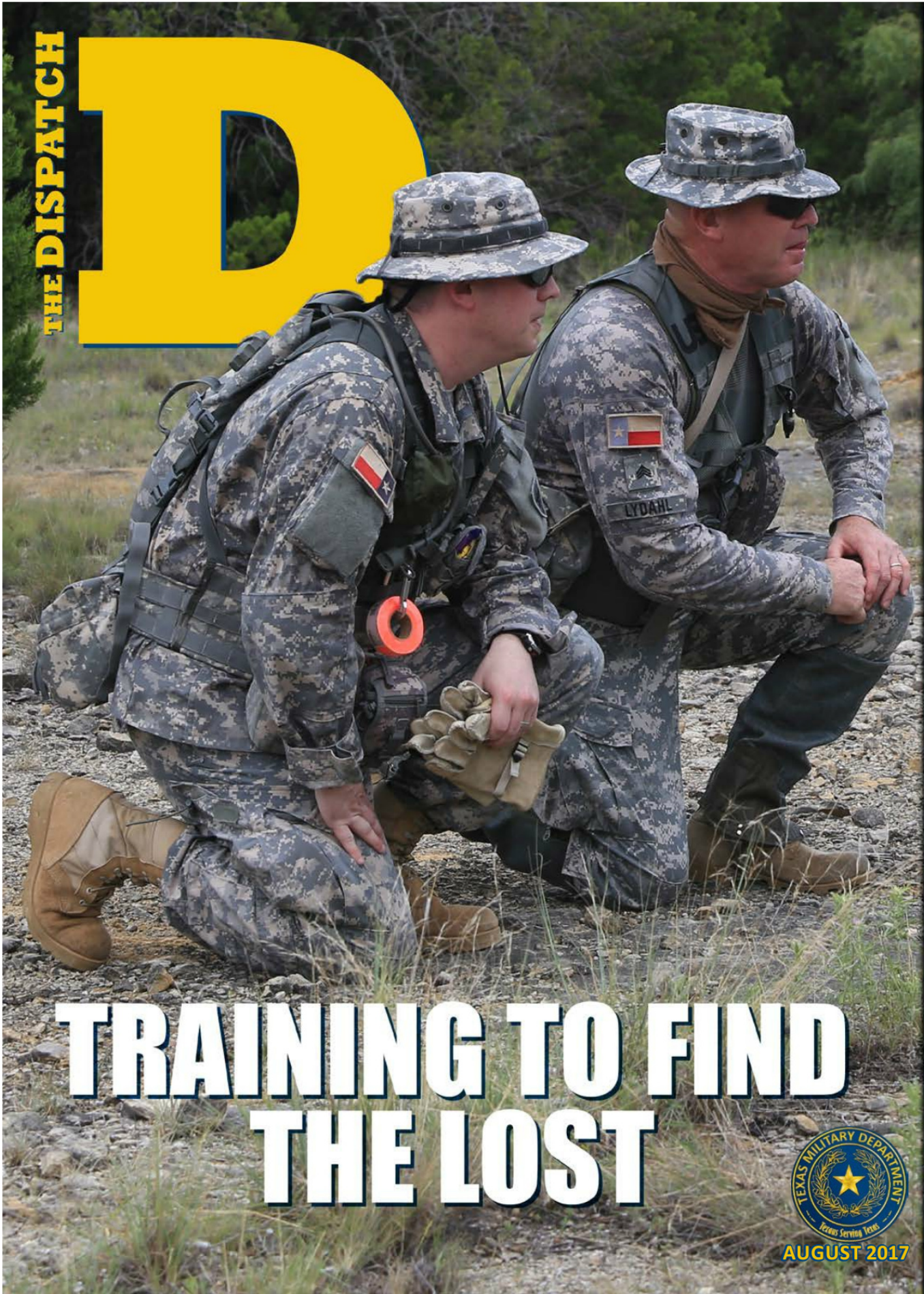


THE DISPATCH

D



# TRAINING TO FIND THE LOST



AUGUST 2017

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT







# AUGUST DISPATCH

- 4 From the Top
- 6 DEA Course welcomes Guard
- 7 Border Mission Transition
- 8 Search and Rescue
- 10 3-124th Cav Cases Colors
- 11 Math Command
- 12 36th ID Change of Command
- 14 100 Years of 36th ID
- 16 Operation Lone Star
- 18 MPAD Visits Latvia
- 21 Air Engineers build Network
- 22 Our Force
- 23 Key Leaders

