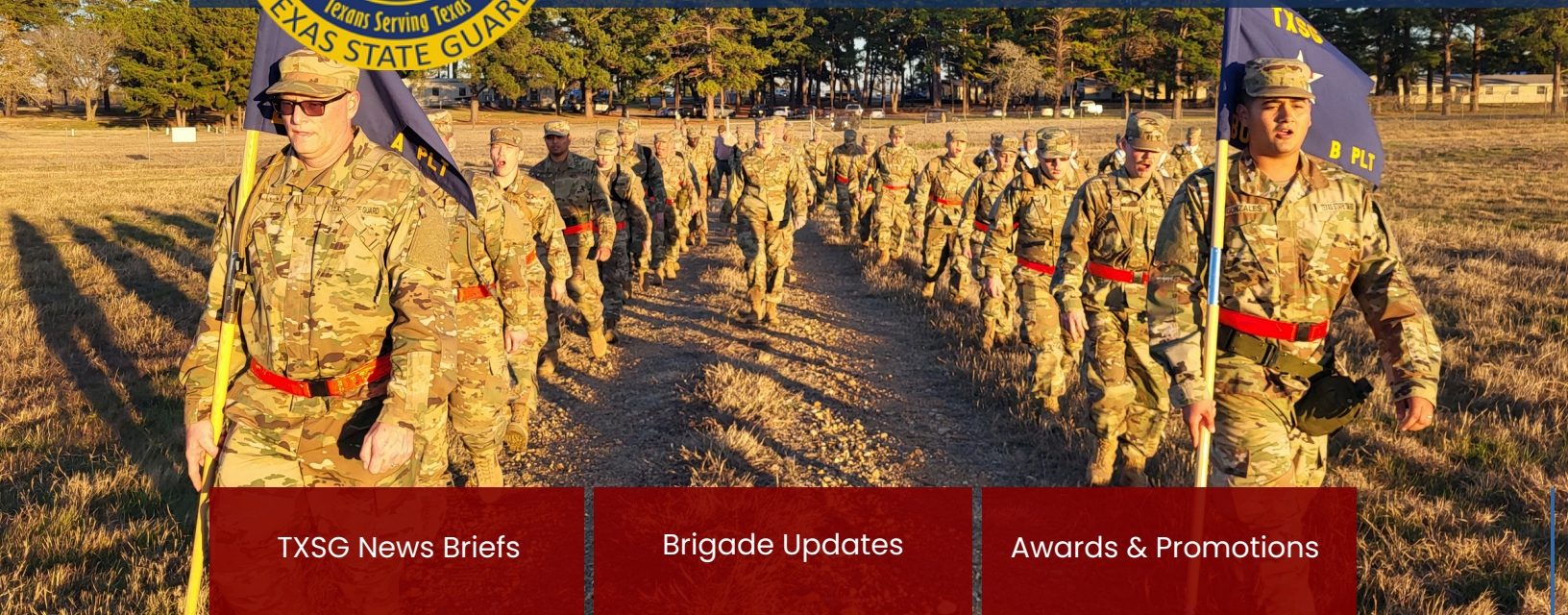




# THE GUARD POST

*A Quarterly Update from the Texas State Guard*



## TXSG News Briefs

Check out some of the latest TXSG news briefs from all around Texas.

## Brigade Updates

What's happening within each Brigade of the Texas State Guard.

## Awards & Promotions

Check out who has been promoted or received awards.

## MESSAGE FROM THE TXSG COMMANDER

Nothing is ever certain but—as the saying goes—'change is inevitable'. Right now, the Texas State Guard is conducting an important assessment of our strengths and identifying opportunities for improvement.

This process is essential as we work with the Texas Military Department to align with the updated National Defense Strategy. We may see structural adjustments in some places, a renewed focus on core competencies, and reinforcement of key capabilities. But our mission remains constant: to stay trained and ready to protect the people of Texas.

In 2017, during Hurricane Harvey—one of the most destructive storms in U.S. history—the Texas State Guard demonstrated our value and resolve. We deployed rescue teams, performed triage, operated shelters, delivered supplies, and managed communications across southeast Texas. We were there when Texans needed us most.

Now, as we approach another hurricane season beginning June 1, we must stay vigilant. Experts say we are overdue for another major storm. Our current assessments will help ensure we are ready to respond, no matter what comes.

So, what can you do? Keep your go-bag ready. Stay on top of your training. Be prepared to serve when called. There is no task too small—and no mission too large—for the Texas State Guard. Thank you for your service, your sacrifice, and your commitment to our fellow Texans.

Respectfully,  
Roger O. Sheridan, MG, Texas State Guard





# PROFILE | TEXAS STATE GUARD LEADERSHIP

## Sgt. Maj. Juli Blenis: A Steady Hand Behind the Command



Written by CPT David Brown, PAO, TXSG

It is early on a Saturday morning. The sun has yet to dawn over drill weekend at the Camp Mabry headquarters of the Texas State Guard. Juli Blenis isn't waiting around for the sun — or the first cups of coffee. A commanding voice rises across the workspace calling half the building to attention without the aid of amplification: the voice of an experienced sergeant major who has seen it all.

"Who's parked in the general's space again? Get that thing moved right now! We've got a presentation in 30 minutes! Get those flags up here!"

With decades of distinguished service and a career that bridges military excellence and public-sector leadership, Sgt. Maj. Juli Blenis is the organizational force behind the Texas State Guard's highest echelons. As executive assistant to the TXSG Command Group, she manages the daily flow of information and operations at TXSG headquarters — ensuring the state's Guard force remains mission-ready and well-coordinated.

Behind the familiar voice of the sergeant major is the mental agility of a would-be lawyer with a passion for history, a respect for structure and discipline, and an institutional knowledge that few current Guard members can parallel. She holds a Bachelor of Science from Excelsior College, University of the State of New York, and previously held a top-secret security clearance.

Her expertise is hard-earned. A U.S. Army veteran with decades of active-duty service, Blenis held multiple senior administrative leadership roles, including support operations during Operation Desert Storm. At VII Corps, she managed the secure flow of classified battlefield information and coordinated the deployment of more than \$35 million in equipment to Southwest Asia. Later, as a senior administrator for the Family Support Division at Fort Hood, she streamlined technology transitions and arranged high-profile visits from senior Army leaders and dignitaries. Her military career earned her multiple commendations, including two Meritorious Service Medals, six Army Commendation Medals, and recognition for excellence in total quality management.

When Blenis entered the Army on active duty, just over three percent of the force was female.

"I was an Illinois State Scholar (before delayed entry to the U.S. Army) and just wanted to pay my student loans off," she explains. With more than 170 hours of education at the university level, she had her sights set on a legal education. "I love the law. I was planning on getting out and going to law school ..." but as often happens, life got in the way: a marriage, family, travel around the U.S. and the world.

