – Active, National Guard and Army Reserve - to plan and execute multi-component training in order to maximize resources and gain efficiency.

“The project included multi-component soldiers who had never met before; they planned and resourced this project remotely, months before

execution. Elements came together at all levels with little to no friction. It’s been about getting the mission done – expanding engineer collective capability,” said Maj. Matthew D. Calton, 111th Engineer Battalion commander.

“It is reassuring to observe the caliber of officers, warrant officers and NCOs that exist within our engineer regiment,” said Calton.

The range road construction project was divided into three major sections with each assigned to specific component. Horizontal engineer soldiers completed excavations, cut and fill, hauling and borrow site operations, while vertical engineer soldiers focused on round and box culvert installations, and headwall construction. Soldiers with other engineer skill sets were task organized to further the mission.

“Within each major route section there are critical path sub-tasks,” said Capt. John Veracruz, construction officer, 111th Engineer Battalion. “Among these were improving trafficability of the route by decreasing the grade of two large hill sections, building new sections of road and installing three concrete-cable low-water crossings.”

At the height of the project, the 111th

Engineer Battalion accounted for 646 soldiers with significant representation from four separate engineer battalions (62nd, 111th, 386th, 980th) and elements from 3rd Engineer Battalion, 1st Armored Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division and the 72nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 72nd Infantry Brigade, 36th Infantry Division Engineer Battalions.

“The quality of training is unprecedented, officers are getting training to plan, NCOs are getting training on complex problem solving and soldiers are getting significant equipment training opportunities; it’s rare to have so many diverse components and engineer capabilities working within a multi-phased project,” said Calton.

Soldiers from across all components now have a better understanding of how the Army Total Force Policy can be implemented.

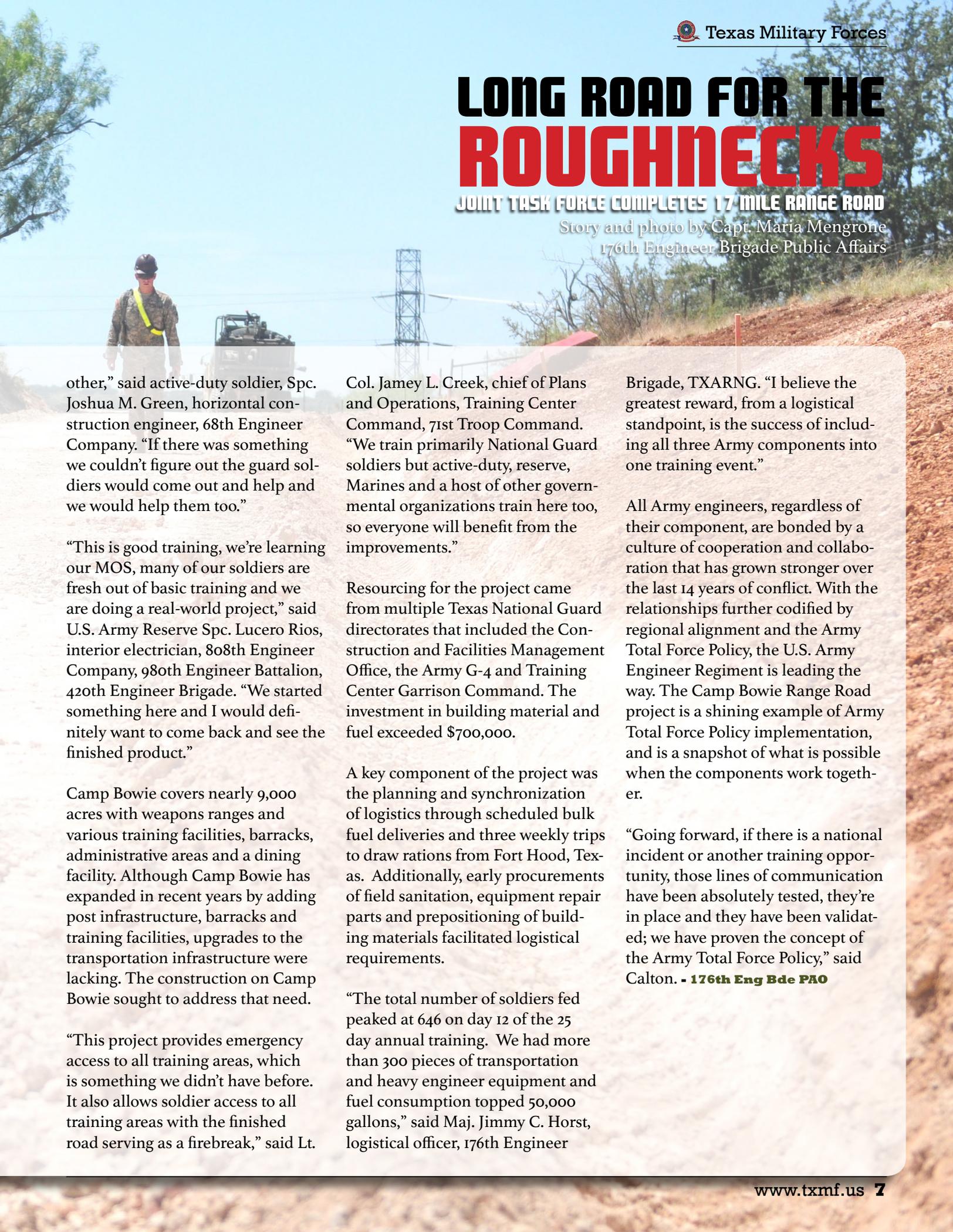
“The support has been fantastic,” said Capt. Jacob Niewold, commander, 68th Engineer Company, 62nd Engineer Battalion, 36th Engineer Brigade. “We don’t usually get this kind of training by staying at Fort Hood.”

