



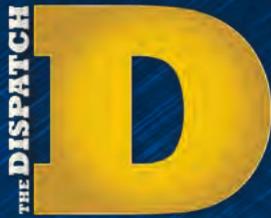
**THE DISPATCH**

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**AUGUST 2016**

**THE MAGAZINE OF THE  
TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT**





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## The Cover



A member of The Air National Guard 531st Band, plays the trumpet at the Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum during a summer tour of southwestern states.

Capt. Brett Ringger, 136th Medical Group, Texas Air National Guard, optometrist, examines a patient during the Greater Chenango Cares Innovative Readiness Training in Cortland, New York, July 18, 2016. The IRT provided medical care to patients at no cost, as well as eye examinations and glasses on site. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Master Sgt. Elizabeth Gilbert)





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# UNITED STATES PROPERTY AND FISCAL OFFICER SENTRY FOR A CENTURY



**Commentary by Col. Elizabeth H. Hines  
United States Property and Fiscal Officer  
Texas Army National Guard**

Coinciding with the establishment of today's modern National Guard, the Office of the United States Property and Fiscal Officer celebrates its 100th anniversary. Unique only to the National Guard, the establishment of a USPFO occurred on June 3, 1916, through the enactment of the National Defense Act.

With the onset of WWI, and Pancho Villa's raiding of the Southwest, this act also updated the Militia Act of 1903 by expanding the size and scope of the State Militias, calling them the National Guard, and making it a standing reserve force. Through swearing allegiance to defend both the Constitution of the United States and their home state, the president was granted authority to federalize the National Guard for domestic and overseas duty and for an unlimited period.

Prior to 1916, federal property was issued to the governors, who were not required to be bonded for its safekeeping and proper accounting. There was so much lost from a lack of proper care and indifference on the part of some states, that the War Department was convinced the system was not properly protecting the government's interest.

Originally designated as a Property and Disbursing Officer for the United States, the Act of 1916 directed that an officer of the State, bonded to the Federal Government (on active duty), be appointed to receipt and account for all federal appropriations and property in possession of the National Guard of their state, territory, or district. In 1954, seven years after the establishment of the Air Force and simultaneously the Air National Guard, the National Defense Act was amended changing the title to United States Property and Fiscal Officer and allowed the individual to be appointed from either the Army or Air Guard.

Today, the USPFO for Texas, located at Camp Mabry in Austin, Texas, works directly for the Chief of National Guard Bureau and has three Assistants (Fiscal, Property, and Real Property) appointed at each of the three Texas Air Wings (Carswell, Houston, and San Antonio), and one Assistant USPFO for Army Real Property (the Construction & Facilities Management Officer), as well as an assigned staff of about 100 personnel to assist in the oversight of Army and Air National Guard funds, equipment and facilities. The Texas National Guard receives about \$450 million in funds annually and has over \$4 billion worth of equipment for which the USPFO is responsible.

Our functions consist of working with Federal Program Managers, also appointed by the USPFO, to plan and properly execute funds appropriated by Congress for National Guard training, operations and readiness requirements. We also work with units and property book officers to ensure they are equipped with proper clothing and classes of supplies, as well as properly accounting for their equipment.

We also manage soldier, technician and vendor pay; travel authorizations and payments; Government Purchase and Travel Cards; contracting for Army and Air construction, procurement and services; the Central Issue Facility; group and commercial transportation requirements; Cooperative and Support Agreements; and federal databases.

And, most importantly, the checks and balances are conducted by the Internal Review Division. IR assists the USPFO and the Adjutant General by conducting audits to ensure management controls are in place, risks are assessed, and in the rare occasion, fraud, waste and mismanagement are reported.

The USPFO partners with the Adjutant General to fully support state programs while protecting the interests, resources and property of the Federal Government. We have a strong, collaborative and unquestioning relationship to ensure public trust is maintained while accomplishing the State's responsibilities. And, we need your assistance to ensure proper procedures are followed, to make sure we take good care of what we have, and to request expenditure of funds for only necessary and authorized requirements that prepare you for your missions. I am honored to be your USPFO and stand ready to serve you.

Just do it ... Right!

**-FROM THE TOP**

**FROM THE TOP**

# 12 BRAVO ♀

**TEXAS ARMY NATIONAL GUARD WELCOMES  
FIRST FEMALE COMBAT ENGINEER**

**Story by 1st Lt. Jolene Hinojosa**  
111th Engineer Battalion  
Unit Public Affairs Representative

AUSTIN, Texas – Spc. Rachel Mayhew, 26, native of Fort Worth, became the first female in the Texas Army National Guard to be awarded the 12B combat engineer military occupational specialty.

“It was an absolute honor to serve with the engineers,” said Mayhew. “The guidance and mentoring I received helped prepare me for a change. I wanted a career path with progression, promotion and growth. That is exactly what I found in becoming a combat engineer.”

Mayhew graduated June 17, 2016, from Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, during a rigorous two-week MOS transition course that included the High Physical Demands Tests (HPDT) and include a series of tasks geared toward combat engineers to ensure force capability and readiness.

Prior to attending the reclassification course Mayhew served in the Texas Army National Guard for seven years as a 74D chemical biological radiological nuclear specialist. In 2011, she deployed to Afghanistan with the 236th Engineer Company.

Since the push to integrate the military into a gender neutral standard, the military has used HPDTs to collect data on newly-proposed MOS-specific standards.

“I’ve never been treated any differently for being a female in uniform or encountered a lower standard,” said Mayhew. “The instructors worked very hard to keep things fair across the board. Every soldier was treated the same and we all knew what we had to do to accomplish the mission.”

Mayhew successfully completed a 12-mile tactical foot march, prepared a fighting position, employed hand grenades and transported a casualty to immediate safety. All four tasks, plus eight others, are designed to paint a picture of the real-life conditions that could be encountered on the battlefield.