That's not to say life hasn't been sweet. She speaks proudly of the accomplishments of her three grown children, Paul, Philip and Mary.

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# TXSG HEADQUARTERS

## Force Multipliers: Generals Muirhead and Thomas Appointed to Top Posts in the Texas State Guard

Written by CPT David Brown, PAO, TXSG

Camp Mabry (Austin), TX - The Texas State Guard has appointed two new Deputy Commanding Generals, promoting Brigadier Generals Stephen Thomas and John Muirhead in February 2025. The appointments come as the Guard continues to align its leadership with evolving state missions under Maj. Gen. Roger Sheridan (recently appointed Commanding General of the Texas State Guard).

Brig. Gen. Stephen Thomas now serves as Deputy Commanding General for Support. Commissioned in 1981 through ROTC at the University of Texas at Austin, he served in the Army Reserve before joining the Texas State Guard in 2011. Over the next decade, Thomas took on roles ranging from battalion commander to Director of Plans, Operations, and Training. He was promoted to Brigadier General in February 2025. Outside the military, Thomas has served 25 years in state government in a variety of top-level positions including as agency chief executive, deputy agency director, CAO, CFO and CHRO. His career includes leadership roles in the healthcare industry, and public service as a local elected official (including 15 years on the Cedar Park City Council). He is also the CEO of a family-owned business and a former adjunct professor of management.

Brig. Gen. John Muirhead, appointed Deputy Commanding General for Operations, brings an extensive background in special operations, intelligence, and psychological operations. A veteran of multiple combat deployments, Muirhead retired from the U.S. Air Force after 20 years of active duty, then transitioned into law enforcement and national defense consulting. He joined the Texas State Guard after retirement, where he has served as a regiment commander, brigade deputy, and Inspector General. He holds advanced degrees in strategic intelligence and education and is currently pursuing a PhD in history.

Together, Generals Thomas and Muirhead bring a combined legacy of leadership, service, and operational excellence to the senior ranks of the Texas State Guard—helping to guide the force as it strengthens readiness and expands support for missions across the state.







When Cpl. Amy Duesing of the 1st Brigade steps up to a microphone, it's more than a performance — it's a calling.

A classically trained vocalist whose background spans cathedral tours in England, musical theater, solo work at Fort Worth's Bass Performance Hall and even New York's Carnegie Hall, Duesing now brings her voice to a different stage: the Texas State Guard.

Raised in Colleyville by a choir director mother and a theater-loving father, Duesing's life has always been steeped in the arts. She studied vocal performance at Dallas Baptist University, later spending years teaching voice in North Texas schools and performing across the United States. Her musical path eventually intersected with the Guard's when a fellow performer connected her with the Texas State Guard Band.

It is not unusual to see her perform 'The Star-Spangled Banner', or 'Texas, Our Texas' at formal State Guard ceremonies, appreciation dinners, or public events involving the Texas State Guard.

"Music moves people emotionally," Duesing said, underscoring the importance of service member morale. "It makes them laugh, feel proud, and remember why they serve. I'd love to see more of it in the Guard."

When not serving on stage, Duesing is busy in the 1st Brigade Public Affairs Office — a natural fit for someone so comfortable with words and performance. She continues to advocate for increased visibility of the Guard through music. "If there's something deeper driving us," she said, "it keeps us focused on why we're here."

Outside of uniform, Duesing leads fitness classes at the YMCA and sings liturgical music at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Frisco, where she participates in a Latin Mass choir. She and her husband Cpl. Hunter Duesing — who also serves in the 1st Brigade Public Affairs Office — live in Dallas with their daughter, Charlotte.

At age 40, Duesing became a mother for the first time. "Being an older parent, I see things differently now," she said. "It's not about missed career chances. It's about passing on the values that matter — to my daughter, to my church, and to my state."

Her dream? To help build out a formal music program in the Texas State Guard. Until then, Cpl. Amy Duesing will keep serving — and singing — where she's needed most.




## TXSG News on LinkedIn

**Follow New TXSG LinkedIn Newsletter  
Feature Titled "TXSG on LinkedIn"**

Are you a Texas State Guard service member active on LinkedIn? If so, make sure you're following the official Texas State Guard LinkedIn page for updates, highlights, and stories from across the force.

There's also a powerful new way to stay informed: the TXSG Public Affairs team has launched a weekly LinkedIn newsletter called "TXSG on LinkedIn." This growing publication delivers timely news briefs, event recaps, and announcements directly to your feed.

Whether you're in uniform or a proud Texan supporter, subscribing ensures you stay connected with the people, missions, and values of the Texas State Guard. Check it out and subscribe today!



I am the Texas State Guard  
*For the Love of Texas*

**EDWARD WEBSTER**  
**Profession:** Business Owner & Consultant, Oil & Gas Industry  
**Texas State Guard:** Operations Manager

"I joined the Texas State Guard as a means of giving

### Get Featured in the "I am the Texas State Guard" Social Media Campaign

relationship is why I continue to serve today."



The Texas State Guard Public Affairs Office continues its dynamic "I am the Texas State Guard" social media campaign—an initiative designed to spotlight the personal stories, diverse backgrounds, and inspiring service of our members across all ranks and specialties.

This campaign highlights the faces behind the uniform, showcasing the wide range of careers and roles that make up the TXSG while reinforcing the values that unite us: duty, honor, and service to Texas.

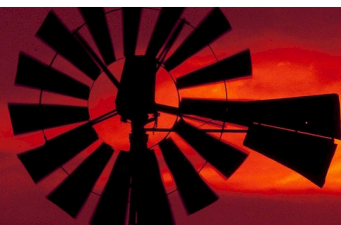
We are actively seeking TXSG service members who exemplify these core values to be featured. If you or someone you know would be a great fit, please send recommendations to [kevin.farley@sg.tmd.texas.gov](mailto:kevin.farley@sg.tmd.texas.gov).

Help us tell the story of who we are—one Guard member at a time.





# 1ST BRIGADE



## A Message from the 1st Brigade Commander

I want to use this opportunity to congratulate the Vanguard for our performance during the brigade's annual field training exercise – our definitive operation readiness mission rehearsal for the hurricane season. We successfully demonstrated our proficiency in our acquired METL-focused training by exercising each of our MRP capabilities under realistic conditions to ensure we reached full operational capability. I'm very pleased to say I was in awe of the professionalism, capabilities, and the dedication of every Vanguard member who recently deployed to Camp Bowie.

