



Texas Military Forces News

"Texans Defending Texas"

MEDIA ADVISORY

For more information, please contact the Texas Military Forces Public Affairs Office at 512-782-5620 or ng.tx.txarng.mbx.pao@mail.mil.

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FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLIC RELEASE:

Texas Military Forces respond to winter storm



DENISON, Texas (Dec. 9, 2013) – Citizen-Soldiers with the 176th Engineer Brigade, Texas Army National Guard, provided support to state and local officials during Winter Storm Cleon, as named by the National Weather Service, in north Texas, Dec. 5-9, 2013.

At the request of Gov. Rick Perry, about 50 members of the Grand Prairie-based brigade suited up in cold-weather gear and headed out in Humvees and Light Medium Tactical Vehicles (LMTVs) to help preposition state assets as the storm approached. Soldiers were stationed along the major highways here, as well as in Wichita Falls.

In fact, preliminary reports from the Texas Military Forces Joint Operations Center indicate the deployed Soldiers aided more than 120 stranded vehicles, conducted more than 225 welfare checks and assisted with the setup of a Red Cross Shelter in Valley View, near Wichita Falls.

“We had a great response when the call went out,” said 2nd Lt. Clayton Harrison, an engineer with the brigade’s Lewisville-based 236th Engineering Company. “We were ready to move out less than 12 hours after we got notified that we’d be responding to this storm.”

Although no one was quite certain what the storm would bring, Harrison said he and his Soldiers were in contact with the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS).

“According to DPS, we’ll assist in vehicle recovery, especially if they end up shutting down the highway,” he said.

On Friday, Dec. 6, 2013, when the storm had come and gone, the real scope of the job ahead was revealed to Harrison and his Soldiers. Although the storm had not dropped much snow on the area, it was the ice underneath that proved to be the biggest challenge for those on the highways.

Texas Military Forces Public Affairs
P.O. Box 5218, Building 10
Camp Mabry (Austin), Texas 78703

Phone: 512-782-5620
E-Mail: ng.tx.txarng.mbx.pao@mail.mil
Web: www.txmf.us

“We're from Boise, and thought this would be no big deal,” said Jonathan Bilger, a pulled over motorist who was passing through to visit family. “We get the snow all the time, but the ice, that's harder to deal with. We're just sliding around like a hockey puck.”

With traffic flow a top priority, members of the Texas Military Forces conducted 24 hour a day operations monitoring and assisting citizens along Highways 75, 82, 380 and Interstate 35 near Denison. Simultaneously, personnel from the 840th Engineer Company monitored flow on the icy and slushy roadways of Highways 281, 181, Interstate 35 East and West, and I-20, near Weatherford and Denton.

“Those guys are great,” Bilger said, as he gestured toward several of the Soldiers hooking up chains to tow a stranded 18-wheeler. “They're out here, helping out, when most of us are just trying to figure out how to get home fastest.”

This view was also shared by the Soldiers' leadership as well.

“These men and women are the epitome of what the Texas Military Forces stands for,” said Col. Patrick Hamilton, commander of domestic operations for the Texas Military Forces. “These Citizen-Soldiers volunteered their time, at a moment's notice, to serve their fellow citizens during a time of need.”

“It's situations like this that show the caliber of our service members and their ‘Always Ready, Always There’ mentality,” Hamilton said.

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The mission of the Texas Military Forces (TXMF) is to provide the Governor and the President with ready and trained forces in support of the citizens of Texas and State and Federal civil/military authorities at home and abroad.

The Texas Military Forces are commanded by the Adjutant General of Texas, the state's senior military official appointed by the governor, and is comprised of the Texas Military Department (formerly the Adjutant General's Department), the Texas Army National Guard (TXARNG), the Texas Air National Guard (TXANG), the Texas State Guard (TXSG) and the Domestic Operations Command (DOMOPS).

For more information about the Texas Military Forces visit our Website at www.txmf.us.