“I’ve never had an opportunity to work with National Guard but it’s great that we are able to help each

# LONG ROAD FOR THE ROUGHNECKS

JOINT TASK FORCE COMPLETES 17 MILE RANGE ROAD

Story and photo by Capt. Maria Mengrone  
176th Engineer Brigade Public Affairs



other,” said active-duty soldier, Spc. Joshua M. Green, horizontal construction engineer, 68th Engineer Company. “If there was something we couldn’t figure out the guard soldiers would come out and help and we would help them too.”

“This is good training, we’re learning our MOS, many of our soldiers are fresh out of basic training and we are doing a real-world project,” said U.S. Army Reserve Spc. Lucero Rios, interior electrician, 808th Engineer Company, 980th Engineer Battalion, 420th Engineer Brigade. “We started something here and I would definitely want to come back and see the finished product.”

Camp Bowie covers nearly 9,000 acres with weapons ranges and various training facilities, barracks, administrative areas and a dining facility. Although Camp Bowie has expanded in recent years by adding post infrastructure, barracks and training facilities, upgrades to the transportation infrastructure were lacking. The construction on Camp Bowie sought to address that need.

“This project provides emergency access to all training areas, which is something we didn’t have before. It also allows soldier access to all training areas with the finished road serving as a firebreak,” said Lt.

Col. Jamey L. Creek, chief of Plans and Operations, Training Center Command, 71st Troop Command. “We train primarily National Guard soldiers but active-duty, reserve, Marines and a host of other governmental organizations train here too, so everyone will benefit from the improvements.”

Resourcing for the project came from multiple Texas National Guard directorates that included the Construction and Facilities Management Office, the Army G-4 and Training Center Garrison Command. The investment in building material and fuel exceeded \$700,000.

A key component of the project was the planning and synchronization of logistics through scheduled bulk fuel deliveries and three weekly trips to draw rations from Fort Hood, Texas. Additionally, early procurements of field sanitation, equipment repair parts and prepositioning of building materials facilitated logistical requirements.

“The total number of soldiers fed peaked at 646 on day 12 of the 25 day annual training. We had more than 300 pieces of transportation and heavy engineer equipment and fuel consumption topped 50,000 gallons,” said Maj. Jimmy C. Horst, logistical officer, 176th Engineer

Brigade, TXARNG. “I believe the greatest reward, from a logistical standpoint, is the success of including all three Army components into one training event.”

All Army engineers, regardless of their component, are bonded by a culture of cooperation and collaboration that has grown stronger over the last 14 years of conflict. With the relationships further codified by regional alignment and the Army Total Force Policy, the U.S. Army Engineer Regiment is leading the way. The Camp Bowie Range Road project is a shining example of Army Total Force Policy implementation, and is a snapshot of what is possible when the components work together.

“Going forward, if there is a national incident or another training opportunity, those lines of communication have been absolutely tested, they’re in place and they have been validated; we have proven the concept of the Army Total Force Policy,” said Calton. - **176th Eng Bde PAO**

# SUPPORTING TEXAS ATHLETES

## TEXAS ARMY NATIONAL GUARD SUPPORTS TAAF SUMMER GAMES

Story and photo by 1st Lt. Alicia Lacy  
Texas Military Forces Public Affairs Office

**C**OLLEGE STATION, TEXAS - The Texas Army National Guard's Recruiting and Retention Command brought the force to support the 2015 Texas Amateur Athletic Federation Games of Texas July 30 - Aug. 3, 2015, in College Station and Bryan.

For five days, thousands of Texas athletes and their supporters converged upon the two cities to compete in the state's biggest multi-sport event.

To support such a large event, coordinators enlisted the help of their partners from the TXARNG and its Recruit Sustainment Program warriors to help manage the chaos

at two of the games' biggest events – track and field and swimming.

“We were really stressed planning this event, knowing that having volunteers would be our number 1 issue,” said Kelly Kelbly, city of College Station recreation manager and Games of Texas coordinator.

But the support of the TXARNG, Kelbly said helped alleviate some of the strains that came with planning such a behemoth event.

“As we developed a relationship with the Guard, it's knowing the dependability we have on the volunteers and it takes some of the stress from the staff,” Kelbly said. “It takes 600 volunteers, 200 staff, a couple hundred



liaisons, and so knowing the dependability of the Guard handling our biggest two events, track and swimming, it takes all the pressure off of us.”

Additionally, the TXARNG’s work at the event demonstrated the presence of the Texas Guard, not just in emergency or combat situations, but also in community events such as the TAAF Games of Texas to celebrate Texas athletes.

“It’s exciting and I’m glad that I have the opportunity to volunteer here so everyone can see that the National Guard helps in combat and also the civilian side,” said Pvt. Kamiya Smith of Houston, a human resource specialist assigned to the RSP. “We’re here to help and serve when they need us.”

This is the second year the recruiters have supported the event.

“Last year, we generated more than 200 leads, which is good,” said Staff Sgt. Richard Strelsky, a TXARNG recruiter.

For the next two years, the games will move to McAllen, but will return to the Brazos Valley area in 2018-2019, and coordinators will keep the Guard in mind when they begin planning.

“We look forward to working with them again,” Kelbly said. - **DISPATCH**



Pvt. Kamiya Smith and Pfc. Stephen Rhodes, with the Texas Army National Guard’s Recruit Sustainment Program, volunteer at the Texas Amateur Athletic Federation’s Summer Games in College Station.