I also would like to express my appreciation to the TXSG Headquarters staff for their direct support and contributions that resulted in our successful accomplishment of AT 2025. I am also pleased that Maj. Gen. Roger Sheridan, Col. Daniel McCarroll, and the visiting TMD Operation Planning Team members were able to gain insights into the Vanguard's operational readiness capabilities and seize upon multiple opportunities to learn about potential issues that may impact future operations.

I can personally attest to why our motto is, "Always First." I can also say, with confidence, that we definitively have the ability to provide quick response, mission-ready military forces capable of conducting disaster response, civil support, and homeland defense operations to safeguard North Texas when needed.

Very Respectfully, COL Thomas L. Mitchell, Commander, TXSG



## 1st Brigade Upcoming Events

Here are some of the key upcoming training dates that we are looking forward to:

- ✓ 27-28 MAY - TDEM Conference, Ft. Worth
- ✓ 28-29 JUN - IBDE UTA, CALX RC
- ✓ July 19-20: TETN Awareness/Operator
- ✓ 26-27 JULY - IBDE UTA, CALX RC



Thanks to Command Sergeant Major Freddrik Taylor, we were able to capture a breathtaking Texas sunrise that marked the beginning of 1st Brigade's Annual Training. More than just a beautiful view, a Texas sunrise holds powerful meaning for those who serve. It symbolizes a fresh start, renewed purpose, and the promise of a new day in service to our state. For the Texas State Guard, it represents resilience, duty, and the quiet strength of those who stand ready before the rest of the world wakes up. With the rising sun casting light on the mission ahead, the 1st Brigade stepped into training with clarity, pride, and an unwavering commitment to Texas.





# 1ST BRIGADE

## Tied In, Locked On: State Guard Scales the Challenge

Written by CPT Esperanza Meza, 1BDE PAO, TXSG

"Up rope!" echoed through the National Guard Armory in Dallas as Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Brigade, took on the TEEX Rescue: Rope Awareness and Operations training, held March 28–30. Guided by a Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) instructor, what started as a tangle of carabiners, harnesses, and unfamiliar knots became a focused weekend of skill-building and teamwork, culminating in a capstone test.

As the first Texas State Guard group to complete this National Fire Protection Association (NFPA 1006)-based certification, soldiers gained hands-on experience in belaying, rappelling, and rescue operations. Each exercise reinforced not just technical ability but the life-saving logic behind every movement.

The final test simulated a patient rescue: hoisted from ground to rooftop via vertical trunk, transferred across levels using an Arizona Vortex trolley line, and lowered to the ground for simulated EMS transfer. It was a scenario designed to test everything they'd learned under pressure.

Leading the training was Battalion Chief Rusty Downs of the Wichita Falls Fire Department. "Better knowledge, improved rope rescue techniques, and confidence—whether on low-angle slopes or high-angle cliffs—it's a skill worth knowing," said Downs.

Private 2nd Class Tyler Arrington echoed that sentiment: "My knot skills and situational awareness have grown significantly. I'm now confident in my ability to reach, secure, and transport someone safely when it matters most."

Whether scaling embankments or hauling simulated casualties, Bravo Company proved their grit. By the end, they were certified, confident, and ready.

Master Sgt. William Grammar, senior enlisted advisor, summed it up: "My goal is to make us a more cohesive and qualified unit—equipped with a new skill set that enables us to provide an additional service to the citizens of Texas."



## At the Ready

Written by SPC Art Galias, 1BDE, TXSG

The 1st Battalion of the 1st Brigade lives up to its motto: "First In, Last Out." As the brigade's medical battalion, they are at the forefront of assessing, treating and restoring health in any emergency they encounter. Ongoing medical training ensures they are ready for any situation.

On the morning of Feb. 22, 2025, during the monthly drill at the Army National Guard Armory in Waxahachie, Capt. Melissa Roberson and Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Jones led classroom training sessions focused on essential medical procedures, including tourniquet application, cervical collar placement, CPR and backboard usage.

That afternoon, service members put their classroom learning to the test during a simulated vehicle accident scenario. The scene included realistic elements: two mannequins, two live dogs and an extension cord draped over the vehicle to simulate a live electrical wire following a collision with a power pole.

"This training pushes us beyond routine, sharpening our skills, building trust and preparing us to think critically and act safely in real-world situations," Roberson said.

Service members were tasked with assessing hazards, determining the safest method for patient extraction, managing the dogs on scene, and taking precautions to prevent further neck or spinal injuries. Using medical litters, the victims were evacuated from the scene and moved to a designated safe zone, where medical assessments were conducted under Capt. Roberson's supervision.

"The primary goal of this training was to enhance our response in a disaster setting," Roberson said. "We focused on prioritizing safety, properly triaging injuries, understanding that the loudest victim isn't always the most critical, and providing care in unfamiliar environments."

Committed to real-world readiness, the 1st Battalion stands prepared to respond when it matters most.







# 2ND BRIGADE

## Message from the 2BDE Commander, Brig. Gen. Buddy Grantham

Annual Training this year has been a great experience! I am extremely proud of the officers and noncommissioned officers on staff in particular who have been working hard to develop all the training and especially the mass care scenario exercise. Plus, working with the professionals at Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service at Disaster City and using their facilities greatly added to the realism of the training.

I was very impressed by our soldiers and their performance. Especially when combined with a full-scale realistic search and rescue field problem. The medical triage in the field was exceptional. The volunteers all dressed up with their injuries, certainly helped the realism. A wonderful addition was the use of our Texas Emergency Tracking Network for full accountability of the movement and placement of people displaced during the mock exercise.

All year long, leadership has put together various training scenarios to help build up to this multifaceted, full-scale exercise at Annual Training. It really paid off.

Instead of only sitting in a classroom watching slides and reviewing photos, troops were in the field using the Texas Division of Emergency Management damage assessment tools, iSTAT and pSTAT, using apps on smartphones to report flooded roads, collapsed bridges and buildings, and other infrastructure issues and needs in real time, just as they would during an actual emergency. Programs needed to help our civilian leadership to expedite getting FEMA funds and assistance to the state and local level.

## 2nd Brigade Upcoming Events

Here are some of the key upcoming training dates that we are looking forward to:

- ☑ 28-29 JUNE – Change of Command and Retirement Ceremony – BG Grantham
- ☑ 12 JUL – 3BN – TETN/Mass Care Training
- ☑ 19-26 JUL – OBH Support

We truly are Texans helping Texas. You are not only trained to help the individual, but also to help the great state of Texas to make sure public entities are adequately reimbursed with federal funds that can come back down to help Texans as we recover from natural disasters and need to repair water treatment facilities, damaged firehouses and lost equipment due to floods. Those things matter. It helps put your tax dollars back into use at the local level.