“The timed road march is the most challenging task I’ve endured in my career. However, I’ve never been more proud of myself than when I reached that finish line,” said Mayhew.

Among the 25 students that attended the course, four fellow Texas Guardsmen attended the course alongside Mayhew.

While Mayhew was the first female Texas Guardsmen to complete the course, she shared her journey with four other female soldiers from different states.

“We had a strong group of female soldiers in our class. They were able to pull their own weight and did everything alongside us,” said Fort Worth native Spc. Carlos Flores, 840 Mobility Augmentation Company, 111th Engineer Battalion, 176th Engineer Brigade.

The two-week training was one of the first reserve component courses to integrate the HPDT standards into graduation requirements.

“We are among the first in gender-integration training. The instructors were very professional and did everything they could to make the training as realistic as possible and to minimize outside distractions,” said classmate and Brownwood native Sgt. 1st Class Stormy Barnum, readiness non-commissioned officer, 454th Engineer Company, 111th Engineer Battalion, 176th Engineer Brigade.



*The Texas Army National Guards welcomed Spc. Rachel Mayhew into its ranks as the first female awarded the 12B combat engineer military occupational specialty. Mayhew graduated June 17, 2016, from Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, during a rigorous two-week MOS transition course that included the High Physical Demands Tests which includes a series of tasks geared toward combat engineers to ensure force capability and readiness. Mayhew is a native of Fort Worth and is assigned as a combat engineer with the 840th Mobility Augmentation Company, 111th Engineer Battalion, 176th Engineer Brigade. (Photo by U.S. National Guard 1st. Lt. Jolene Hinojosa)*

Through HPDTs, gender integration and the mid-Missouri heat, Mayhew and her fellow classmates have proven they have what it takes to join the proud Corps of Engineers.

“You really felt a sense of accomplishment after completing the HPDT tasks,” said Mayhew. Even though the work days were long and exhausting, morale and soldier care remained at an all-time high, which I think are the two crucial parts to any mission.”

Mayhew is currently assigned as a combat engineer with the 840th Mobility Augmentation Company based in Weatherford, Texas. Company Commander Capt. Aaron McConnell of the 840th Mobility Augmentation Company, says he is happy to welcome Mayhew into his company.

“Spc. Mayhew is a good soldier and I am glad to retain her,” said McConnell. To me, it is more about what you can do as a soldier than what your gender is. We treat everyone on our team the same.”

“These are my brothers, my family,” said Mayhew. “All my battle buddies are very accepting and encouraging of my decision to become a Combat Engineer. The knowledge these soldiers have of their job is impressive and inspiring. I want to soak up as much of it as I can so that I can be proficient as a 12B and lead my future Soldiers and peers in the right direction as well.” **-D**



# TEXAS GUARDSMAN NAMED SAPPER LEADER COURSE HONOR GRAD

*Story by 1st Lt. Jolene Hinojosa*  
 111th Engineer Battalion  
 Unit Public Affairs Representative

AUSTIN, Texas – “Class, attention! The Sapper Creed!,” said Texas Guardsmen and class 08-16 Sapper Leader Course honor graduate 2nd Lt. Ethan McIntosh. The room thundered as 23 course graduates joined the Austin native in reciting, “I am a Sapper! I am the cutting edge of my country’s sword!”

McIntosh graduated June 10, 2016, from the Sapper Leader Course earning the honor graduate distinction along with the Sapper Spirit Award.

“This is a great course that gives you more training in a month than most people do in years. I believe that this course has something to teach everyone and hope that more National Guard soldiers get the opportunity to attend this school,” said McIntosh.

McIntosh commissioned a second lieutenant at the University of Hawaii at Manoa ROTC Program. The ROTC Program afforded him the opportunity to attend several other specialty schools to include Air Assault, Airborne and Special Forces Dive School.

“Sapper school is a different type of school compared to the other courses I have attended, but the other courses still helped give me a better knowledge base and made Sapper a little easier on me,” said McIntosh.

His wife, Roxy, has been continually there to support him throughout all of his endeavors.

“Roxy was more excited for me than I was about graduating as honor grad. She always supports me in everything I do and expects no less than my best,” said McIntosh.

Obtaining the honor grad title was no easy feat even for this marathon enthusiast, but it is one that he is proud to have earned.

“I enjoy going to schools and telling people that I am in the National Guard. The active duty counterparts are always taken aback because they expect us to be ‘ate up’ and out of shape,” said McIntosh.

Fellow Sapper and 111th Engineer Battalion Command Sergeant Major, Command Sergeant Major Jimmy Leonard, also received the distinguished honor graduate title and Sapper Spirit Award when he attended the course in 1996.

“It brings out a sense of pride knowing that we have been able to secure training seats and send our best officers and NCOs to this school,” said Leonard. “This is some of the toughest training in the Army and knowing that we now have two new lieutenants in the unit who will utilize their learned knowledge to train and educate our soldiers is one of the greatest feelings a leader can have.”

The course culminates with an intense field training exercise that reinforces the use of the battle drills and specialized engineer techniques learned throughout the course.

“SLC is a 28-day course designed to challenge you mentally and physically to see how leaders perform under pressure. The second half of the school is focused on patrolling and leadership in a field environment. It teaches you a lot about yourself as you push through patrolling on little food or sleep,” said McIntosh.

Historically, SLC graduates an average of 52 percent of its class. In McIntosh’s class only 24 of the 41 students that started the course received the coveted Sapper tab.

“I believe Sapper Leader Course has been the most demanding course I attended in my 22+ years as a combat engineer. Not only are you physically challenged, but you are mentally challenged, Leonard said. “You have to learn much of the same things as in Ranger School such as Principles of Patrolling, Operations Orders, and Mountaineering. However, in Sapper Leader Course, you are tested on several other areas such as Demolitions, Advanced Medical Techniques, Aerial Operations, Waterborne Operations; and Foreign Threat Weapons and Mines.” **-D**

# Texas Army National Guard Receives Excellence Award

*Story by Laura Lopez*

Texas Military Department Public Affairs

AUSTIN, Texas— The 2016 Army Community of Excellence winners were recently announced by the Department of the Army, with the Texas Army National Guard earning third place in the Bronze division.