# MEDICS KEEP IT REAL

TXARNG Medics train how they fight

Texas Army National Guard Medical Command Soldiers learn how to load a patient onto a medical evacuation helicopter at Camp Swift near Bastrop, Texas.



*Story and photo by Sgt. Mark Decker  
100th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

**C**AMP SWIFT, TEXAS - Texas Army National Guard combat medics with Texas Medical Command retrieved, treated and evacuated injured personnel in a simulated hostile environment as part of their annual training at Camp Swift near Bastrop, Texas, July 29, 2015.

Soldiers navigated around improvised explosive devices, machine gun fire and mortar rounds; realism MEDCOM Command Sgt. Maj. Elizabeth Shockley says is critical to incorporate within training.

“It’s very important for MEDCOM soldiers because we have people that maybe haven’t been on a deployment in a combat medic situation,” Shockley said.

Coordination between MEDCOM and other Guard and active duty Army units helped achieve the more realistic setting. Sgt. 1st Class James Balandran, MEDCOM Operations Non-commissioned Officer, says the .50-caliber machine gun and 155 mm Howitzer artillery simulators and a helicopter flown in from the 36th Combat Aviation Brigade, “gave the soldiers the more realistic training that they wanted for so long.”

MEDCOM medics appreciated the additional training aids.

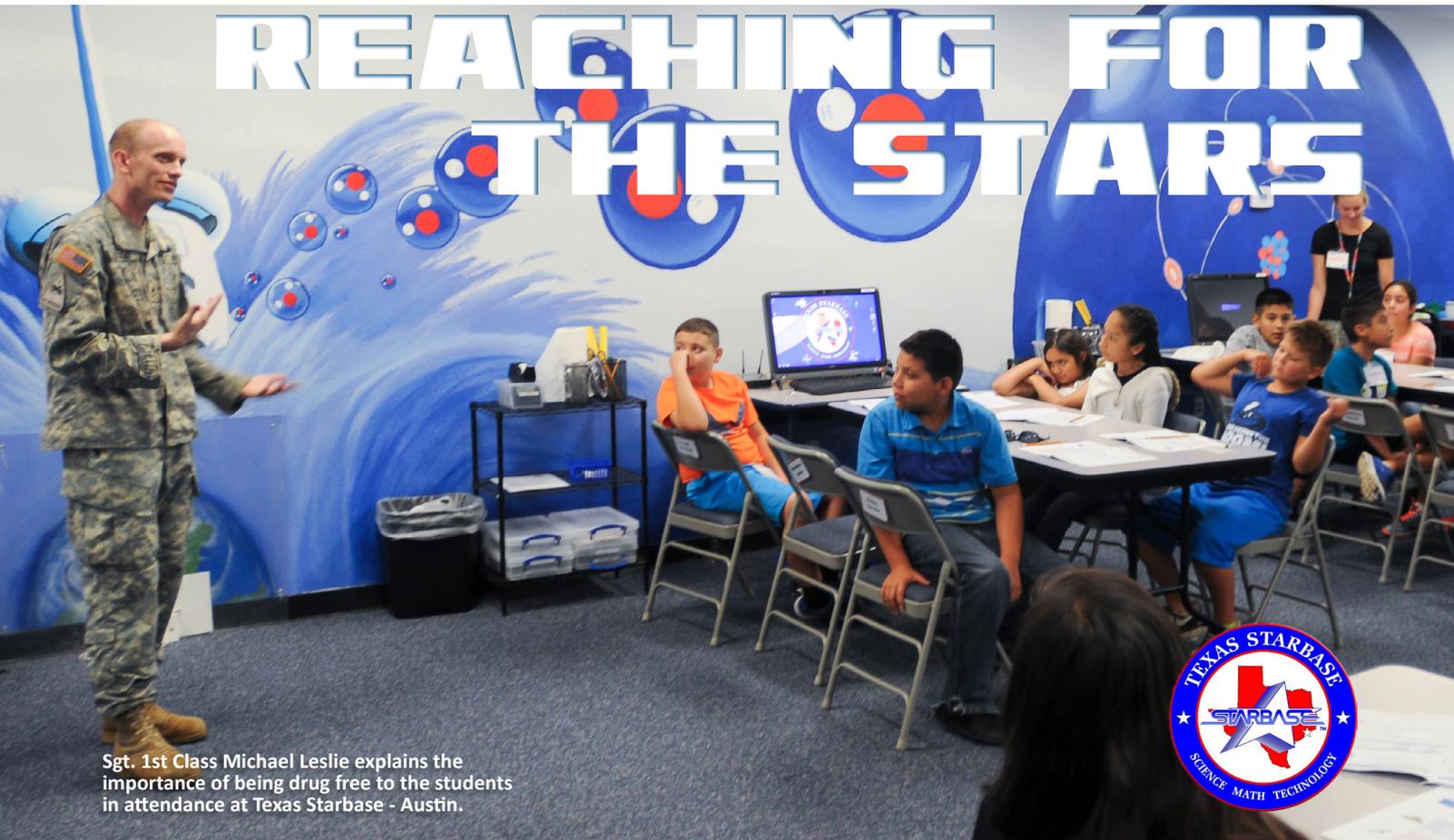
“This is definitely much more insightful,” said Spc. Samuel Linder, MEDCOM combat medic. “Nothing beats training with a live helicopter.

The exercise included individual weapon qualification ranges and renewal of Emergency Medical Technician basic license recertification.

“You have to keep them on top with the latest,” Shockley explained. “And always throw in all that mix of the different possibilities they might be called upon to get the patient out.”

**- 100th MPAD**

# REACHING FOR THE STARS



Sgt. 1st Class Michael Leslie explains the importance of being drug free to the students in attendance at Texas Starbase - Austin.