## HERE:

Crews from the 4th Battalion of the 133rd Field Artillery Regiment, attached to the 71st Expeditionary Military Intelligence Brigade, 36th Infantry Division, Texas Army National Guard, hosted a family day on Saturday, June 25 2017, at Fort Hood, Texas. Families, friends and civilian co-workers and employers were invited to Fort Hood to see their soldier in action and witness a demonstration of the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System as the unit is spending its two weeks of annual training running operations, fire missions, and completing their annual proficiency certifications. (U.S. Army Photo by Maj. Randall Stillinger, 36th Infantry Division Public Affairs)

## ON THE COVER:

Sgt. First Class Thomas Adamowicz and Sgt. Mark Lydahl conduct a leader's reconnaissance prior to deployment of the ground search and recovery team into the search area during a Texas State Guard Training exercise. (Photo Courtesy of 4th Regiment Texas State Guard)



**Governor**  
Greg Abbott



**The Adjutant General**  
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## TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT

# TIGHTENING BUDGET LEAVES TMD DOING MORE WITH LESS



**“As leaders,  
we must carry  
out our  
missions with  
the resources  
we have  
available.”**

**MG ROBERT J. BODISCH**  
DEPUTY COMMANDING GENERAL - TEXAS STATE GUARD

The state budget for fiscal years 2018 and 2019 as passed by the 85th Texas legislature is signed and law. Under this new budget, all state agencies were required to reduce their spending by 4 percent, as compared to the previous biennium and for some, other reductions beyond the four percent were required. We will have to accomplish our many missions and tasks with the funding appropriated by the Legislature.

As members of the Texas Military Department, you may be wondering, how this budget, or reduction, impacts you as a Soldier, Airmen or civilian employee. Needless to say, this impacts all of us in different ways, as the 2018-2019 budget provides for State Active Duty training and resources crucial for readying the force; it helps fund the multiple humanitarian missions those in the Texas State Guard participate in; it allows many of our members to further their education; and it helps fund the necessary renovations some of our armories need to be modernized.

So as we develop internal operating budgets, we will all need to be mindful of these reductions and plan on a lean biennium. We will need to be fiscally disciplined, responsible and cognizant that we will be expected to do as much, or more, with less. Covering all the basics requires leadership when making tough decisions, but that is what we must do as leaders and what will be expected.

As leaders we never feel we have the adequate funding and resources that we think we need or would like to have. Regardless of that fact, we will have to balance shortfalls and show state leadership, our staffs and subordinates we will go forward in spite of the shortfalls utilizing creativity, initiative and ingenuity.

As leaders, we must carry out our missions with the resources we have available. This is an important part of being a leader.

It has been said many people make decisions looking through a soda straw, but as leaders we must rise up one to two levels above ourselves and open the aperture of that straw gaining a strategic view of the decision. Some call that the boss' bosses view. We have to ask ourselves, how would my boss handle this situation and further, how would my boss' boss handle this situation. We have to think strategically and keep the big picture in mind first and foremost.

Making tough budget decisions can be very stressful and emotional. Though it is important a leader not let emotion play into one's decision-making process. Emotion only serves to cloud the issue and can potentially result in decisions we later regret.



**TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT**

As leaders we must look at decisions from the outside, unattached to the emotional influence from within. As leaders we must rise above such distractions in order to maintain objectivity and discipline.

Leaders must always keep in mind the mission and what we are required to accomplish and not become distracted, regardless of the task. As leaders we must continually articulate to our workforce the importance and significance of our many and varied missions.

For fiscal years 2018 and 2019, which begins on September 1, 2017, and possibly going forward, state agencies will have to implement a highly-disciplined approach to budgeting. We must ensure that once the operating budget is adopted, we closely monitor expenditures and align those expenditures with avail-

able balances – in other words, no hot checks. There can be no deficit spending with the hope that we can take from another area to cover shortfalls. We will all have to closely monitor our individual divisional/section budgets to ensure issues or concerns are brought to leadership's attention before they become a problem or crisis.

As members of the state's premier military, it is important that we remember our mission is to provide a ready force to the Governor and President when needed, regardless of our budget or constraints.