An awards ceremony was held at the Army National Guard Readiness Center in Arlington, Virginia, May 23, 2016.

“This is a tremendous honor for the Texas Army National Guard and is truly representative of the 18,000 citizen-soldiers who serve state of Texas and the U.S.,” said Brig. Gen. Tracy Norris, Assistant Deputy Adjutant General-Army. “This is definitely an award that encompasses a group effort and, as such, enables us to better serve our fellow Texans.”

The ACOE Award honors the top Army, National Guard and Army Reserve installations which have achieved the highest levels of excellence in building a quality environment, outstanding facilities and superior services.

“The Texas Army National Guard departments have learned that ACOE is more than just a competition; it is about providing a common vocabulary that facilitates an environment of excellence and a continuous process for improvement,” said Sgt. 1st Class Brenda Lopez, G5-Organizational Excellence noncommissioned officer in charge, Texas Army National Guard. “We have also learned the importance of integrating our customers, partners, and workforce into organizational change processes that will have lasting impacts to our organization.”



*Army Maj. Gen. Richard Gallant, Special Assistant to the Director of the Army National Guard, (left) presents Army Brig. Gen. Tracy Norris, Assistant Deputy Adjutant General of the Texas National Guard (center) and SFC Brenda Lopez, TXARNG G5 NCOIC (right), with the Army National Guard Communities of Excellence third place in the Bronze division at a ceremony held at the Army National Guard Readiness Center in Arlington, Virginia, May 23, 2016. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Michelle Gonzalez)*

The ACOE program is an Army Chief of Staff program that uses the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Program Criteria for Performance Excellence – an internationally recognized integrated management system – to evaluate installations. The criteria ensures the leadership considers all stakeholders, tailors the post’s processes and resources accordingly, and employs visionary thinking through the application of proven business principles in six distinct, but integrated categories. Those categories include leadership, strategy, customer focus, measurement, analysis and knowledge management, workforce focus and operations focus.

The TXARNG has competed in the annual ACOE competition since 1996. Since 2006, the TXARNG has placed in the rankings and been named a gold winner, nationally, six times. **-D**

# EAGLE SCOUT HONORED FOR WORK ON CAMP MABRY ENVIROMENTAL CENTER

*Story By Cat Cude*

AUSTIN, Texas - For Capital Area Eagle Scout Matthew Moore, fixing up an abandoned gazebo was much more than slapping paint on an old building. This was apparent during the dedication ceremony held by the Texas Military Department at Camp Mabry in Austin, April 2016, as Moore stood beaming with the confidence and pride that comes from a job well done.

City of Austin Council Member Sherri Gallo, presented a proclamation on behalf of Mayor Steve Adler recognizing Moore's efforts and the significant contribution he made to the district and the City of Austin and commended Moore for, "not only restoring the structure but improving upon it for future generations."

Following September 11, 2001, security measures across the country were increased and at Camp Mabry, a fence was put up around the base and security guards were placed at the entrance.

Prior to this fence, many members of the community referred to the base as Mabry Park. It was used and enjoyed by many.

"I grew up in Austin so I spent many years at Camp Mabry on this facility, and it was our public park," said Gallo.

After the fence was put up, many members of the community thought the base was closed to them, making it no longer a part of the Tarrytown and greater Austin communities, said Lt. Col. Les Davis, director of the Construction, Facilities and Maintenance Office for the Texas Military Department.

But this was far from the truth, and something agency leadership were hoping to change, said Davis.

The Camp Mabry Environmental Center gazebo was built in 1994 and officially dedicated by Maj. Gen. Sam Turk, former adjutant general for Texas, November 12, 1994 during the Texas Military Department's Muster Day, an open house event for the community.





It was inadvertently fenced out after the fence went up, excluding it from the immediate Camp Mabry grounds. Then in 2014, when a new fence was installed, the fence line was moved to include the gazebo. By this time, it was in a state of disrepair with overgrown vegetation, broken Plexiglas doors for the display cases and peeling paint.

When Moore went looking for a viable Eagle Scout project, he spoke with Texas State Guard Brig. Gen. Don Prince who sent Moore to talk with Davis, then Garrison Commander, who recommended the gazebo repair project.

“The repair of this environmental center shows the Texas National Guard’s commitment to environmental and community quality,” said Davis. “It is our hope that this center will continue to provide opportunities to not only heighten awareness of our programs, but provide a focal point for community involvement in the pursuit of a better environment.”

Once his project was approved, Moore designed, developed and implemented a plan of action to revitalize the gazebo for the community.

In April of 2015, Moore, along with his Eagle Scout team and the support of the Construction and Facility Management Directorate completed the significant project. The center was power washed, graffiti removed, repainted, repaired, relandscaped and restored back to its original condition.

*Eagle Scout Matthew Moore ends renovation efforts at the Camp Mabry environmental services center by affixing a plaque to the wall of the facility. The updated center will serve as a learning center for environmental programs and be available for rental by the public.*

The environmental center, located in the southeast corner of Camp Mabry, will now be able to resume its initial purpose, which was to provide regularly scheduled presentations by outside organizations, as well as Camp Mabry subject matter experts, on a broad range of environmental topics and issues. It is also available for school groups, outreach events and other environmental programs within the community to use.

“It is absolutely wonderful and something that we want to applaud when we have a younger members of our community that do something to make a positive impact,” said Gallo to Moore. “I really appreciate the fact that you’re helping to make it a better place.”