*Story and photos by Sgt. Adrian Shelton 100th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

**A**USTIN, TEXAS - Fifth-grade students from various area schools interacted with Texas Army National guardsmen to problem-solve a variety of hands-on projects based on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math curriculum as part of the Starbase program held at Camp Mabry, Aug. 3 - 7, 2015.

“Starbase is an outreach program for the Department of Defense,” said Patrick M. Yonnone, director of Texas Starbase - Austin.

Texas Starbase - Austin is one of the newest of 76 locations on or near military bases across 40 states and is partially funded through the Department of Defense. According to its website, DoD Starbase is a

premier educational program sponsored by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, that aims to expose historically underrepresented students to set and achieve goals in the STEM program while they continue their education.

The director and employees for Texas Starbase - Austin started the week-long, 25-hour STEM camps in 2012.

“We set up here at Camp Mabry because it’s centrally located in the Austin area,” Yonnone said. “It has the appropriate and available space we need and is easy access to soldiers to be able to support the program.”

The program invites National Guardsmen to demonstrate how STEM concepts apply to their fields of expertise and to provide positive role model interaction to the students.

“For some of these students, some of their only views of the military is what they see on the news or in movies,” Yonnone said. “Some of that is good, some is bad. But what you don’t always get is soldiers are members of the community. Even though they do heroic things, they have families, they work nine to five, they are parents and are an integral part of the community.”

Vicki Barfield, deputy director of Texas Starbase - Austin, and lead instructor, is in her third year of teaching STEM. She said the program targets Title I Austin area schools with students between fifth and sixth grade, with the schools determining who gets to attend summer sessions of Starbase.

“The targeted schools know only 30 students will get to go to Starbase at the end of the school year,” Barfield said. “Some will pick 30 students, some will send kids who pass the STARR test, or some will have them



Spc. Zachary Polka interacts with students as they participate in hands-on exploratory STEM classes at Texas Starbase - Austin.



Vicki Barfield, deputy director of Texas Starbase - Austin, demonstrates a hands-on experiment at Texas Starbase - Austin.



Shanae Ninehouser demonstrates a hands-on experiment involving fire and "glass paper" at Texas Starbase - Austin.

write an essay to apply. They have to meet certain criteria throughout the whole year."

Barfield and Yonnone both said the students usually live in inner city and rural locations, come from underserved populations, are socio-economically disadvantaged or have a disability.

"In the schools they've got limited funding so their science background might not be as strong," Barfield said. "Here they get to do a lot of activities they wouldn't normally get to do in public schools. In fact, when a lot of teachers come in and see the materials and supplies we have, like infrared thermometers, their chins hit the ground going 'Wow!' We get to bring in the technology that schools may not be able to afford."

STEM is a curriculum across the nation that seeks to engage students in activities and experiments with less direct instruction. According to

Barfield, a STEM 2.0 is being developed in Houston, where Texas Starbase launched in 1991, to serve as an afterschool program for sixth-grade students.

"We know, anecdotally, students who participate in STEM, generally speaking, are more engaged in their class work back at their home schools," Yonnone said. "So we hope it has a positive effect on attendance, and the students will get excited enough about one or all of the activities we do that they'll start exploring STEM on their own."

"It gets the kids thinking what they want to be when they grow up," Barfield said.

Several of the students said they liked interacting with the Texas National Guardsmen. They also said they appreciated the exploratory, hands-on activities that encourage them to draw their own conclusions in groups working together.

"Even though I've gone to this camp before, it was still really fun to go again because I really liked it," said Denny O'Neal, a student about to attend sixth grade in Buda, Texas. "I like the projects here, they're real fun. And if I ever do this stuff in middle school, maybe even high school, I'll know, 'Hey, I learned that.'"

This week, soldiers from various units within the Texas Army National Guard interacted with the students, supporting and encouraging them to take advantage of what Starbase and STEM has to offer.

"Maybe we don't get to kindle the fire or fan the flames, but hopefully we're casting out enough sparks that something catches fire," Yonnone said. "As soon as a student is interested in something, they far eclipse what teachers or anyone else are able to teach them." - **100th MPAD**



**“ This group of Soldiers is exceptionally prepared for the mission in Honduras. ”**



A Honduran soldier trains with his working dog during a training exercise in Tamara, Honduras.

# Perfect for the Task

Texas Soldiers prove to be the best fit to share best practices with Honduran Army



Story and photos by Maj. Randall Stillinger  
36th Infantry Division Public Affairs Office



**T**AMARA, HONDURAS – Texas Army National guardsmen from the San Antonio-based 1st Battalion, 141st Infantry Regiment are spending an extended summer working with and training Honduran military forces at a remote base two hours Northwest of the capital city of Tegucigalpa.

The four-month mission, which started in May, is meant to enhance the host nation’s ability to counter transnational organized crime by creating a knowledgeable and trained force that is able to detect, disrupt and detain illicit trafficking across Central America.

The more than 50 members of Task Force Alamo, which is commanded by Maj. Rodney Kelley, were selected because they bring unique capabilities to the mission.

In addition to combat experience, these citizen-soldiers brought with them expertise and experience that was gained from civilian careers in related fields. Members of the task force include Austin police officers, a U.S. Marshall, a firefighter, a U.S. Border Patrol agent, and employees of the Bexar County Sheriff’s Department.

These Texas National Guard Soldiers also bring an added benefit to the training environment: the ability

to speak Spanish fluently.

Kelley said, “This group of soldiers is exceptionally prepared for the mission in Honduras. The fact that 65 percent of our soldiers are bilingual improves the quality of training because much is lost when an interpreter is used.”

