



The MINUTEMAN

THE MONTHLY RECRUITING NEWSLETTER OF THE TEXAS ARMY NATIONAL GUARD • MAY 2015

TXARNG JUNIOR ENLISTMENT
TEXAS CHALLENGE ACADEMY
CHANGE OF RESPONSIBILITY
THOMAS FALLS MUD RUN
WARRIOR DASH
PROMOTIONS



TEXAS
STRONG
WARRIOR
CHALLENGE

FROM THE COMMANDER



By
MAJ AUGUST T. MURRAY, Ph.D.
 Commander, TXARNG
 Recruiting & Retention Bn.

**May
 - “The Greatest
 Unit I Have
 Ever Served In”**

Thank You and job well done to the 24 Soldiers who participated in the 36th Infantry DIV’s Command Post Exercise that ended 26 April 2015 at Fort Hood. The State and 36th Infantry Division Leadership had much praise for your hard work!

Thank you and job well done to the 200 unit members who trained 600 Recruits at the Texas Strong Warrior Challenge from 24-26 April 2015. You ran an incredibly professional and smooth competition which ensured our Recruits are ready to succeed at Basic and Advanced Training!

I believe that the Texas Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Command is the greatest unit I have ever served in - With a depth of Leadership and quality of NCOs that is unmatched. I am proud of you - of your commitment and efforts. You truly care for and mentor our next generation of Soldiers with a profound level of dedication.

I have some questions to leave you with:

- What are you doing to make this the best unit it can be?
- Are you doing your part to make this the kind of unit that you can always be proud to be a part of?
- What more can we do together to create a great climate where we all feel appreciated and have a strong sense of belonging?

Your efforts are making a huge difference and impact. Let’s continue to raise the bar - TEXAS STRONG!

Soldiers from the Recruiting & Retention Bn. tested their skills at Texas Strong Warrior Challenge 2015. For more, see page 6.

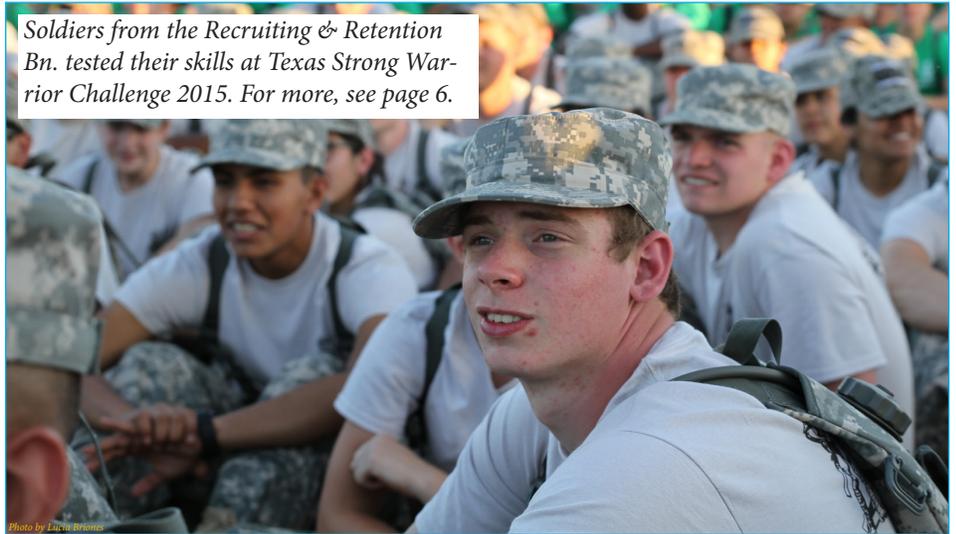


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Talent Showcase

RGN I/Team 4’s talented SGT Michael Miraglia decided to put his skills to good use and constructed his very own “Plinko” board. SGT Miraglia noted that not only does his Plinko display produce plenty of interest from the crowds, but also helps regulate RPI distribution and gives RRN-COs more time to speak with potential leads. GREAT JOB!



The Texas Army National Guard's Recruiting Sustainment Program took formation during the Texas Strong Warrior Challenge on April 25th, 2015 at Camp Bowie in Brownwood, Texas. The formation consisted of 536 Warriors and 237 TXARNG Soldiers.

2015 Texas Strong Warrior Challenge

The Texas Army National Guard's Recruiting Sustainment Program successfully held its second annual Texas Strong Warrior Challenge; a three-day event held at Camp Bowie in which RSP teams across the state compete with one another based on their knowledge of skills taught during Basic Training.