Moore achieved his Eagle Scout and was honored on April 11, 2016 and graduated from high school, May 2016. **-D**

**For further information about reserving the center or for suggested presentations, contact Dr. Linda Brown.**

**[linda.a.brown110.nfg@mail.mil](mailto:linda.a.brown110.nfg@mail.mil) or  
512-782-5818.**



The Hands on History event at the Texas Military Forces Museum at Camp Mabry in Austin, Texas, July 16, 2016. Every year the museum hosts the event to give local citizens a chance to see and handle some of the most famous weapons in military history. Weapons and equipment ranged from 1812 to present.  
(Photos courtesy of Chris Hunt)

# HANDS ON HISTORY



# THE GUARD

*Story by Sgt. Praxedis Pineda*

*100th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

HOHENFELS, Germany – They call them the “Men in Black,” referring to the all-black tactical uniforms they wear. More formally called the Opposition Force, or OPFOR, soldiers with the 1-4 Infantry Battalion pose as enemy combatants during training here. The 1-4 is an independent element able to set its own rules of engagement and be as merciless as it need to win the fight. Still, regardless of their “dark” methods during battle, even the “bad-guys” want friends.

OPFOR teamed up with soldiers from the Texas, Michigan and North Dakota National Guards, along with Slovenian and Latvian service members, to invade the fictional country of Atropia and defend against NATO forces as part of Exercise Swift Response 16 at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center, May 27 June 26, 2016.

“It’s a huge help having them here,” said Cpt. Erik Prince, with the 1-4 headquarters. “Usually they outnumber us 2 to 1. We would not have the combat power to fight without them.”

The exercise is one of the premier military training events for multinational airborne units. The training enhances the readiness of the 82nd Airborne’s 1st Brigade Combat Team to conduct rapid-response, joint forcible entry and follow-on operations alongside European Allies.

“To work with other countries is a big opportunity,” said Prince. “The fact that we can train on that scale between different countries is impressive.”

During the exercise, the 1-4 portrayed the fictional Arian Army. In attempts to defeat the NATO forces, the OPFOR conducted assault missions, provided security to the local population and even captured enemy soldiers. With help from the additional soldiers, they placed barricades and mine fields throughout the battlefield.

“When you fight in a real conflict, you never fight with just your organic unit; there’s always detachments,” said Prince. “There’s a lot stuff they can teach us, and we also get to practice our systems to see how we integrate an outside unit.”

The realistic environment introduces many real-world problems during training. It pushes soldiers to exchange knowledge across different military components and nations to complete their objective. The diversity in skills and procedures makes for a stronger OPFOR, but also lets the soldiers have fun with a little healthy competition.

“It’s always good to get around those active duty guys to see if those myths hold up. ‘Is active better than Guard?’ It’s all ‘one team, one fight’ at the end of the day,” said Staff Sgt. Johnson, 1433rd Engineer Company, Michigan National Guard. “We’re living in the same barracks, and we’re just playing off of each other. Simple tasks such as placing mines, they had an ingenious way of implementing them that hides any telltale signs that the dirt was disturbed.”

The multinational partners and guardsmen had the opportunity to take away much of what they experienced here, and the 1-4 can appreciate the knowledge they left behind.

“We got guys that are paramedics, mechanics and police officers. We even have doctors working with us,” said Johnson. “When one man can train the other man can teach. All those pull together and amplify the military skillset.”

“I learned to get along with a lot of different types of people,” said Spc. Hunter Erhart, infantryman with the 1-4. “I made a lot of good friends here.” **-D**

# GOES DARK



*An opposing force soldier with the 1-4 Infantry Battalion drives through the fictional town of Kebirli as part of Exercise Swift Response 16 at the Hohenfels Training Area in Germany. The exercise is one of the premier military crisis response training events for multinational airborne forces in the world. The training is designed to enhance the readiness of the combat core of the U.S. Global Response Force – currently the 82nd Airborne’s 1st Brigade Combat Team – to conduct rapid-response, joint forcible entry and follow-on operations alongside Allied high-readiness forces in Europe. Swift Response 16 includes more than 5,000 Soldiers and Airmen from Belgium, France, Germany, Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain and the United States and takes place in Poland and Germany, May 27 - June 26, 2016. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Praxedis Pineda)*



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

# THE FRIENDLY SKIES!

U.S. Army Garrison, Hohenfels, Germany - National Guard service members from 1st Battalion, 141st Infantry Brigade based in San Antonio, Texas, attended the Observer Coach Training Academy at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center on Wednesday, June 8, 2016, alongside NATO Allies and partners participating in Exercise Swift Response.

Swift Response was a two-phase, premier military crisis response training event involving a multinational task force whose primary purpose was to evaluate the forces' readiness to rapidly deploy to respond anywhere in the world. The first phase began May 27 in Poland, during which para-troopers of several nations conducted multiple and simultaneous airborne jumps to demonstrate allied rapid response capabilities.

"For this particular mission, our brigade was actually selected to fill some slots," said U.S. Army Capt. Jason W. Fernandez. "So we looked across our battalion and selected officers and enlisted Soldiers with both combat deployment experience and successful time in leadership key roles at the company and platoon level."

"I volunteered to come here," said Capt. Joshua A. Wright. "I feel that some benefits that we've had from multiple deployments working with our NATO counterparts and real-world combat also adds to the value of being a good observer and coach in general."

Fernandez is a training and operations leader at the battalion level. Wright is a battalion-level leader in administration and personnel actions, and also the full-time mobilization officer for Texas. They clarified what it means to be an observer coach and why the Texas Army National Guard was involved in Exercise Swift Response.

"We're involved because, as we deploy overseas to places such as Afghanistan and Iraq, we found that we'll be working with French, Polish, British and Australian military forces," Fernandez said. "Though a lot of our terminology and the way we conduct missions are very similar, there's a lot of things we need to learn more specifically about each other, so we don't have confusion that can result in loss to soldiers' lives, or damage to equipment or mission failure."