“The civilian experiences that they bring to the training are an added bonus that is hard to replicate,” Kelley said.

Officially known as the Republic of Honduras, the country has suffered from many years of political instability and one of the highest crime rates in the world. Although there have been improvements, it remains one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere. Adding to the problem, nearly 28 percent of the 8.1 million people are unemployed despite an increase in trade with the United States, the country’s largest trading partner.

The rigorous training process builds U.S. partner nations’ capability to conduct border control operations along with a series of related tasks. Subject matter experts from the U.S. State Department and Department of Homeland Security are also brought in during each three-week rotation to focus on certain specialties.

Week 1 includes both rifle and pistol marksmanship, close quarters training, troop leading procedures and cordon/search operations.

Week 2 focuses on border enforcement, arrest/detainment, patrolling in an urban environment, working entry control points and utilizing terrain models for military operations.

Week 3 includes a field training exercise that pushes the students to utilize all the training they’ve received, but also focuses on operational security and how to use the 9-line format to call in medevac support.

Col. Cesar Rolando Rosales Zapata, commander of the military base in Tamara and commander of the 2nd Infantry Airborne Battalion Transported, praised the joint training:

“We’re receiving great feedback from the soldiers and they are looking forward to putting their training into action in different parts of the country, along the border and on the coast.”

“I also enjoy seeing the camaraderie that is shared between the U.S. and Honduran soldiers as they compete in soccer and volleyball,” Rosales said.

Maj. Gen. Lester Simpson, commanding general of the 36th Infan-

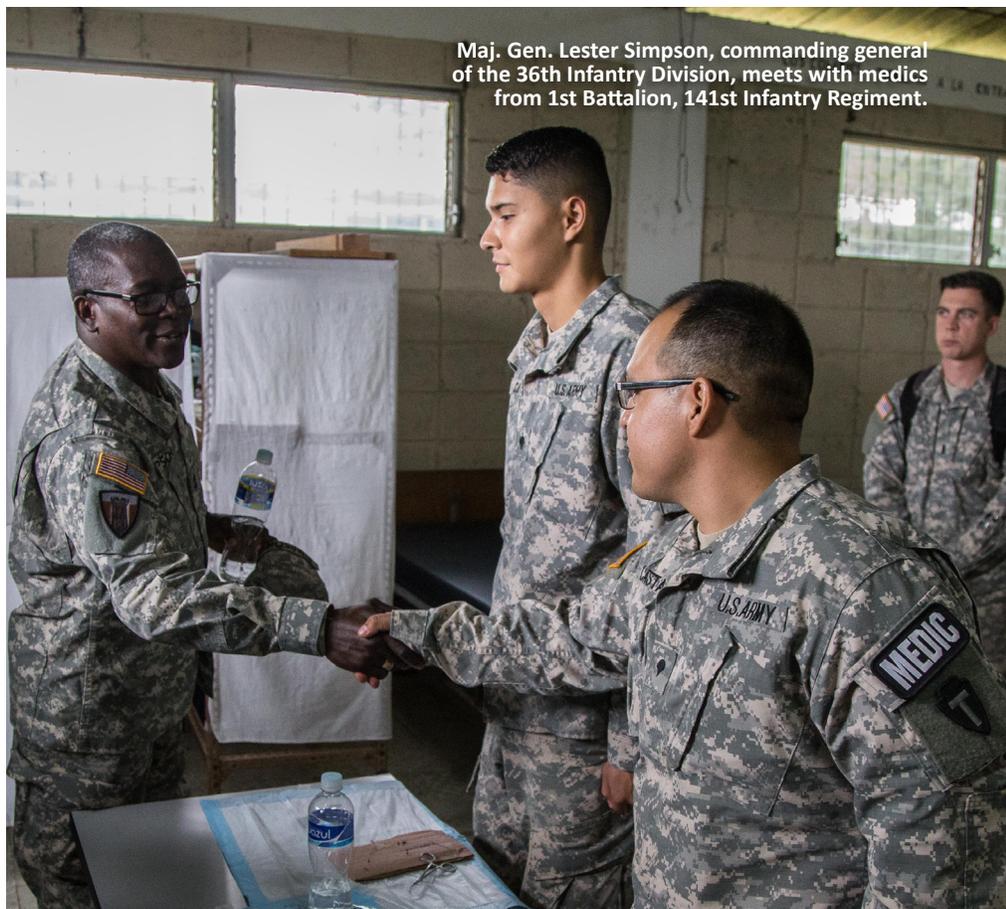


1st Lt. Raymond Bayane (right) observes two Honduran soldiers practice a 'fireman's carry' during a training exercise in Tamara, Honduras.

try Division, Texas Army National Guard, said, "I'm extremely proud of Task Force Alamo and the great work it's doing in Honduras."

Simpson and division Command Sgt. Maj. John Sampa visited the soldiers in July to witness the training, identify potential opportunities for future rotations, meet with Honduran officials, and to thank the soldiers for their dedication and professionalism.

"These citizen-soldiers have stepped up to volunteer, they've adapted to a new environment, and they're having a tremendous impact on the Honduran people," Simpson said. "This highly-successful mission is yet another example of the versatility that National Guard soldiers provide on the world scene. I couldn't be prouder." - 36th ID PAO



Maj. Gen. Lester Simpson, commanding general of the 36th Infantry Division, meets with medics from 1st Battalion, 141st Infantry Regiment.



Staff Sgt. Jason Band (left) and Spc. Carlos Tafolla (right) work with Honduran soldiers during a training exercise in Tamara, Honduras.



A Honduran soldier trains with his working dog during a training exercise in Tamara, Honduras.