As I complete my 35 years of military service this June, I will be saying goodbye to some of the finest troops that I have had the honor to work with, and that is saying a lot. My military career began when I joined the Texas Army National Guard in the fall of 1979. Many of my senior NCOs back then were Vietnam War veterans. And while some were initially drafted into service, they had all volunteered to stay in the service. Like you, they were dedicated individuals committed to serving Texas and protecting its citizens. I know you too have volunteered and are fully prepared to respond to any natural disaster or emergency when called upon.

I will leave you in the capable hands of Col. Arthur Levesque, whom I have had the pleasure of working with for many years and who I am proud to pass on our brigade colors to and, more importantly, pass on you unto his care and leadership.





# 2ND BRIGADE



## 2nd Brigade Troops Train for Aeromedical Evacuation with Agency Partners

ANGLETON, Texas – Soldiers from the 1st and 4th Battalions, 2nd Brigade, Texas State Guard, conducted aeromedical evacuation training March 22 with support from the National United States Armed Forces Museum and its CH-46 helicopter.

The exercise reinforced basic first aid, patient loading and unloading procedures, and preparation of improvised landing zones—skills essential during natural disasters or emergency deployments.

This joint effort exemplifies the value of agency partnerships in building operational readiness.

2nd Brigade remains ‘Ad Omnia Parati’—ready for anything.

(Photo by Gregory Illich, CW2, TXSG)



## Garza Named 2nd Brigade Junior Enlisted Troop of the Year

BRYAN, Texas – Brig. Gen. E.A. “Buddy” Grantham, commander of the 2nd Brigade, Texas State Guard, awarded the Texas State Guard Commendation Medal to Sgt. Steven Garza, while Command Sgt. Maj. John Marshall presented a ceremonial Bowie knife during a ceremony at Annual Training on April 27, 2025.

Garza was recognized as the brigade’s 2024 Junior Enlisted Troop of the Year for exceptional leadership, commitment to duty, and adherence to the highest standards of military excellence. He was recently promoted to sergeant in acknowledgment of his performance.

Well done & well deserved. (Photo by CW2 Gregory Illich, 2BDE PAO, TXSG)



Instructors from the Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service and the Texas Division of Emergency Management certified members of the 2nd Brigade, Texas State Guard, in electric and propane forklift operation during Annual Training on April 25 at the TDEM Region 8 Warehouse, located on the Texas A&M RELLIS Campus. (Photo by Gregory Illich, CW2, TXSG)





# 3RD BRIGADE

## A Message from the 3rd Brigade Commander

To the men and women of the 3rd Brigade, Texas State Guard—

Thank you for the professionalism, grit and heart you display each and every day that you wear the uniform while in the service of the Great State of Texas. During our recent annual training missions in El Paso and La Copa Ranch, and on countless call-ups, I have witnessed firsthand how you lead under pressure, adapt to the mission, and take care of one another.

Our success doesn't come from rank or equipment — it comes from your commitment to serve with purpose. That's what makes this brigade strong. That's what makes us ready.

A word about commitment: each of you took an oath to serve your fellow Texans during times of need. Again and again, when civilian officials have reached out to the Texas State Guard for support, we have proven ourselves ready.

Keep that spirit of service in your heart. In coming weeks, as we adjust to leadership and personnel changes, changing needs and demands statewide, you may be called to serve on short notice. In that moment, don't hesitate to stand and be counted. Make plans and preparations now. Attend each drill. Be ready to move and serve. We need you. And Texas is counting on you.

No matter the mission, I have no doubt: the 3rd will deliver.

—Brig. Gen. Carl Alvarez, Commanding, 3rd Brigade, TXSG



## 3rd Brigade Upcoming Events

Here are key steps to take control of your company's financial health:

- ✓ 14 JUN: 3BDE Drill (CC, Weslaco, Midland, El Paso)
- ✓ 16 JULY: OBHP 1-Day Telethon
- ✓ 18-26 JULY: OBHP (RGV, Laredo)







# 3RD BRIGADE

## Mental Health Resources Shared at Weslaco Armory

By 1LT Joe Martinez, 3BDE PAO, TXSG

WESLACO, Texas (May 2025) — In recognition of Mental Health Awareness Month, Yezi Trevino of the Texas Military Department Counseling Program delivered a mental health awareness briefing to members of the 1st Battalion, 3rd Brigade during their May drill at the Weslaco National Guard Armory.

The presentation emphasized the importance of mental wellness and informed soldiers about the resources available to them, including the department's counseling hotline: 512-782-5069. The hotline offers free and confidential support to all Texas Military Department service members.

"Protecting your mental health is extremely important to soldiers in general, as there continues to be a high rate of suicide (in the U.S. military)," said Maj. Sharon Moreno, medical officer for the battalion. "I would like to remind all service members that Yezi Trevino, as well as other counselors, are available and free of charge. If you have any questions, concerns, thoughts or doubts, please reach out to Yezi Trevino by dialing the counseling hotline."

The briefing served as both a reminder and a call to action for soldiers to take their mental health seriously and to utilize the support systems in place. With the increasing demands placed on service members, the Texas Military Department continues to prioritize mental health as a key component of overall readiness and resilience.

Counselors are available year-round to provide assistance on a wide range of issues, including stress, anxiety, depression and service-related challenges.



## 3rd Brigade Concludes Annual Training with Crisis Exercise

By 1LT Joe Martinez, 3BDE PAO, TXSG

BROOKS COUNTY, Texas (March 2025) — The 3rd Brigade concluded its annual training (East) exercise in Brooks County, capping off a year of intensive preparation with a realistic, high-pressure simulation designed to mirror the chaos of natural disasters like hurricanes.

The event gave service members a chance to put into action the skills they have spent the past year honing. The culmination of the exercise tested participants in a simulated emergency environment, requiring fast decision-making, leadership and teamwork under stress — elements they might face in real-world disaster response missions.

"This has been a ground-up program," said Col. Ian T. Arvizo, deputy commander of the 3rd Brigade. "It has not been a top-down directed exercise. It has been from the lower troops leading from the front. We value our junior officers and our noncommissioned officers taking charge, and this has been a fantastic opportunity for them to demonstrate that skill and the trust that we've put into them. I am very proud of the work they have done."

The exercise also allowed the brigade to assess operational readiness and further strengthen the capabilities of its leadership at all levels. In a county known for its rural landscape and limited infrastructure, the training provided unique challenges that made the simulation even more realistic.

As the Texas State Guard continues to prepare for domestic emergency response missions, the 3rd Brigade's hands-on training efforts represent a vital step in ensuring that troops are prepared to lead — no matter the crisis.