DUTY-HONOR-TEXAS

**FROM THE TOP**



# DEA COURSE STRENGTHENS TMD FIGHT AGAINST DRUGS

Story by  
Sgt. Michael Giles

Texas Counter Drug Task Force  
Public Affairs Office

WASHINGTON D.C. - A Texas Army National Guard Soldier working with the Texas Joint Counterdrug Task Force graduated from the Drug Enforcement Agency's intelligence analyst training, July 20, 2017, in Washington, D.C.

Staff Sgt. Denise Rosales, a Counterdrug analyst assigned to support the DEA, said the 10-week Basic Intelligence Research Specialist course gave her tools to collaborate more effectively with her DEA counterparts.

"As an intel analyst assigned to DEA, we work hand in hand with DEA agents and DEA intel analysts," Rosales said. "Having this training allows me to understand the DEA language and know what they expect of me in the office."

Doug Poole, Chief of Intelligence for the DEA, explained that interagency training is essential because the DEA relies heavily on other organizations--especially the National Guard--for their success.

"The guard folks are so very important for all we do in DEA," Poole said. "Having them understand from our perspective what's involved will be very helpful to them and to us."

"Everything we do within DEA intel is interagency," Poole emphasized. "So if we can start out that interagency environment in the very first training session, that just helps our analysts go out and be better prepared to do what they do."

The DEA recognized the role the Guard plays in anti-narcotics efforts by inviting a task force member to attend their training, said Texas Army National Guard Maj. Zach Carroll, commander of the Texas Counterdrug Region South.

"Those long-term narcotics investigations require criminal analyst support, aerial surveillance support, ground surveillance support and counter threat finance support," Carroll said. "Our mission is to pro-



*Texas Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Denise Rosales, a Counterdrug analyst, stands with (from left to right) Charles P. "Chuck" Rosenberg, the acting head of the Drug Enforcement Agency, Maj. Zach Carroll, Texas Counterdrug Region South commander, Sgt. Maj. Jesus Gonzalez, senior enlisted advisor of the Texas Counterdrug Task Force, and Lt. Col. Miguel Torres, commander of the Texas Counterdrug Task Force, at DEA Headquarters in Washington D.C., July 20, 2017. Texas Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Denise Rosales attended the Drug Enforcement Agency's intelligence analyst course as part of interagency efforts to improve collaboration. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Michael Giles)*

vide that support. This graduation we just attended is a recognition from the DEA higher leadership how important the relationship is."

The course consisted of 10 weeks of classroom instruction and exercises in search warrants and leadership at the DEA Training Academy in Quantico, Virginia. Rosales explained the course challenged her ability to retain and use new information, because exams were often given on material that was taught the previous day.

"The course was a roller coaster," Rosales said. "One week the course was stress free. The next week we were up till three in the morning. Take a quick nap, get back up at five and take exams in the morning."

Rosales said the camaraderie she experienced combined with the knowledge she gained made a permanent impact on her life.

"Not only were we treated as if we were regular DEA analysts, we achieved long-lasting friendships and contacts in numerous states," Rosales said. "It was a life changing event." - **D**



# BORDER OPERATIONS TRANSITION TO TRAINING MISSION

Story by Capt. Martha Nigrelle Texas Military Department



TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT

RIO GRANDE VALLEY, Texas - Operation Secure Texas, a once State Active Duty operational mission for the Texas Guard, will transition to a federally funded Title 32 training mission, late July 2017.

The transition will allow service members to conduct hands-on training and improve unit readiness, while still providing partner agencies their unique capabilities along the Texas-Mexico border.

On July 17, 2017, Gov. Greg Abbott announced Texas will receive funding from the federal government in support of Operation Secure Texas and transition the Texas Guardsmen supporting this operation to a federal status.

“The National Guard Bureau has allocated \$19 million, appropriated by the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense for FY17, for the four border states, California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas, to plan, coordinate, manage and conduct additional training missions along the border to increase readiness,” said Lt. Col. Travis Walters, Texas Military Department State Public Affairs Officer. “The benefit of this transition is our ability to conduct realistic, hands-on training on many of our mission essential tasks, work alongside our partner agencies and provide an incidental benefit to the Texas Department of Public Safety’s efforts to prevent pervasive criminal elements from crossing into the U.S.”