# Road Guard for a good Cause

*Story by Capt. John Root  
Texas State Guard Public Affairs Office*

**M**IDLAND, Texas – Soldiers from the 39th Composite Regiment, Texas State Guard, performed route and safety guidance for the Cactus & Crude MS-150 Bike-A-Thon, along the 150-mile route from Midland to Lubbock, Texas, July 25-26, 2015.

The Guardsmen followed the lead of local law enforcement to create a safe roadway for the cyclists at multiple highway intersections, blind curves and other potentially dangerous points along the route.

“The soldiers, along with event organizers, local emergency management, law enforcement and emergency medical services, did an outstanding job of ensuring the safety of all cyclists along the two-day 150-mile route,” said Col. Barney E. Welch, commander of the 39th Composite Regiment.

In the spirit of the event, Sgt. 1st Class Rosalind Roger, with the regiment’s 3rd Battalion, entered the race and finished among the top riders.

“The ride was great, the weather was fabulous and the support from the Texas State Guard was amazing,” said Roger. “I am proud to be a part of a great team like the Texas State Guard. I look forward to this event next year.”

Welch said this is was valuable training for the Guardsmen.

“Our soldiers used this event as a training opportunity for future missions where the regiment is needed for maintaining traffic flow and assisting with the evacuation of citizens during an emergency, such as a hurricane or a wildfire. The 39th is always ready and “equal to the task.” - **TXSG PAO**



**“ Our soldiers used this event as a training opportunity for future missions. ”**



Staff Sgt. Manuel Hernandez and Staff Sgt. Derald Mabbit, 39th Regiment, Texas State Guard, guide cyclists during the Multiple Sclerosis Society's Cactus & Crude MS-150 Bike-A-Thon along the 150-mile route from Midland to Lubbock, Texas. (Courtesy photo)



# SOD - AFRICA

## JUMPS INTO KEY WEST

*Story by Maj. Robert Cowart  
Special Operations Detachment -  
Africa*

**K**EY WEST, FLA. - As the ramp opened up, the smell of salty air and humidity filled the C-130. It was almost as thick as the enthusiasm displayed by the Texas Army National Guardsmen on board. The soldiers, part of the Special Operations Detachment - Africa, 71st Troop Command, conducted a long-range airborne insertion into the waters near Key West, Fla., July 24, 2015.

The exercise was the culmination of

a three-year process, which executed the unit's Mission Essential Task List training; a training plan designed to take units from an untrained status, to proficient and finally to a trained status - all leading to the unit's ability to conduct its wartime mission.

"The key focus for this weekend is the Mission Essential Task, load out and deploy," said Col. Doug O'Connell, SOD-A commander.

The SOD-A mission is to provide command and control for U.S. and coalition special operation forces within the U.S. Africa Command area of responsibility.

"Everything we have done, leading up to this weekend, are essential skills that we use on a regular basis, as we send small teams to remote locations," said Lt. Col. Tim Ochsner, SOD-A executive officer.

Coordination for the operation involved several branches, which included reaching out to the Army's Special Forces Underwater Operations School that helped secure the drop zone, lodging, watercraft and parachute drying facility; the Navy for the overall use of Naval Air Station Key West and for emergency management services during the airborne insertion operations; the

Air Force helped with their C-130 aircraft for the trip to and from the insertion and the U.S. Coast Guard provided its galley for meals.

“After completing the water jump into Key West, the unit conducted recovery operations in preparation for redeployment back to Austin, said Maj. William “Rusty” Weedman, SOD-A logistical planner. “During the SOD-A’s stay in Key West, they received support from the U.S. Coast Guard Sector Key West Galley and the Special Forces Underwater Operations School.”

With preparations set, the SOD-A members, assisted by 294th Quartermaster Company (Rigger), 36th Infantry Division, leapt from the aircraft, as members of the school conducted drop zone operations, manned watercraft for recovery and provided medical coverage. Once all of the jumpers had successfully completed their required water sustainment jump, they transitioned to deploying-and-supporting dive team operations, in this case, the 5th Special Forces Group dive team as they conducted airborne water insertion and underwater infiltration operations.

Planning a training event with this many moving pieces is an enormous undertaking, but it ensures that SOD-A always has trained and deployable personnel to conduct the many real world missions it is called upon to execute, Ochsner said.

“Because the unit deploys small teams, almost quarterly to remote locations in Africa supporting missions and exercises, it is imperative that we find ways to conduct mission essential task list training while conducting steady state operations,” O’Connell said. - **DISPATCH**



A Texas Army National Guardsman with Special Operations Detachment - Africa, 71st Troop Command, jump into the waters off of Key West, Fla. (Courtesy photo)

# STATE OF THE TXANG

TEXAS AIR NATIONAL GUARD LEADERS DISCUSS THE FORCE

*Story by 2nd Lt. Phil Fountain  
Texas Military Public Affairs Office*

**A**USTIN, TEXAS – Members of the Texas Air National Guard were recently in the nation’s capital to participate in the Air National Guard Readiness Center’s annual “State of the State” events involving each state and territory of the United States.

Brig. Gen. David M. McMinn, Chief of Staff of the Texas Air National Guard, led a group of senior Air National Guard leaders from Texas to the nation’s capital to conduct face-to-face engagements with their federal counterparts at both the National Guard Bureau and the Air National Guard Readiness Center, in Arlington, Virginia.

Among the attendees were the commanders of each of the Texas Air National Guard’s wings from the Lone Star State: Col. George W. “GW” Holt of the Fort Worth-based 136th Airlift Wing, Col. Stan Jones of the Houston-based 147th Reconnaissance Wing and Col. John F. Kane of the San Antonio-based 149th Fighter Wing.