# 6TH BRIGADE

## A Message from the 6th Brigade Commander

It is an honor to take command of the 6th Brigade—the Sentinels. Over 30 years ago, I began my military journey under the African sun. I never imagined it would lead me and my wife, Verlaine, to this incredible moment in the great state of Texas.

I thank Gen. Sheridan and Col. Graf for their exceptional leadership and example. As I step into this role, I do so with humility, purpose and a deep commitment to serve. Leadership is about trust, not titles. It means putting our people first, leading with integrity and upholding the proud traditions of this brigade.

Every member of this unit has value. Together, we'll train with grit, lead with heart and raise the standard. To our families—thank you for your unwavering support. To our troops—thank you for your trust.

This is Sentinel 6—Ready to Serve!

— Col. MacClements, Commander, 6th Brigade, TXSG

## 6th Brigade Upcoming Events

Here are some of the key upcoming training dates that we are looking forward to:

- ✓ 27-30 MAY – TDEM Conference (Fort Worth)
- ✓ 5-6 JUN – Military District Coordinator Course (Mabry)
- ✓ 26-27 JUL – IDT / Leadership Conference

## 6th Brigade Farewells – and Gratitude for Your Service

The 4th Battalion, 6th Brigade, proudly recognizes the following service members for their exceptional service to the citizens of Texas.

Command Sgt. Maj. Dewayne Naumann: On Feb. 22, 2025, Texas State Guard service members, friends and family gathered at Martindale Army Heliport in San Antonio to honor Command Sgt. Maj. Dewayne Naumann, senior enlisted advisor of the 4th Battalion, 6th Brigade, after 21 years of dedicated service.

Sgt. Craig Wright: On April 15, 2025, during Operation Lone Star, Sgt. Craig Wright was honored for his 7.5 years of service. He recently concluded his deployment (September 2021–April 2025).

Cpl. Caitlin Lonowski-McEnroe:

Cpl. Lonowski-McEnroe is departing the Texas State Guard as she prepares to relocate to Germany. She demonstrated strong NCO leadership during deployments for disaster response and severe weather emergencies. We thank her for her years of committed service.

Maj. Gen. Rodger Sheridan presented the Texas Outstanding Service Medal (End of Tour) to Lt. Col. Sarah Nunez in recognition of her exceptional service to the 6th Brigade. Editor's note: This is a corrected version of a post in the January 2025 newsletter. The original photo was published without a caption.







# 6TH BRIGADE



## 6BDE Troops Earn Community Emergency Response Certification

Written by SPC Douglas Gable, 6BDE UPAR, TXSG

Martindale Army Heliport, San Antonio – Service members from the 4th Battalion, 6th Brigade, Texas State Guard, completed Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training during Annual Training.

According to Cpt. Mary Jane Meisner, G7 OIC, the 4th Battalion is the first in the TXSG to obtain this important distinction. The 6BDE G7 shop assisted Bexar County CERT/TDEM instructors in the certification process.

CERT training equips individuals to assist during emergencies and disasters, especially when first responders are delayed. The course includes fire safety, search and rescue, disaster medical operations and team coordination.

Soldiers practiced tourniquet use, patient assessment, unresponsive patient positioning, triage, first aid and hands-on rescue scenarios.



## Engineers Complete Major Projects During 6BDE Annual Training

By LT Michael Ritchie, 6BDE Engineering, TXSG

Camp Swift, Bastrop, Texas – During Annual Training 2025, the 6th Brigade Engineers of B Company, 1st Battalion, carried out several high-priority facility maintenance projects at Camp Swift in coordination with CFMO representative Alan Donaldson.

The team demolished and removed built-in shelving, installed wall insulation, and constructed a French drain for a supply storage building. They also trimmed dead tree limbs over critical structures and cleared debris to ensure safety. Additional tasks included caulking and painting newly installed exterior siding on a latrine, as well as creating and installing range lane markers for the National Guard.

B Company's efforts during this training period are estimated to provide approximately \$6,250 in labor value.

Essayons!



Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 6th Brigade Boat & Dive Team trains on search dive tactics and mission preparation during Annual Training 2025 at Camp Mabry. Pictured after completing readiness operations are: 1LT Javier Castro, SSG Simon Alva, SGT Jose Santiago, PFC Marco Banda, SPC Justin Harvey, and SPC Leonardo Silva.





# RECRUIT TRAINING

## A Day of Training with the Recruit Training Unit

By Steven Kahla, WO1, RTC DPAO, TXSG

Any day on the water is a good day for the RTC Boats Instruction Unit—but what does it take to get there?

A boat team includes at least two certified coxswains and two certified crew members operating two boats. Each coxswain must first earn Basic Boat Operator Certification and then Advanced Boat Operator Certification, completing rigorous, mission-driven training.

The RTC Boats Instruction Unit is a maritime search and rescue-focused operational training program that depends on support from RTC leadership, T-4 personnel, and brigade boat units. More than just hands-on training, the unit emphasizes preparedness through equipment maintenance, collaboration, and continual instruction.

When boat teams deploy, they're responsible for more than just personnel—they maintain and operate trucks, trailers, hulls, and engines valued at over \$100,000. In October, T-4 led an engine maintenance day at Camp Mabry, bringing 14 outboard engines online with help from RTC, 2nd and 6th Brigades, and 1st Brigade support. These assets were distributed for ongoing preventative maintenance and readiness testing.

Boat teams must maintain 24-hour deployment readiness, supported by the "Always Be Training" (ABT) mindset. This includes operational and physical training, swimming, maintenance instruction, and advanced individual training.

The RTC Boats Instruction Unit has also trained Texas Army National Guard personnel for Operation Lone Star, with support from the 2nd and 3rd Brigades. TXSG boat operations have partnered with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Coast Guard, Texas Parks and Wildlife, and local agencies to support Texans statewide.

## RTC Upcoming Training Dates

Here are some of the key upcoming training dates that we are looking forward to:

- ☑ 28 JUNE-1 JULY BOT, Camp Swift
- ☑ 24-25 JUNE: (Boast) Mercury Outboard Training, Dallas
- ☑ September: Next PME







# RECRUIT TRAINING

## First Steps: A Day of Training with a Recruit Training Unit

By Steven Kahla, RTC PAO, TXSG

The Recruit Training Units (RTUs) at each brigade are the first step in preparing new Texas State Guard members for service. Whether prior-service or new to the military, all recruits enter a three-drill, phase-based program that introduces them to Guard expectations, standards, and structure.

Each RTU prepares troops for Basic Orientation Training (BOT) through FEMA certifications, assessments, and instruction in customs and courtesies, drill and ceremony, troop leading procedures, and other foundational topics. Once completed, members attend BOT at the Regional Training Center at Camp Swift before returning to the RTU for additional professional military education and eventual assignment.