The transition will not impact the mission of the Texas National Guard or its role in protecting and serving the citizens of Texas, said Walters. But it may improve their readiness.

The transition to a training mission will enable service members to train on more than 30 required tasks in a realistic environment, while also working in a joint environment.

“Our mission in supporting both the state and nation, whenever we are called, almost always puts us in a joint environment, working alongside partner local, state and federal agencies or partner militaries,” said

Walters. “Successful synchronization of operations with partner agencies and communication across a joint network are absolutely essential skills for our Guardsmen to have whether we are responding to a hurricane here in Texas or supporting combat operations overseas.”

From the outside, the Texas Military Department’s role in supporting Operation Secure Texas really won’t change.

They will still serve under the command and control of the Governor and they will still work alongside and in support of DPS.

The unique, dual mission of the National Guard allows Guardsmen to act as a bridge between our civilian agencies and the Department of Defense.

Federal law provides the Governor with the ability to place a Soldier in a full-time duty status under the command and control of the state but be directly funded with federal dollars.

For example, U.S. Code Title 32 states that the Secretary of Defense may provide funds to a Governor to employ National Guard units or members to conduct homeland defense activities that the Secretary determines necessary and appropriate for participation by the National Guard.

When it comes to support of Operation Secure Texas, service members will conduct diverse joint training operations ranging from command post operations, to convoy operations and communicating in a joint environment.

“Our mission in the Texas National Guard is to provide the Governor and the President with ready forces in support of state and federal authorities at home and abroad and this transition to a training mission, will only increase our ability to do so,” said Walters. “We are committed to serving our state and nation whenever we are called.”- **D**

*(Photo Above) Airmen from the Texas Air National Guard observe a section of the Rio Grande River. The airmen are serving at the Texas-Mexico border in support of Operation Secure Texas. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Maj. Randall Stillinger)*

[www.tmd.texas.gov](http://www.tmd.texas.gov) 7



TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT

# LOOK FOR THE LOST

Story by 4th Regiment Texas State Guard  
Texas State Guard Public Affairs

8 **TheDISPATCH** August 2017





*Guardsmen of the 4th Regiment Ground Search & Recovery team set-up in line formation to conduct a detailed line search.*

MINERAL WELLS, Texas- “Team leader, look what the terrain is doing to your formation,” said Staff Sgt. Joe Ringald, platoon sergeant and certified Ground Search and Recovery (GSAR) trainer as he coached a team leader maneuvering a 12-member team through heavy terrain. “Look how that thick foliage to your right is driving your entire team to the left.”

The GSAR drill was an element of a 4th Civil Affairs Regiment, Texas State Guard field training exercise at Fort Wolters Training Center, in Mineral Wells, in July. The TXSG contains a total of six GSAR Mission Ready Packages (MRP) for deployment across the state.

To kick off the exercise, Regimental Operations alerted the GSAR team to assemble and move to a nearby remote community where recent storms and flooding had resulted in several missing persons.

“In this scenario, we knew based on the operations briefing we were looking for remains. The Soldiers conducted a deliberate search pattern focused on terrain where experience has taught us remains were likely to be found,” said Warrant Officer Jack Snow, GSAR operations officer.

In the Fort Wolters mission, the GSAR team conducted two training iterations. In a daylight scenario, the team conducted a wide-area search resulting in the location of simulated human remains. The team then reset and conducted a night operation, successfully locating a simulated lost child. The night search was the most advanced and

challenging mission the unit has undertaken to date.

“Guardsmen from this team have deployed on a number of real-world GSAR missions,” said Snow. “Our goal here is to share their knowledge and experience and to make the training more challenging and under more difficult conditions to ensure we can successfully execute out in those real-world scenarios.”

“Demanding training like this is all about confidence. When lives are on the line we don’t want soldiers doubting themselves, their leaders or their teams,” he added. To maximize the training value, the team rotated several Soldiers through the planning and leading roles.

“The mission of the 4th Regiment is to provide task-organized mission ready teams to support civil emergency management authorities principally in the disaster response domain,” said Col. Robert Hastings, 4th Regiment commander, Texas State Guard. “We train to conduct mass shelter operations, emergency tracking network operations, search and recovery and to augment civil emergency operations centers. The mission ready MRP is the end-state. There are a number of enabling skills that are important – such as land navigation, first aid and radio operations, but the ‘magic sauce’ that brings it all together is teamwork and leadership, and that’s really the focus of our annual training plan and field exercises like this one.”