Greeted by Recruiting and Retention's very own drill sergeants, the RSP Warriors arrived Friday evening to a reception very much like what they will experience during basic training. Although it looked to be a weekend full of thunderstorms, the skies cleared up just in time for soldiers to take to

the field early Saturday morning. Each team consisted of seven (7) to ten (10) Warriors, accompanied by a NCO mentor. In all, 536 Warriors and 237 Soldiers took part in the weekend's activities.

The Recruiting Sustainment Program is divided into five phases: Red – First drill; White – All drills between first and second to last drill; Blue – Final drill before Warriors depart to basic training. Green Phase is for split-option Warriors that have completed basic training but are waiting to attend Advanced Individual Training. Gold Phase Warriors are one drill away from reporting to their official unit. All RSP Warriors train throughout

the year, however, only White and Green Phase Warriors attend the annual TSWC.

Each RSP Team was given four hours to complete a total of five events throughout a seven mile course. Warriors were tested on their land navigation skills, weapons assembly/disassembly & checks, how to react to an ambush, delivery of a SALUTE report, and finally properly identifying hand grenade types and demonstration of maximum range of effectiveness. Once the teams completed their missions, Warriors were given the amazing

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Photo Courtesy of TM 16

RSP Warriors from RGNs I & IV take flight around Camp Bowie on a Boeing CH-47 Chinook during the Texas Strong Warrior Competition.



Photo Courtesy of TM 16

RSP Warriors and instructors from Weslaco's TM 16 spent the March 7-8 drill weekend preparing for the Texas Strong Warrior Challenge.



Photo by Lucas Brown

RRNCO SSG Strelsky and his team from RGN III/TM 9 pose with their awards after taking home 1st Place for the second year in a row.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

opportunity to board a Boeing CH-47 Chinook and take flight around Camp Bowie.

By the end of the afternoon, the Warriors were treated to Brownwood bar-b-que and a concert performed by CW3 Darby Ledbetter.

The overall mission of the Texas Strong Warrior Competition is to better prepare and expose TX-ARNG Warriors to the elements and pressures they will be faced with once they arrive to BCT and AIT.

This year's TSWC winners are:

- White Phase**
- Gold-* RGN III TM 9
SSG Eric Strelsky
- Silver-* RGN IV TM 13
SGT Joe Anthony Mendoza
- Bronze-* RGN III TM 11
SGT Thomas, Rubin

- Green Phase:**
- Gold-* RGN II TM 6
SSG Michael Hutsell
- Silver-* RGN IV TM 16
SGT San Juanita Garcia
- Bronze-* RGN IV TM 16
SSG Isaac Casso





Photo by Steve Johnson

Change of Responsibility



On April 1st the Texas Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Command bid farewell to CSM David Castorena as CSM Kristopher Dyer assumed the responsibilities as its newest Command Sergeant Major.

The ceremony took place at Camp Maby's RTI auditorium where more than 100 service members, family and friends from around the state came together for the special occasion.

CSM Castorena delivered a heartfelt speech in which he gave much credit to his daughters, sisters, and above all his beloved mother for whom he credited his success in life. CSM Dyer gave special thanks to his wife, three daughters, as well as special recognition to LTC MacGregor for her tireless support during his recovery after a severe auto accident in 2011.

Combined, CSM Castorena and CSM Dyer share more than 50 years of experience in the military. CSM Castorena first joined the Army in 1986. During 26 years of service, CSM Castorena has held numerous leadership positions to include Fire Team Leader, Squad Leader, Platoon Sergeant, Sergeant Major and Command Sergeant Major. He was deployed to Afghanistan during OEF from 2012 to 2013. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Excelsior College. CSM Castorena has been awarded numerous awards and decorations including the Texas National Guard Federal Service Ribbon, Texas Faithful Service Medal, Texas Combat Service Ribbon, The Master Recruiting Band and the Order of Santa Barbara.

(L) Recruiting and Retention Commander, MAJ August Murray, presents outgoing Command Sergeant Major, CSM David Castorena, with the framed colors of the TXARNG Recruiting and Retention Battalion.