During a recent drill at the Fort Bend County Emergency Operations Center, the 2nd Brigade RTU demonstrated the strength of its training. Most trainees had only attended one drill, yet displayed strong progress. The RTU meets monthly, making every session critical. Instructors focus on effective, retention-driven training.

RTU cadre also manage recruiting packets and track each recruit's progress. At this drill, 11 new members were sworn in. Afterward, 1st Lt. Francis Ensila and CW2 Clint Robinson introduced expectations, shared program information, and led the group through their first drill and ceremony on the grinder—an impressive first showing.

RTUs play a vital role in setting the tone for success in the TXSG. The quality of instruction directly impacts the Guard's readiness and professionalism, marking the beginning of a meaningful path of service for every new recruit.







# PROMOTIONS

\*\*NOTE: Information per HQ TI, accurate at time of award/promotions

## MARCH & APRIL 2025 PROMOTIONS

Ackley, Monica, SPC  
Afolabi, Olusegun, PV1  
Ahmed, Musibau, PFC  
Alexander, Christopher, SGT  
Altinisik, Yakup, 1LT  
Alves Da Silva, Gustavo, SPC  
Baker, Jeff, CPL  
Berman, Jedediah, MSG  
Bledsoe, Robert, CW3  
Bramanti, Matthew, MAJ  
Brockett, Nicholas, PV2  
Brownfield, Caitlyn, PV2  
Brownfield, Carolyn, PV2  
Burgos, Marco, PV2  
Byers, Ryan, PV1  
Cantu, Zachary, PV1  
Carroll, William, PFC  
Cripps, Alan, PV1  
Cruz, Cristal, PFC  
Davila, Rebecca, PV1  
Davis, Timothy, WO1  
De La O, Gabriel, 2LT  
Degorostiza, William, PV1  
Delgado, Shemeka, SPC  
Dyck, Carver, SPC  
Fancher, Jeffery, CPT  
Garcia, Jennifer, CPL  
Garcia, Melisio, SGT  
Garza, Steven, SGT  
Gassaway, Steve, PV2  
Gibson, Ashley, 2LT  
Gil, Sergio, PV2  
Gonzales, Joshua, PV1  
Harrison, Brian, CPT  
Herrera, Reanna, PV1  
Hill, Maurice, PV1  
Holland, Daniel, PV1  
Janzen, Chloe, PV1  
Kellogg, Michael, PV2  
Kelly, Byron, 1LT  
Key, Zander, PV1  
Khachikian, Andrew, SSG  
King, Melisa, PV1  
Lindsay, Omar, SSG  
Lissom, Denis, PFC  
Little, James, PFC  
Lozano, Nicholas, PV1  
Marchan, Cecilia, WO1  
Marquez, Isaac, PFC  
Marrero, Dennis, SGT

Martins, Olumide, SPC  
Matute Graterol, Nelson, PV2  
Medellin-Martinez, Christopher, PV1  
Medina, Joe, SPC  
Mempas Min, Divald, PFC  
Mizell, Wayman, SPC  
Molina, Jennifer, PFC  
Murphy, Ambunga, SPC  
Musinga, Blaise, PFC  
Ned, Bervis, PV1  
Nguyen, Thi Kim Cuc, PV1  
Odulate, Samson, PV1  
Olalekan, Taiwo, PV1  
Ontiveros, Pedro, PV1  
Penano, Omar, 1LT  
Phillips, Donald, WO1  
Poppe, Sergio, SPC  
Proctor, William, 2LT  
Reed, Randall, PV2  
Riojas, Juan, 2LT  
Rowe, Will, SPC  
Salazar, Aaron, 1LT  
Salazar, Braulio, CPT  
San Miguel, Lucia, SPC  
Sanchez, Alberto, WOC  
Sanchez, Marcelo, 2LT  
Sanders, Joshua, PV1  
Sanders, Nicholas, SSG  
Sauseda, Destinee, PV2  
Sayre, Gabriel, PV2  
Sierra, Ivan, 2LT  
Soldevilla, Eric, SSG  
Speir, Scott, PFC  
Steeb, Jeremy, PV1  
Stevens, Daniel, SGT  
Stovall, Jason, SSG  
Stredic, Brandon, PV1  
Swift, Jon, SPC  
Taylor, Jimmy, MAJ  
Torres, David, PV1  
Trevino, Kalixtro, PV2  
Trevino, Stephanie, PV1  
Trezza, Vincent, SPC  
Urbanczyk, Karin, WO1  
Vargas, Araceli, PV2  
Villegas, Cristian, 1LT  
Walker, Rachel, CPL  
Webb, Allen, PFC  
Westenhaver, Finn, SPC  
Whitten, Jody, SPC  
Williams, Frederick, SPC  
Wilson, Rita, SPC  
Wilson, Woodrow, SGT  
Winkler, Michael, SPC

## The Spirit of Service: Insights from the TXSG Motto Contest

The Texas State Guard's recent motto contest offered more than a chance to select a new guiding phrase. It provided a revealing glimpse into how service members view the Guard's mission, values and enduring identity.

Since taking command, Brig. Gen. Roger Sheridan has expressed a desire for a motto that better reflects the spirit of the modern Guard. The current motto, "Equal to the Task" — likely adopted during World War II — has long been seen as too passive for a force that exceeds expectations in training, service and field performance. In April, Sheridan invited members to propose alternatives.

With 246 submissions, clear patterns emerged. "Texas" appeared in 55 entries, underscoring strong state pride. "Ready" and "always" each appeared 32 times, highlighting the Guard's focus on preparedness and reliability.

Content analysis showed major themes of readiness (74 entries), service (35 entries) and resilience (29 entries). While tradition and heritage were less often cited in English, many entries used Latin phrases, such as Semper Parati ("Always Ready") and Fortis et Fidelis ("Brave and Faithful"), connecting the Guard to broader military traditions.

This use of Latin reflects the style of other military mottos, including the Marine Corps' Semper Fidelis ("Always Faithful"), the Coast Guard's Semper Paratus ("Always Ready") and the Army's This We'll Defend. Each motto is short, forceful and enduring — qualities reflected in many Texas State Guard submissions.

An advisory team is currently reviewing the proposals, and service members will soon vote in an online survey. The Commanding General will make the final selection, subject to approval by the Texas Adjutant General. Monitor your official email for announcements and expect further coverage here in 'The Guard Post'.

Whatever motto is ultimately chosen, it will stand on a foundation of values that remain alive in the hearts of all who serve in the Texas State Guard.