"We observe the training and document what the units are doing," Wright said. "They give us what they want to train on, and their training plan is our indicator that they're succeeding at their mission. When there's a safety concern with what that unit is doing, that's where we step in and coach them on safer ways to do what they're doing."

Phase two of the exercise involved the Global Response Force, led by the 82nd Airborne Division, parachuting into Grafenwoehr and Hohenfels to conduct follow-on activities from Phase one. Soldiers were divided into teams at Joint Multinational Readiness Center, during which the teams provided coaching, teaching, mentoring and After Action Reviews (AAR) to military units that are part of NATO. Some activities included a non-combatant evacuation operation and scenario-based operations involving civilians on the battlefield.

Soldiers of the Texas Army National Guard understand the importance of multinational relationships and how essential it is to the successful execution of an exercise involving this much collaboration.

"Getting us all together and being over here is vital to those relationships," said Sgt. 1st Class Travis Hall, a scout platoon leader. "The multinational effort it takes when we deploy to an overseas mission gets us all on the same page easier, quicker, working together, gets us familiar with each other's tactics, techniques and procedures."

Some of the challenges the Texas Army National Guard and other multinational forces faced were communication issues, which they overcame during Exercise Swift Response.

"I've been working with the French airborne troops from France, and they are very smart, very good at their jobs, but they do things differently from how we do it," said Capt. Gerald Rogers, an intelligence officer. "So that's the one hang-up that some of us had, saying 'this isn't what we do.' Well, it doesn't necessarily have to be, it's just a way, not the way. That's what I've been learning here--new ways to get things accomplished."

Col. Colin P. Tuley, commander of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division watches soldiers descend to the ground in a multinational airborne training exercise Swift Response at U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels, Germany, June 15, 2016.  
(Army National Guard Photo by Sgt. Michael Giles)



Rogers described one of his experiences while observing and coaching the French unit; when involved in a scenario and some casualties had to be removed from a rooftop during a simulated attack, he noted how quickly the French Soldiers moved their casualties off the rooftop, down a ladder safely and securely, before he could advise them of a safer way to do it.

"They've already prepared for incidents like that," Rogers said.

"Sometimes there's a little bit of a rivalry between guard, reserve and active duty and between units, but I haven't felt that here," Rogers said. "The OC-Ts here welcomed us in, assigned us to different teams like the Warhogs and the Grizzlies and others; once we became part of their teams, we were part of their families. So whatever we needed, they took care of us, be it radios, batteries, water, food, or maps."

Soldiers from other nations reflected on their experience working with the Texas.

"We've been working with soldiers from Texas for the first time," said British Army Warrant Officer 2nd Class Martyn Jones of 23rd Parachute Engineer Regiment. "It was important and good to have a mentor to show us the ropes because they've done a couple of rotations and this has been our first rotation."

Jones was on the Raptor team. "You Texas OC-T soldiers are constantly on the ground as observer mentors, whereas we're not so much; we're observing the soldiers, but we only step in briefly when there's a safety breach."

"Initially it wasn't so much a language barrier, it was understanding that accent, but we bounced off one another, and overall it's been a real good experience," Jones said. "I'll definitely visit Texas."

"The hardest thing for this rotation was that they brief all of their information in French," Rogers said. "So I have to work through a translator who is also an OC-T, who translates the high points, and then I help out at each section that I can, either intelligence, operations, fires, or whatever particular mission they have going on."

There are always areas of improvement for every exercise, and the Texas OC-T team looked forward to mentioning those matters in an after action review.

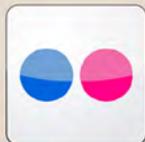
"The OC-T Academy is a good start, but I'd say next time it could go a little more in depth on the duties and responsibilities," Rogers said. "Maybe have a scenario day just for OC-T's. It takes a first-time OC-T some time to get competent at all of the duties and responsibilities."

"I think it's going to help us understand the bigger strategic picture of continuing to face the Global War on Terror," Wright said. "We'll be able bring some of the lessons learned back to Texas soldiers." -D



Photo Caption: Col. Colin P. Tuley, commander of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division watches soldiers descend to the ground in a multinational airborne training exercise Swift Response at U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels, Germany, June 15, 2016. (Army National Guard Photo by Sgt. Michael Giles)

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# BUILDING BRIDGES

## Sgt. Elizabeth Peña

*Texas Military Department Public Affairs*

FORT HOOD, Texas – Engineers from the Texas Army National Guard’s 386th Engineer Battalion, 551st Multi Role Bridge Company, Czech Republic’s 15th Engineer Regiment and U.S. Army’s 20th Engineer Battalion conducted a Multinational Lumberjack River Exercise, June 21, 2016.

“This is the first time we have worked with an active duty engineer battalion in order to conduct a gap crossing exercise along with the foreign national soldiers,” said Texas Guardsman Lt. Col. Anthony J. Miles, commander for the 386th Engineer Battalion.

The Texas National Guard is currently partnered with the Czech Republic and Chile under the State Partnership Program. Through SPP, Guardsmen conduct military-to-military engagements with multinational allies in support of defense security goals.

“It’s an honor to see Czech soldiers exercising alongside American soldiers,” said Petr Gandalovic, Ambassador for Czech Republic, during his visit to Fort Hood. “This is important because we all keep the same values and we all have to be responsible for each other, and the responsibility translates into capability of doing something real.”

Service members coordinated with each other to conduct a wet gap crossing. When a large body of water is blocking ground transportation, this is used to transport military supplies, personnel and or vehicles across a lake or river.

“The concept of the operation was to conduct rafting operations and project combat power across the far shore,” said Capt. Jacob Patterson an operations planner for the 386th Engineer Battalion.

During the exercise, soldiers worked on ground to free-launch bays and bridges into the lake, and conducted air operations to sling load a bridge, several bays and ramps.

“The aircraft is doing airdrops,” said Sgt. Randall McMorris, with the 551st MRBC, non-commissioned officer in charge for the shore portion of the exercise. “We have a landing zone up the road, and they will attach a ramp and boat and drop it in the water.”