(B) MAJ August Murray, CSM Kristopher Dyer, CSM David Castorena, and LTC Miguel Torres

CSM Dyer enlisted in the Army in 1995 and graduated Advanced Individual Training at Fort Lee, VA as a 77F (Petroleum Supply Specialist). In 2001, he joined the Texas Army National Guard, serving in increasing levels of leadership in the 149th Medical Co Air Ambulance, A Co 339th ASB, and 149th GSAB. CSM Dyer was deployed in support of OIF from 2006 to 2007. He was assigned to Recruiting and Retention command in September 2008 where he served as Recruiting and Retention NCO, and NCOIC of Teams 9, 12, and 13. CSM Dyer currently holds a Bachelor of Science from Excelsior University, and is pursuing a Masters Degree in Homeland Security. He is a member of the National Guard Association of Texas, First Cavalry Division Association, and Association of the United States Army.



TXARNG Wraps Up Season With Mavericks and Spurs

During the NBA's regular season, the Texas Army National Guard tested out two new "Team of the Week" programs with the Dallas Mavericks and San Antonio Spurs.

Regions I and II selected a total of 16 schools around the Dallas/

Fort Worth area to face off with one another in an online, public vote. During the four-week program, the schools and communities were encouraged to go to TXARNG.com/Mavericks and cast their vote for whom they believed best deserved the title of "Team of the Week."

Voters were then given the option to submit their information should they want to be contacted by a Texas Army National Guard Recruiter.

Region IV chose a more direct approach and selected the six teams they not only wanted to establish a stronger presence among but also teams that

encompassed Guard Values, both on and off the court.



Both programs proved to be ideal vessels for the Texas Army National Guard. All recruiters established and strengthened relationships with the high school's students, athletes, administration and athletic staff.

ADVENTURE



RRNCOs from RGN IV/Team 13 braved the cold, wet and muddy conditions during this year's Warrior Dash in Smithville, Texas. (Photos courtesy of MSG Gabe Rios)

With heavy rain and chilly winds, the elements could not have been better planned for this year's Warrior Dash in Smithville! Team 13's recruiters made the most of the rainy day, not only challenging potential recruits to pull-ups and pushups, but ran alongside them throughout the 12 obstacle, 3.7 mile course!



Texas Challenge Academy Continues To Grow

Last month, RRNCOs from Region I/Team 1 visited with cadets currently enrolled at the Texas Challenge Academy in order to discuss the options and benefits available to them once they complete the academy's 17-month program. The TCA, located in Sheffield, Texas, is a voluntary, military-styled program designed to help at-risk youths get their lives back on track. Leadership and self-discipline are just two facets strongly promoted throughout the entire program.



After a two-week acclimation phase, cadets live onsite during a 20-week residency. Throughout the residency phase, cadets attend classes in pursuit of their high school diploma, GED, and even college credits. Cadets have the potential to earn promotions, merits, and demerits based on their behavior.

Good behavior can even lead to participation in the academy's ex-

tracurricular activities such as band, athletics, and driver's education.

Graduates of the five-month course will then spend the next year in their hometown, where they will be required to maintain enrollment in school or employment. Cadets will also be required to meet with their mentor at least once a week.

With 150-cadet classes hosted

twice a year, Team 1's NCOIC, SFC Christopher Watson, foresees great potential assisting these cadets develop in character and career through close involvement and mentorship. With a second Texas Challenge Academy scheduled to open later this summer in RGN III's Eagle Lake, Texas, the relationship between the TXARNG and TCA are bound to strengthen.

Thomas Falls "March Madness" 5K Mud Run

Region II/Team 7 continues to build its presence in and around the vicinity of Thomas Falls in Upshur County. The weather on March 28th was optimal for a good, old-fashioned mud run!

More than 100 runners, along with several members from Team 7, took part in the 2nd Annual Thomas Falls "March Madness" Mud Run; an event which raises funds to help support the Wounded Warriors Foundation in East Texas. The event consisted of a 5K course filled with tire climbs, water bridge crossings, and mud bogs.

So far this year, involvement with the mud run has resulted in two enlistments with eight strong leads in progress. Through the positive commitments of both the TXARNG and KLTV, the event is expected to grow even larger next year!



PFC Anna Lisa Mangrum and a proud local supporter catch their breathe at the finish line.

Welcome the Newest and Youngest Member of the Texas Army National Guard!



Story By: SFC Malcolm McClendon
AUSTIN, Texas - With his right hand raised, eight-year-old Rowan Windham took the Oath of Enlistment to become the newest member of the Texas Army National Guard.

Rowan had the unique opportunity to be given an honorary enlistment into the organization during a ceremony held at its headquarters at Camp Mabry in Austin, Texas, March 27, 2015.