## Sergeant Major Juli Blenis Profile (Continued from Page 2)

After her career in the U.S. military, Blenis applied her skills to work in the gas and oil industry. In the public sector, she would serve as an executive assistant in high-impact roles at the Texas Water Development Board, the State Comptroller's Office, the Department of Information Resources and the Office of the Governor. In each position, she built a reputation for handling executive priorities with clarity, discretion and results. Whether planning complex board meetings, managing travel logistics or designing multimedia presentations for Fortune 500 audiences, Blenis consistently delivered under pressure.

Blenis joined the Texas Military Department as a full-time staff member in 2014, bringing to her role in the State Guard both exceptional administrative acumen and a deep understanding of military protocol. She oversees scheduling, travel, personnel logistics, VIP engagements, meeting prep and ceremonial coordination with precision and discretion. From tracking critical staff tasks to orchestrating high-level briefings, her attention to detail has proven invaluable across the command structure.

Any doubts about the critical role she plays in the Texas State Guard are quickly dispatched just by counting the officers gathered around her desk each drill weekend, looking for her advice, counsel and direction. A sign above her desk reads, simply, "Choose Wisdom."

"There are three things I believe are important as a manager or as a leader: humility, integrity and loyalty," she says.

Of course, in the Texas State Guard, it doesn't hurt to have the voice and reputation of a seasoned sergeant major.

To borrow a line from a famous ad of years gone by, "When Sgt. Maj. Blenis speaks ... people listen."

## TXSG LEADERSHIP PROFILE



## Where can I find great Texas State Guard Photos & stories? Check out our Social Media

Looking for Texas State Guard photos? Check out TXSG social media! The Public Affairs Office maintains active platforms on Facebook, LinkedIn, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, and Flickr. Follow us on your favorite channel to see the latest images and updates.

Prefer not to use social media? No problem—visit our Flickr page, the official TXSG Online Photo Album. No login is required, and you can view or download any photos you like.

Want to share your own images or stories? Reach out to your brigade PAO or email [kevin.farley@sg.tmd.texas.gov](mailto:kevin.farley@sg.tmd.texas.gov). We're always looking for great content to showcase the people and missions of the Texas State Guard!

NOTE: If you are not sure how to get to our variety of social media platforms...just click on the icons below, at the bottom of this page & you will get there.

## Coming Soon: OBHP. What is Operation Border Health Preparedness (OBHP)?

Operation Border Health Preparedness (OBHP), formerly Operation Lone Star, is an annual initiative led by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to improve disaster response while delivering free healthcare to underserved communities along the South Texas border.

The Texas State Guard (TXSG) plays a critical role in OBHP, serving alongside other state agencies to support both medical and logistical operations. As part of the Texas Military Department, TXSG personnel help establish and operate field clinics, manage logistics, and ensure mission success.

OBHP not only provides essential services but also strengthens the state's ability to respond to public health emergencies through this large-scale training and outreach effort.







# AWARDS

\*\*NOTE: Information per HQ TI, accurate at time of award/promotions

## MARCH & APRIL 2025 AWARDS

### Adjutant General's Individual Award

Dominguez, Abigail, PFC  
Lilly, Kevin, COL  
Morgan, James, SFC  
Tipton, David, CPL  
Villegas, Cristian, 1LT

### Commanding General's Individual Award

Brown, Ashley, PFC  
Clemente Jr, Conrado, 1LT  
Estrera, Michelle, 1LT  
Frebourg, Greg, CPT  
Garza, Martha, SGT  
Macek, Ronnie, CPL  
McNeal, Gary, MAJ  
Nguyen, Sang, PFC  
Oulela, Nicole, 1LT  
Sibi, Tchinsseon, PV2  
Smith, James, SSG  
Thomas, Charles, SGT

### NCO Professional Development Ribbon

Ajomale, Victor, SPC  
Alden, Matthias, CPL  
Bank, Nandor, SGT  
Barber, Jonathan, SGT  
Barrientes, Kelly, CPL  
Bramanti, Matthew, MAJ  
Cantu, Christian, CPL  
Carmichael, Bryan, CPL  
Castillo, Erick, CPL  
Castillo Jr, Javier, CPL  
Cena, Travis, SGT  
Cole, Christie, SGT  
Davis, Kyle, SGT  
Dong, Mark, SPC  
Durden, Darin, SGT  
Eanes, Joseph, SSG  
Edmonston, Theresa, SGT  
Edmonston, Michel, SSG  
Esparza, Jairus, CPL  
Evans, Steven, SSG  
Garcia, George, CPL  
Garcia, Efren, CPL  
Garcia, Miguel, CPL  
Garza, Hernan, SGT  
Gonzales, Roman, SGT  
Graham, Seth, CPL  
Haley-Varner, Ashley, SPC  
Hardin, James, SPC  
Hernandez, Eveart, SPC  
Hilyard, James, SSG  
Hryekewicz, Andrew, SPC  
Jones, Charles, SSG

Jones, Charles, SSG  
Juarez, Nina, CPL  
Kearns, Brendan, SSG  
Marcaccio, Douglas, SGT  
Marx, Katherine, SGT  
Medeles, Lewis, CPL  
Ozuna, Encarnason, CPL  
Penna, Matthew, SPC  
Perez, Juanita, CPL  
Quintanilla, Ernesto, SGT  
Reese, David, SGT  
Rodriguez, Roderick, CPL  
Sammons, Michael, SSG  
Scott, Gerald, SGT  
Shreiner, Donald, CPL  
Silas, Angafor, CPL  
Smith, Roger, SSG  
Soldevilla, Eric, SSG  
Sprinkle, David, SGT  
Steck, Anthony, SGT  
Stout, Keith, CPL  
Tello, Jose, SGT  
Tipton, David, CPL  
Wood, Ariel, SGT

### Officer Professional Development Ribbon

Altinisk, Yakup, 1LT  
Banda Gwak, Dale, 2LT  
Beck, Christopher, CPT  
Canham, Andrew, 1LT  
De La O, Gabriel, 2LT  
Fernando, Maynard, 1LT  
Ingalls, Benjamin, 2LT  
Landa, Michael, 2LT  
Meaders, Mitchell, 2LT  
Padro, Ken, 1LT  
Proctor, William, 2LT  
Riojas, Juan, 2LT  
Sanchez, Marcelo, 2LT  
Sierra, Ivan, 2LT  
Soto, Jesse, CPT  
Wadenpfuhl, Kristopher, CPT

### Organizational Excellence Award

Aguilar, Rene, MAJ  
Cantu, Jose, CPT  
Janecek, Robert, MSG  
Salazar, Braulio, CPT

### State Guard Association Awards

Caruthers, Cheryl Grace, 2LT  
Clemente Jr, Conrado, 1LT  
Kearns, Brendan, SSG  
Perez, Arsilia, CW5