Once all the equipment was in the lake, service members connected the bays and ramps to form a floating bridge. Each bridge is made up of five interior bays and two ramps, referred to as a seven float.

“With that seven float you can push the heaviest piece of army equipment across, said Patterson. “We pushed M113’s,

▲ *Soldiers from the 551st Multi Role Bridge Company (MRBC) conduct an equipment air drop using a CH-47 Chinook helicopter as a part of the Wet Gap Crossing, June 21, 2016, at Fort Hood, Texas. Service members from the Texas National Guard’s 386th Engineer Battalion, the 551st MRBC, U.S. Army’s 20th Engineer Battalion, and the Czech Republic 15th Engineer Regiment conduct a Multinational Lumberjack River Exercise. Through the States’ Partnership Program, the Texas Army National Guard currently works alongside the Czech Republic and Chile to conduct military operations in support of defense security goals. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Elizabeth Pena/Released)*

M2A2 Bradley's, Up-Armored Humvee's, a buffalo and a husky, which is a route clearance piece of equipment," said Patterson.

Soldiers built, two bridges to transport equipment across the lake and used real-world conditions as practice for maneuver operations.

"This year the water levels are much higher than they were last year," said Patterson. "It's about five to 10 ft. higher than what we experienced last year, so that in itself is a challenge because we've had to change the operation multiple times based on Mother Nature and what we were given to work with."

Last year the 386th Engineer. Battalion. went to the Czech Republic to conduct a similar exercise using the Czechs' equipment. This year, they came the U.S.

"It's one of the greatest experiences I've had so far," said 2nd Lt. Josef Kurfirt a platoon leader with the Czech Republic's 15th Engineer Regiment "The most valuable thing for us is for us to see this bridge, work with their equipment and vehicles, and compare technologies and procedures with them."

The SPP has been successfully building relationships for over 20 years. The U.S. currently works with 76 nations around the globe.

"This is extremely important in today's environment to be able to work with interagency and non-governmental organizations with multinational forces, to include our own," said Miles. "It's an excellent training opportunity because that's how we fight overseas. We get rolled up and assigned to other active duty units so if we can practice that in a peacetime situation it makes it that much easier in a wartime situation." **-D**

*Texas Army National Guardsmen from the 551st Multi Role Bridge Company (MRBC) work together to load boats into the lake duct a Wet Gap Crossing to transport military vehicles across Lake Belton. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by 1st Sgt Daniel Griego/Released)*



# REAL GUIDANCE

By: Jessie Trofe,  
MA, LPC



When I picture grief I immediately conjure up thoughts of funerals and people shrouded in black mourning the loss of their loved one. But grief and loss come in many forms, and other types of significant losses can often feel like a death to some. Ask anyone who has been through an especially difficult divorce. Losses such as employment, home (i.e. job relocation or house is destroyed by natural disaster) and any major transition that creates a loss of familiarity and comfort, can initiate a grief response. Unfortunately, most of us don't even realize we are trying to grieve, let alone give ourselves space and permission to. Instead we brush ourselves off, swallow and stuff down our pain and try to avoid thinking or feeling the monumental loss we have just experienced. Maybe we feel like we have to do this. For our children maybe, or for our country if we serve, or possibly even for ourselves, because "moving on is best." But can we really move on, or better yet move forward, if we are not willing to face the pain we are trying not to feel in the present? Where does the grief go if we choose not to acknowledge it? As my colleague Beth Goldberg, LCDC and life coach says, "the only way to get through the pain, is to go through the pain."

Easier said than done right? We are a culture that does everything we can to avoid pain. We pop pills at the hint of a headache, we numb ourselves with alcohol and binge on television, and we choose not to talk about how we really feel. If we pretend the pain doesn't exist, maybe it will magically cease to exist. Unfortunately, it doesn't work that way. When we don't release it, when we don't allow ourselves to feel it, it sits there ... and it builds. Most likely there is additional pain that already resides there, from a lifetime of attempting to move forward without making peace with the past.

Maybe it begins to seep out in various ways. We begin to feel irritable for no apparent reason, and then we lash out at others. Or maybe we begin getting regular headaches, our sleep suffers, and we begin to feel sick. Our body may be trying to send a message that something's gotta give; this way of living isn't working anymore. Yet we still press on. We might even perceive ourselves as "being strong" by carrying the weight of the burden ourselves and not reaching out for support. But as the weight continues to build and we grow more weary, we can only carry so much before we collapse either mentally and/or physically. Only when we begin to address our grief, our loss, our pain, do we begin to unpack the burden and lessen our load. We begin to regain our personal power, feel lighter and feel hopeful toward the future.

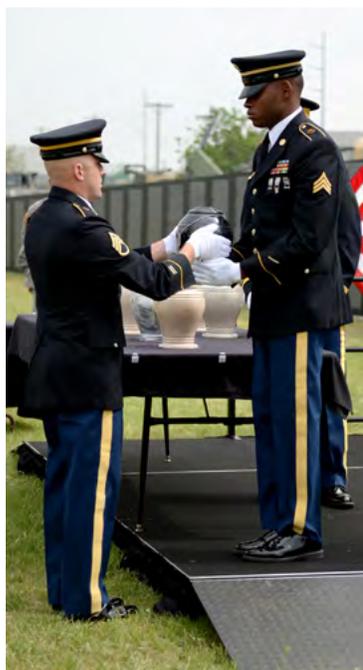
So how do we begin the process of addressing our grief, and moving forward in a healthy and positive way? First we need to know WHAT we are grieving. I know that sounds like I'm stating the obvious, but grief is often more complicated than just the actual loss experienced. Often there are a string of symbolic losses associated with the actual loss, making it even more difficult to adjust and adding to the pain. For example, if someone were to lose their partner, they might not just be losing their companion, but also the father/mother of their children and their dream of sharing a life with this person. They may also experience a significant financial loss or now feel disconnected to the social support group that they relied on. Identifying each loss allows us to acknowledge each loss for what it is, and helps us to better understand the scope of our grief.