McMinn delivered this year’s briefing, which was received by Brig. Gen. Michael R. Taheri, Commander of the Air National Guard Readiness Center.

During the briefing, McMinn discussed the accomplishments of the Texas Air National Guard in federal fiscal year 2015.

The general also touched on the current operations members of the Texas Air National Guard are involved with overseas, including the National Guard’s State Partnership Program. As a part of the program, Texas is



paired with the Czech Republic and Chile to share best practices in military-to-military exchanges.

“Our State Partnership Program is very important to us,” McMinn said. “We have developed life-long relationships with some of America’s greatest allies. As we join forces with these countries, we are able to achieve America’s strategic goals and those shared strategic goals of the Czech Republic and Chile.”

“In this way, the Texas Air National Guard contributes immeasurably to our nation’s defense and the defense of our allies,” McMinn said.



// Texas is a great state with dedicated airmen. We are ready and willing to accept the toughest challenges. If the nation needs it, then give it to Texas. We will get it done. //

is concurrent and proportional to the active Air Force.

Additionally, the Texas Air National Guard is well-positioned to accept a greater role in emerging missions, McMinn said. Texas is highly ranked as a state for information technology, which could allow for an increased role in cyber security.

The Texas Air National Guard's 273rd Information Operations Squadron, a cyber unit, is located in San Antonio alongside active Air Force cyber operations units and the National Security Agency.

"The 273rd is perfectly positioned and capable of contributing significantly to our national needs," McMinn said. "The 273rd can be mission capable as a Cyber Protection Team by year's end, well ahead of any other organization out there."

Lastly, McMinn highlighted the Texas Air National Guard's efforts to develop its people through local leadership development efforts. The goal is to "build the bench" of qualified personnel ready to serve at the highest levels of National Guard leadership. A deliberate mentorship and leadership development program is in place and already delivering capable airmen.

"Texas is a great state with dedicated airmen," McMinn said. "We are ready and willing to accept the toughest challenges. If the nation needs it, then give it to Texas. We will get it done." - **DISPATCH**

The state of the state engagement involved a week's worth of activities, said Lt.

Col. Lyndy Doyle, who coordinated the event for the Texas Air National Guard. The events included updating members of the state's Congressional delegation at the U.S. Capitol and receiving professional development training with state and national associations.

The topics of discussion also included the potential future of the Texas Air National Guard.

The Texas Air National Guard is facing challenges with its aging air fleet and the leaders outlined the benefit of ensuring the state's aircraft are modernized in a way that



# REAL Guidance

Courtney J. Lynch, PhD, LCSW  
and Tracy K. Ward, M.Ed, LPC

# NOT ALONE



(U.S. Air Force photo illustration by Airman 1st Class Corey Hook)

## You Are Not Alone

*No one understands.*

*I'm alone.*

*It will always be like this (things will never change).*

*The world would be better off without me.*

*There is no hope.*

*No one would care if I'm gone.*

*People suck.*

*I can't go on without her/him.*

*I can't trust anyone.*

*I'm done.*

*No one can help me.*

*I'll be by myself forever.*

*I'm a therapist, soldier, doctor, etc: I can handle this myself, I should be able to handle this myself.*

*What I did can't be undone; is unforgivable.*

Statements like the ones listed above typically include negative, mean and absolute words (i.e. always, never, no one, everyone) and/or words that predict the future. Sometimes these statements are referred to as negative self-talk. No matter our education levels, financial status, career choice, or relationship status, we all have some form and some amount of negative self-talk.

### Negative self-talk is more difficult to detect and stop when:

- we are experiencing additional stress
- we are isolated from others
- there is a grain of truth that makes the thought more believable
- it has been a lifetime habit, or
- we are under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs

### Consider the following scenario:

You made a mistake at work (a true event). The negative thought process after making a mistake may sound something like this:

"I'm so stupid; I always make mistakes; I am going to lose my job; I deserve to lose my job; Who would want someone like me working here?; This place would be better off without me; The world would be better off without me."

In this example, what starts with a simple mistake escalates into negative talk that includes cruel and untrue statements. We all make mistakes; they are a normal human experience, and they are a major component in the learning process. Negative self-talk can be paralyzing, and if not interrupted, can potentially lead to further isolation from others, increased depression, or thoughts of self-harm or suicide. We are all vulnerable to negative self-talk. It is important to stop these "tricky" thought patterns so that we can move through them and learn better ways to solve the issue at hand. To do this, we must use coping skills, self-compassion, or talking to a trusted person to help us catch or stop these thoughts.

### Consider again the example above but now notice the break in negative self-talk and the use of self-compassion:

"I'm so stupid; I always make mistakes; STOP! I made a mistake; everyone makes mistakes; what can I learn from this?" (This may be a good time to be in touch with someone you trust to get a fresh perspective on the situation, or a good time to just go for a run or walk after work).



### Support and Hope

Timing is crucial. Reach out for support when you or someone else notices that you are not yourself. No one is an island. We all need support and contact with each other. We all need human touch and appreciation. During these times it is important to connect with others who care, who listen, or who can point you in the right direction for problem-solving. You may look to friends, family members, or battle buddies for support. There might be times when due to the negative self-talk we have cut off certain people or ‘burned bridges’; however, this does not mean that we do not have other sources of support. Seek out the alternative sources when you have burned bridges or when you just want a new perspective. Among others, this may include ministers, counselors, or a 24/7 call line, which can be helpful with middle-of-the-night concerns.

In order to have hope that one’s circumstances will improve, it is critical to remember the present circumstances are just that; present. As much as circumstances and situations may feel permanent, they are temporary and will pass. When we remind ourselves of the temporary nature of situations and circumstances, we maintain hope. Finding hope is very important because it breaks the dialogue of the negative self-talk, and keeps the mind open to facilitate safe and healthy options to our problems.