After an emotional ceremony for friends and family, the young soldier looked out at the audience, cleared his throat and said, "Thank you. This is the best day of my whole entire life."

Rowan is currently battling a rare disorder called Shwachmann-Diamond Syndrome, which affects the pancreas, gastro-intestinal tract, immune system, blood and bone marrow. Rowan has spent more than 900 days in the hospital, received dozens of blood transfusions and made 71 trips to the operating room.

During one of his stays at the Methodist Children's Hospital of San Antonio, Rowan met nurse's aide,

David Hixson, who is also a combat medic in the Texas Army National Guard. There the two grew close.

"I was so surprised and happy. I knew it was going to be the best day of my life." - Rowan W.

"I met Rowan after my last deployment, and we immediately became friends," Hixson said. "Even though it wasn't under the best circumstances, every time he came back it was like seeing an old buddy."

At a recent visit, Hixson informed Rowan that he would be deploying soon, and they would not be able to see each other for a while. This is where the eight-year-old expressed his life-long wish to his friend.

"When I told Rowan I was leaving, he told me he too wanted to be in the Army one day, Hixson said. "So after talking to his mom, I contacted a friend at Camp Mabry, who later

contacted a lieutenant colonel in the public affairs office, and it kind of just snowballed from there. And here we are today."

In front of family, friends and distinguished guests, Rowan swore to uphold the U.S. Constitution as many of his fellow guardsmen in attendance did before him. Rowan's father, Brian Windham, described the event as overwhelming and shared his son's interest in the military and strong will to survive.

"Rowan actually enlisted himself into the Army on a piece of paper a couple of years ago, so this is fantastic; he's got to be way overwhelmed with joy," Windham said. "He's always looking to help other people. He has two feeding tubes, one goes to his heart the other to his stomach, and everyday he'll tell you he has the best life ever."

Rowan's resilient attitude earned him a spot in his new home unit as he was made an honorary member of the 124th Cavalry Regiment.

"Because we know that you are such a trooper, we want to enlist you into the cavalry," said Brig. Gen. Sean Ryan, commander of the 71st Troop Command and officiator at the enlistment. "A cavalry soldier always moves forward in battle, and we know that you, Rowan, are always moving forward in your own battles."

Rowan will continue to combat his illness as he and his family travel to a specialized hospital in Seattle and look at a possible bone marrow transplant. As Ryan states, Rowan is on his way to his own deployment, but not alone, he now has more than 24,000 guardsmen by his side.

NEED *to* KNOW

Calendar of Events

For the most current calendar, visit TXARNG.com/calendar.

Texas Army National Guard Recruiters are scheduled to man booths at the following events at locations across the state. Community members are invited to stop by to visit with recrecruiters and learn more about serving in the National Guard.

May 2015

May 1-3 - Central Texas Air Show,
RGN II, TM 8

May 7 - Recruit Military Job Fair,
RGN IV, TM 15

May 13 - Houston Career Fair,
RGN III, TM 11

May 13 - Job News Job Fair,
RGN IV, TM 15

May 15-16 - Bloomin Festival,
RGN II, TM 8

May 19 - Plano West HS MaxPreps
Presentation, RGN II, TM 6

May 28 - Odessa Career Fair,
RGN I, TM 1

June 2015

Jun 4 - Arlington Career Fair
RGN I, TM 1

Jun 11 - Houston Career Fair,
RGN III, TM 5

June 25 - Dallas Job Fair,
RGN II, TM 5

POINTS OF CONTACT

TXARNG Bde. Strength Management POCs

ARNG, DIV HQ, MED, TIOG	(512) 964-1361
136th MEB	(512) 517-6742
36th CAB (Austin)	(512) 422-6958
36th SUS BDE (Temple)	(254) 424-1039
72nd IBCT (Houston)	(512) 782-3847
71st BFSB (San Antonio)	(210) 787-9127
176th ENG BDE (Dallas)	(972) 804-2602
56th IBCT (Fort Worth)	(817) 343-8946

TXARNG Recruiting & Retention Bn. POCs

Education & Incentives	(512) 782-6084
AMEDD Recruiting	(512) 782-5269
Officer Strength Management	(512) 782-5491
OCS Recruiting	(512) 782-5882
Warrant Officer Recruiting	(512) 782-5547
Special Forces Recruiting	(903) 701-5207
Marketing	(512) 782-5165

CONGRATULATIONS ARE IN ORDER

2nd Quarter Promotions within the Texas Army National Guard's Recruiting and Retention Battalion