In order to further understand and move through our grief, next

it is important to identify HOW we have been grieving. Learning about typical grief responses helps us identify how grief has been playing out in our own lives, and if we have been attempting to cope in healthy or unhealthy ways. An expanded 7-stage model of “The Stages of Grief” is accepted by the Texas Military Department and used in the training that I help to provide for the Casualty Notification Officers and Casualty Assistance Officers. This model expands upon the popular model developed by Dr. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross in 1969 that outlines five stages of grief (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance). Though this model is useful in describing the different ways grief can look, it is important to remember that everyone experiences grief differently. Some people may skip stages of grief only to cycle back through them, or they might never experience some of the stages at all. Despite the vast array of emotions and grief responses, the overall goal of moving through grief is usually the same - acceptance of the loss.

### STAGES OF GRIEF (EXPANDED MODEL):

- 1) Shock: initial paralysis at finding out about the loss (our body’s way of protecting us from this information).**
- 2) Denial: inability to believe the news; living life like nothing has happened (our mind’s way of protecting us).**
- 3) Anger: frustrated outpouring of bottled-up emotion, can be angry at the person for leaving them, others, God, and/or themselves (guilt).**
- 4) Bargaining: seeking in vain for a way out (ex- substance abuse to numb the pain).**
- 5) Depression: final realization of the inevitable, deep sadness and pain, appetite and sleep may be affected, social withdrawal.**
- 6) Testing: seeking realistic solutions, trying out new behaviors or positive coping skills, utilizing supports.**
- 7) Acceptance: finally finding the way forward; remembering and honoring the past, but looking toward the future.**



It can be healing to know that we are not alone in our pain and that other people experience these conflicting emotions when coping with loss too. We can name our pain, the losses behind the grief. We can name our emotions we have experienced and the stages of grief we identify with. Better understanding what and how we are grieving helps to unlock the pain and start to move it. However, as the pain moves outward, it is impossible not to feel it or be touched by it in some way. So how do we plan on comforting ourselves and coping with the pain that is resurfacing? What can we do to take care of ourselves during this often emotionally exhausting process?

### TIPS FOR COPING WITH GRIEF AND LOSS:

- 1) Draw on your support network- It’s easy to want to isolate when experiencing grief. However, leaning on family and friends allows us to accept support and can give us an opportunity to talk about our loss, rather than bottling up our emotions.
- 2) Look after your physical health- Make an effort to eat foods that are nourishing, drink plenty of water, exercise and get enough sleep. Avoid using alcohol and drugs to attempt to numb the pain. Taking care of our physical health directly impacts our mood and can help support our ability to grieve in a healthy way.
- 2) Practice self-compassion- if there is ever a time for your inner voice to be supportive, it’s now. Practice patience and acceptance with feelings that may come up, and know that it is common to feel conflicting emotions such as anger, guilt and fear.
- 3) Face your feelings- Unresolved grief can led to depression, anxiety, substance abuse and health issues. Riding the wave of emotions, rather than fighting it, allows grief to begin to move.
- 4) Express the feelings you face- Maybe you don’t feel comfortable talking to a friend or family member about everything, but that doesn’t mean you can’t express what is coming up for you. Talking to a therapist, chaplain, or joining a bereavement support group often help people feel heard and understood. Journaling, drawing or painting, playing music- there are many ways to also express feelings without talking. The important thing is to acknowledge the feeling and get it out in some way.
- 5) Plan ahead for grief triggers- Holidays, birthdays, anniversaries and other milestones can often reawaken memories and feelings. Surround yourself with support during these times, avoid isolation and practice good self-care.
- 6) Know when to seek help often grief can mirror the symptoms of depression, and distinguishing the difference between grief and clinical depression can be difficult. Thoughts of suicide, feelings of hopelessness or helplessness, and the inability to function at work, home and/or school are just a few examples of symptoms that benefit from the support of a mental health professional.