# AWARDS

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## **Texas Faithful Service Medal**

Buckwalter, Rodney, MSG  
Davis, Jay, SFC  
Dodd, Thomas, CW5  
Johnston, John, SGM  
MacClements, Jonathan, COL  
Manigrasso, Paul, CPT  
Scoles, Patrick, SSG  
Ward, Mark, CW2

## **Texas Medal of Merit**

Encila, Francis Gilbert, 1LT  
Matthies, Erik, SSG  
Pimentel, Carlos, SPC

## **Texas Outstanding Service Medal**

Illich, Gregory, CW2  
Lares, Richard, MAJ  
Naumann, Dewayne, CSM  
ONeill, Daniel, LTC

## **Operation Border Star Awards**

Huron, Edward, SFC  
Alaniz, Ricardo, PV2  
Guerra, Rudy, SPC

## **TXSG Achievement Medal**

Adams, Kristopher Joe, PFC  
Buckwalter, Rodney, MSG  
Carrell, Laura, SGT  
Cervantes, George, SFC  
Dugger, Jared, MSG  
Edwards, Kay, 2LT  
Flores Bonilla, Jeny, PV2  
Gascon, Xavier, SPC  
Grider, Eric, LTC  
Hardin, James, SPC  
Harper, Lee, SFC  
Harralson, Philip, 1SG  
Hesse, John, CPT  
Hinton, Luke, CPL  
Johnson, Bobby, SFC  
Jones, Stacy, 1LT  
Jones, Stacy, 1LT  
Kanick, Robin, SPC  
Kearns, Brendan, SSG  
Lonowski McEnroe, Caitlin, CPL  
Lopez, Claudia, PFC  
Polhemus, Brian, SGT  
Semplice, Ross, SGT  
Smith, Donald, PFC  
Whitt, Christopher, 1LT

## **TXSG Commendation Medal**

Buckwalter, Rodney, MSG  
Duerer, Ray, MAJ  
Lonowski McEnroe, Caitlin, CPL  
Lopez, Claudia, PFC  
Sainer, Lynashley, PFC

## **TXSG Exemplary Service Medal**

Ferrer-Russ, Kristine, SPC  
Gonzales, Roman, SGT

## **TXSG Good Conduct Medal**

Adams, Kristopher, SPC  
Alvidrez, Melissa, CPL  
Anucha, Anthony, CPL  
Bramanti, Matthew, MAJ  
Grimes, Willie, WO1  
Hesse, David, SGT  
Honnoll, Kyleton, SGT  
Lindsey, Sean, SPC  
Myers, Stacy, PFC  
Othieno, Salvatore, CPL  
Ross, Keith, CPL  
Tremont, Peter, SGT  
Wadenpfuhl, Kristopher, CPT

## **TXSG Meritorious Service Medal**

Haislett, Douglas, SGT

## **TXSG Physical Fitness Ribbon**

Alden, Matthias, CPL  
Alvarez, Leonar, 2LT  
Athey, Daniel, SFC  
Bank, Nandor, SGT  
Barber, Jonathan, SGT  
Barrientes, Kelly, CPL  
Berniere, Jerome, CDT  
Bramanti, Matthew, MAJ  
Brockett, Nicholas, PV2  
Brownfield, Carolyn, PV2  
Burgos, Marco, PV2  
Castillo, Erick, CPL  
Castillo Jr, Javier, CPL  
Cazares, Adam, PFC  
Cena, Travis, SGT  
Coni, Peter, PV1  
Davis, Kyle, SGT  
De La Garza, Juan Carlos, SSG  
Dietzmann, Darren, 1LT  
Dong, Mark, SPC  
Dyken, Alan, CDT  
Edmonston, Theresa, SGT  
Edmonston, Michel, SSG  
Esparza, Jairus, CPL  
Garcia, Efren, CPL  
Garcia, Miguel, CPL  
Garza, Hernan, SGT  
Gassaway, Steve, PV2  
Gil, Sergio, PV2  
Gonzales, Roman, SGT  
Grider, Eric, LTC  
Hardin, James, SPC  
Hardin, James, SPC  
Hicks, Cody, SSG







# AWARDS

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## TXSG Physical Fitness Ribbon (Cont.)

Hryekewicz, Andrew, SPC  
Jackson, Arthur, PV1  
Johnson, Brandon, PFC  
Juarez, Nina, CPL  
Kearns, Brendan, SSG  
Kellogg, Michael, PV2  
Marx, Katherine, SGT  
Matte, Jill, 1LT  
Matute Graterol, Nelson, PV2  
Meaders, Mitchell, 2LT  
Meier, Lucas, 1LT  
Paulsen, Cody, PFC  
Perez, Juanita, CPL  
Phillips, Donald, WO1  
Reed, Randall, PV2  
Rodriguez, Roderick, CPL  
San Miguel, Lucia, SPC  
Sayre, Gabriel, PV2  
Scarano, Dante, OC  
Scott, Gerald, SGT  
Silas, Angafor, CPL  
Smith, Roger, SSG  
Sprinkle, David, SGT  
Stout, Keith, CPL  
Tello, Jose, SGT  
Tipton, David, CPL  
Trevino, Kalixtro, PV2  
Tynan, Thomas, 2LT  
Umar, Ahmed, PV1  
Woodland, Sam, PV1  
Yaussi, Mark, SGT

## TXSG Service Medal

Ajomale, Victor, SPC  
Davila, Jesus, SPC  
Duley, Connor, PFC  
Edmonds, Jerry, CPL  
Haley-Varner, Ashley, SPC  
ONeill, Daniel, LTC  
Spence, Tatiana, CPL  
Wilson, Trinity, SGT

## TXSG Training Ribbon

Berniere, Jerome, CDT  
Brockett, Nicholas, PV2  
Brownfield, Caitlyn, PV2  
Brownfield, Carolyn, PV2  
Burgos, Marco, PV2  
Cazares, Adam, PFC  
Dykens, Alan, CDT  
Gassaway, Steve, PV2  
Gil, Sergio, PV2  
Jacobson, Craig, CPT  
Jorgenson, Keaton, SPC

## TXSG Exemplary Service Medal (Cont.)

Kellogg, Michael, PV2  
Marchan, Cecilia, WO1  
Matute Graterol, Nelson, PV2  
Paulsen, Cody, PFC  
Phillips, Donald, WO1  
Reed, Randall, PV2  
Sanchez, Alberto, WOC  
Sauseda, Destinee, PV2  
Sayre, Gabriel, PV2  
Scarano, Dante, OC  
Siplon, Jose, 2LT  
Trevino, Kalixtro, PV2  
Tynan, Thomas, 2LT