Another key component to maintaining hope is practicing self-compassion. Self-compassion is a concept that is increasingly studied and researched. Dr. Kristen Neff, Associate Professor at The University of Texas at Austin, states that, “Self-compassion involves being kind to ourselves when life goes awry or we notice something about ourselves we don’t like, rather than being cold or harshly self-critical. It recognizes that the human condition is imperfect, so that we feel connected to others when we fail or suffer rather than feeling separate or isolated.”

Self-compassion is something that can be learned and practiced. To take a test to determine your level of self-compassion, or for further reading and information on the topic, go to: <http://self-compassion.org/> or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IvtZBUSplr4>

**- REAL Guidance**

September is Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month. The film, Crisis Hotline: Veterans Press 1 will be shown at Camp Mabry, Bldg 8 Auditorium free of charge on:  
9 September, 1000 - 1130 hrs  
15 September, 1130 - 1300 hrs  
22 September, 1400 - 1530 hrs

### Support is Available:

You are not alone, as much as it may feel like you are. Wherever you are, there are resources available. These resources are available to all service members, retirees, veterans, and family members and include the following:

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
  - [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)
- Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 (Press 1), or text to 838255
  - [www.veteranscrisisline.net](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net)

If you or someone you know needs to talk to someone for guidance, support, or wants to arrange for counseling or therapy services, call:

- TXMF 24/7 Counseling Line at 512-782-5069

If you want additional training, information, or education on suicide prevention, or need to arrange these for your unit, you may contact:

- TXARNG Suicide Prevention Program Manager: 512-782-1204

Texas National Guard Suicide Prevention Program exists to minimize suicidal behavior by:

- Providing adequate unit-level training to ensure resources and interventions measures are in place.
- Promote awareness and educational programs detailing both early warning signs and high risk factors.
  - You may also contact the TXARNG State Resilience Program Manager at 512-782-1462.

Texans Helping Texans - The TXMF Resilience Team strives to assist units, soldiers, and Families by providing programs, services, and re-sources that address critical psychological and emotional need.



**SPC. DANIELLE SCHRAG  
HEALTH CARE SPECIALIST  
TEXAS MEDICAL COMMAND  
TEXAS ARMY NATIONAL GUARD**

Spc. Danielle Schrag, a health care specialist with Texas Medical Command, played a supporting role during Operation Lone Star 2015.

“It is an invaluable experience for everyone participating,” says Schrag. “You immediately see the impact you have on the community.”

Schrag is from Leander, Texas. When she’s not training, she works as a referral specialist for an insurance company.

**OUR FORCE** 



## New Key Leadership Positions



Col. Stan L. Jones

- **Role:** Commander of the 147th Reconnaissance Wing
- **Experience:** Entered the Air Force through the ROTC program, graduating from the University of Georgia in 1991. Assignments include Security Forces Flight Commander, T-37 Instructor Pilot, F-16C/CG/CJ Mission Commander, Instructor Pilot and Flight Examiner at Spangdahlem AB Germany, Kunsan AB, Korea, Shaw AFB, S.C. and Dannelly Field, AL ANG. Upon arrival at Ellington Field, he served as the 111RS Chief of Weapons, Dir. of Ops. and Commander. Then served as the Commander of the 147th Operations Group and Vice Commander of the 147th RW before assuming command in Jun 2015.
- **Education:** B.S. in Education, University of Georgia. M.S. in International Management, Troy State University. Squadron Officers School, Maxwell AFB, Air Command and Staff College and Air War College via correspondence.
- **Did you know:** Col. Jones is a Reserve Sergeant with the Harris Co. Sheriff's Office.
- **In his words:** It is an honor to be given the opportunity to lead the outstanding Airmen of the 147th RW. They continue to excel in facing the many challenges put in front of us and turn them into opportunities. We have critical missions sets throughout the wing supporting local, state and federal agencies. The Airmen of the 147th are an amazing group and I look forward to our future.



Ltc. Theresa K. Cogswell

- **Role:** Assist. Chief of Staff, G6 for the TXARNG
- **Experience:** Served as an enlisted soldier in the USAR while in college until commissioned as a 2nd Lt. Quartermaster Active Duty Officer. Served overseas in Korea, Germany, Kosovo. Company Commander in Iraq from 2004-2005. Joined the TXARNG in 2006 and became a military technician in various positions in the TXARNG G4 2007-2012. Served as Support Ops. Officer, 36th DISCOM, 72nd IBCT Brigade S4 and deployed as Joint Area Support Group, Dir. for Support Ops. 2009-2010 in Bagdad. Battalion Commander of 949th Bde. Support Bn. meanwhile serving as the full-time Deputy G6. Currently the Sustainment Chief, 36th ID and the full-time Assist. Chief of Staff, G6.
- **Education:** B.S. in Management Information Systems from Ball State University and a M.B.A. from Webster University. Currently a first year student at the U.S. Army War College for academic year 2017.
- **Did you know:** Ltc. Cogswell teaches Tae Kwon Do to 4-5 year olds in Round Rock and coaches CrossFit at CrossFit Camp Mabry.
- **In her words:** I am honored to have been selected to serve in this position and to be given the opportunity to lead Texas' most talented IT professionals to be the best of the best in cyber security readiness in the nation. As the TXARNG G6, my goal is to build an experienced technical workforce, modernize our secure communications infrastructure and to manage change while minimizing the impact to the Texas Military Forces workforce.

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*\*Available on Android only. Apple iOS coming soon.*



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