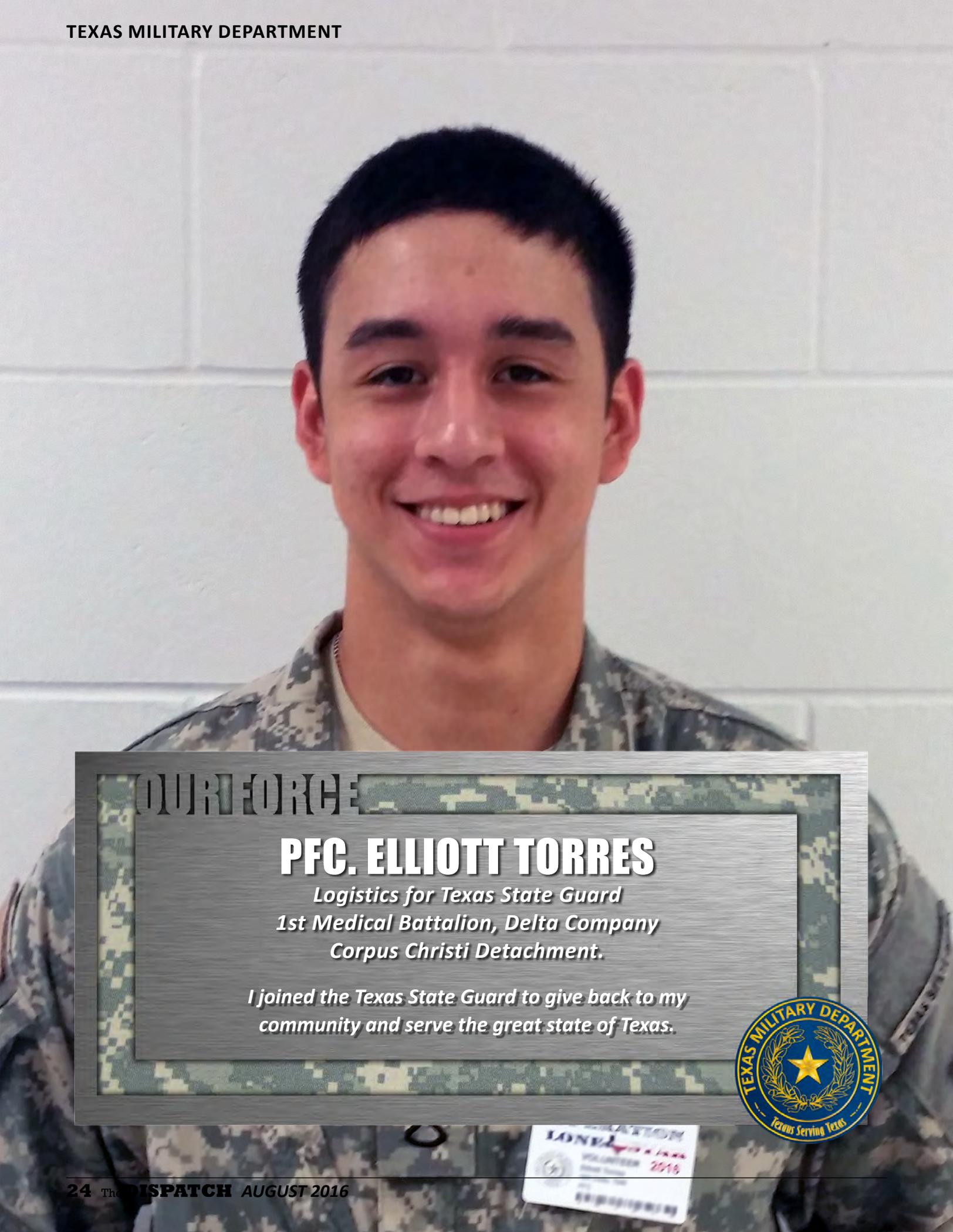
### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR COPING WITH GRIEF:

TXMF Counseling Team- free confidential counseling services for Texas SMs and their family members: (512) 782-5069

Psychological Health Coordinator for the Texas National Guard- Contact Jessie Trofe at (512) 782-5001 ext 4232 to connect to resources in your area

Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)- a national organization that offers support and other services to families grieving the loss of a loved one who served in the armed forces. 1-800-959-8277 Grief support groups- [www.hellogrief.org](http://www.hellogrief.org) has a list of grief support resources throughout Texas to include support groups. Also local mental health authorities and churches often know different grief support groups offered in the community.

Military OneSource- confidential counseling and resource connecting for service members and their families 1-800-342-9647 **-D**

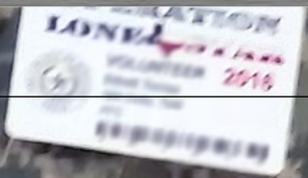


OUR FORCE

## **PFC. ELLIOTT TORRES**

*Logistics for Texas State Guard  
1st Medical Battalion, Delta Company  
Corpus Christi Detachment.*

*I joined the Texas State Guard to give back to my  
community and serve the great state of Texas.*



# New Key Leadership Positions



## Col. Michael N. Adame

Commander 36th Sustainment Brigade,  
Texas Army National Guard

### EXPERIENCE:

Adame enlisted in the Texas Army National Guard in 1986, attended Officer Candidate School and commissioned on July 29, 1989. He has served in a variety of command and staff positions as a traditional National Guard Soldier. His commands include the 36th Sustainment Brigade, the 136th Regiment (CA) Regional Training Institute and the 636th Brigade Support Battalion. He deployed overseas to Afghanistan in 2004-2005 and 2012-2013 and Iraq in 2009-2010.

### EDUCATION:

Bachelor Business Administration from Tarleton State University, and a Master of Strategic Studies from the United States Army War College.

### DID YOU KNOW:

Adame is a cyber security professional with 20+ years in Information Technology.

### IN HIS WORDS:

"I am tremendously grateful to wear the uniform and honored to lead the fine men and women of our great organization. The indomitable spirit of Texas Army National Guard Soldiers and our families energizes me. Together, we will meet all challenges and BE ALL THAT WE CAN BE."



## Lt. Col. Tim T. Ochsner

Commander of the Special Operations Detachment  
- AFRICA (SOD-A)

### EXPERIENCE:

Ochsner enlisted in the Texas Army National Guard in August of 1985 serving in the 49th Armored Division. He was commissioned through ROTC at the University of Texas – Arlington in December of 1989. He served on active duty as an Infantry Officer from 1990 thru 1994 with the 25th Infantry Division at Schofield Barracks, HI. He later served as a mechanized infantry Company Commander in Lubbock, Texas (2-142 IN) before transferring to the Mississippi Army National Guard in order to join Special Forces in January 2002. Ochsner served as a Detachment and Company Commander for 2d BN 20th Special Forces Group including a combat tour in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Ochsner transferred back to the TXARNG in 2007, and commanded the first Special Forces Company in Texas (C Co 5th Bn 19th Special Forces Group) at Camp Bullis in San Antonio. Ochsner served as the Deputy Commander for Special Operations Detachment - Africa from October 2012 until assuming command in June 2016.

### EDUCATION:

Bachelor of Business Administration from the University of North Texas in Denton.

### DID YOU KNOW:

Lt. COL. Ochsner is the Assistant Chief Pilot for the Texas Department of Public Safety.

### IN HIS WORDS:

"I am truly honored and humbled to lead the Special Operations Detachment - Africa. The SOD-A possesses incredible talent and capability and has one of the most challenging missions in the SOF community. I am fortunate to have senior leaders that support our organization and a dedicated team that is prepared for missions and assignments in a rapidly evolving environment."

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