SSG Toby Alsip

SSG Marlon Barrios

SFC Tommy Brown

SFC Carlos Castillo

SFC Christopher Cioffi

SGT Tanner Denney

SFC Sefo Fanene

SFC Michael Fine

SSG San Juanita Garica

SFC John Hicks

SFC Ashley Jeanes

SGT Julianne Jordan

SSG Ray Miller

SFC Brandon Nichols

SFC Rodrigo Nunoz

SFC Chaz Patterson

SFC Robert Pearson

SFC Tanya Pelikan

SFC John Piccio

SFC James Plant

SGT Elizabeth Schoelwer

SSG James Spurlock

SFC Kristina Stefano

SSG Tyler Trenkle

10 TIPS FOR COMPANY COMMANDERS & FIRST SERGEANTS UNIT RETENTION PROGRAM

1. MONTHLY EXTENSION

CEREMONIES: Recognize and honor re-enlisting Soldiers at least once every month as a scheduled event during drill weekend.

2. UNIT RETENTION NCOs. Formally appoint a member of your unit as the URNCO to facilitate your unit retention program IAW NGR 601-1. Send to the 2 day URNCO course at Camp Mabry, REC RET CMD HQs.

3. RETENTION MANAGEMENT

SYSTEM: Your URNCO, Readiness NCO and Recruiter must use RMS to identify eligible Soldiers, track retention and responsibilities.

4. UTILIZATION OF DA Form 4836:

Provides obligation requirements; and must be processed through RMS to ensure the extension is correctly documented.

5. RETENTION INTERVIEWS: Utilize URNCOs, Recruiters and Brigade Strength Managers as Retention subject-matter experts to assist unit leadership in interviews.

6. EXTENSION INCENTIVES. Promote and encourage 2 and 6 year extension incentives (bonuses) as well as recognition items such as Extend to Defend kits.

7. CLIMATE SURVEYS: Use initially and annually to determine the needs of Soldiers, leadership perceptions, training and other concerns. Address retention issues.

8. RETENTION IS ISG & CDR

BUSINESS: ISGs and CDRs are the driving force behind a successful unit retention program, it is a required CDR's program.

9: SPONSORSHIP: Promote a smooth transition into the unit and make the Soldier's first impression a positive one.

10: ALTERNATIVES TO SEPARATION:

Work to retain Soldier through other means such as MOS re-class, geographic reassignment, schools, change of duties.

RECRUITING & RETENTION / BRIGADE STRENGTH MANAGEMENT POCs:

BRIGADE

BSM SGM
72nd IBCT
56th IBCT
36th CAB
71st BFSB
176th EN
DOMOPS (JTF-71/136 MEB)
36th SUS
TRP CMD/JFHQ/R&R/36 ID

NAME

SGM Ricardo De Souza
SSG Jimmy Smith
SFC Francisco Torres
SFC John Castilleja
SSG Bryan Calhoun
SFC Robin Rivera
SFC James Banks
SFC Tielow Henson
SFC Carl Moore

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R&R CMD LEADERSHIP

Commander
Executive Officer
Command Sergeant Major

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MAJ Jim Carney
CSM David Castorena

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(512) 782-5163 • david.castorena.mil@mail.mil

RETENTION INCENTIVES

Eligible Soldiers who extend their service with the Texas Army National Guard will receive outstanding retention incentives:

- **\$4,000 FOR TWO-YEAR EXTENSION**
- **\$12,000 FOR SIX-YEAR EXTENSION**

Must re-enlist/extend for 2 or 6 years. Must be E-7 or below on contract start date not to exceed 13 years time in service at current ETS date.



EXTEND 2 DEFEND

Soldiers who meet the following criteria will receive EXTEND 2 DEFEND items:

- Current APFT and PHA
- Extend within 365-1 day of ETS
- E-7 or below with less than 13 years in service
- Must be primary slot holder



RETENTION RECOGNITION BACKPACKS

Starting in January 2015, TXARNG Soldiers who extend their enlistment will receive a COYOTE BROWN OPERATOR'S BACKPACK.

*While supplies last. Units must request backpacks through their Brigade Strength Manager.

STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM

- Up to \$50,000
- Must re-enlist for 6 years
- Re-enlistment applicants must have less than 13 years time in service
- Re-enlist/extend must be within 365-1 days of current ETS date
- Must be DMOS qualified
- Loans must be disbursed prior to re-enlist/extension date
- All eligible loans must be verified on NSLDS printout