Texas State Guard GSAR teams are validated and certified by other state agencies. - D

[www.tmd.texas.gov](http://www.tmd.texas.gov) 9





**Click for unit casing video and interview with Lt. Col. John Davis, Commander of the 3-124th Cavalry.**



# MATH COMMAND

Story by Sgt. Mark Otte

Texas Military Department Public Affairs Office

Brig. Gen Patrick Hamilton, The Texas Military Department's Domestic Operations Task Force commander, visits 4th and 5th grade students at the Brentwood Christian School during a Math Command Ceremony, where student were recognized for mastery of Mathematics.



At an early morning meeting, the Texas Military Department's Domestic Operations Task Force commander addressed a small room of generals, who were set to test the career Cavalryman by peppering him with questions after he finished his remarks.

While the 10 or so 4th and 5th-grade "math-generals" in the audience were not clad in fatigues, they were battle-hardened through years of weekly mathematics testing in the Math Command program at Brentwood Christian School, where they had risen to the rank of general by receiving perfect scores on every test, at every rank...TWICE.

The sometimes-grueling testing regime starts when the children are in kindergarten and continues through 5th grade. With four color-coded levels at each of the seven ranks, students must show a perfect command of the skill being tested before being allowed to move on to the next rank.

Only about eight students per class ever reach the rank of general by the programs completion in 5th grade. Students like Zino Etakibuebu, who completed made general by 4th grade, attended the ceremony for a second year, this time as Ret. Gen. Etakibuebu.

Brig. Gen Patrick Hamilton, who commands the Texas Military Department's Domestic Operations Task Force, was on hand for his third annual appearance at the event, signing the certificates of achievement and reiterating the importance of math throughout life to the young math-generals.

While acknowledging the tremendous achievements of the students was important, Hamilton said that being at the event was also about building relationships in the community he serves.

"The Texas Military Department is a critical part of the community," Hamilton said. "I ask all of my leaders to get out and get involved in the community so that when there is a crisis here at home, we are people that community members recognize and trust."

Although Hamilton was able to capture the attention of the 10-year-old math wizards with tales from his days a tank commander, many of the school's staff remembered him in his new role.

"One year at this event, Gen. Hamilton had to cut his visit short because it was starting to flood," said Mara Ashley, the elementary principal at the school. "I think it really impressed that kids that he was an actual working general."

Day to day, Hamilton oversees a force that hovers around 4,000 from both the Texas Air National Guard and Texas Army National Guard. When crisis strikes in Texas the number of those reporting to Hamilton have swollen in the past to as many as 7,500 during large-scale responses.

Being stewards of the community is something that Hamilton believes requires a commitment both in and out of uniform. He also said that all of the senior leadership encourages each armory to go out into the community to foster cooperation and teamwork with others community organizations.

"Each community is different, in Waco, there is the adopt a school program, where soldiers go and read to the students," Hamilton said. "Our brigade in Round Rock participates in the Special Olympics every year. Those are the small things we do to help establish partnerships with the communities." - D



## TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT

# ARROWHEAD SOLDIERS UNDER NEW COMMAND

**Story by Spc. Christina Clardy**  
36th Infantry Division Public Affairs Office

On the morning of July 15th, 2017, Texas' own 36th Infantry Division, Texas Army National Guard, held a change of command ceremony on the Texas State Capitol steps as Maj. Gen. Lester Simpson, officially relinquished command to the new commander, Maj. Gen. S. Lee Henry.

The ceremony has traditional significance as the division's flag, or "colors," is passed from the outgoing commander, to their senior commander, who then passes the colors to the incoming commander.

"This change of command is a great time for us," said Texas Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. John F. Nichols. "It allows the outgoing commander to leave their mark on the formation and

the incoming commander to take that mark, improve it and make it even greater.

"I think the greatest compliment someone can get is, 'well-done Soldier,'" said Nichols. "So, to you Lester [Simpson], well done Soldier." Thirteen rounds of cannon fire, which echoed across downtown, were fired in honor of the outgoing commander and his service to the nation and state.

Simpson, who received a commission as an officer in the Army National Guard in 1980 from the University of Texas at Arlington, retired after 37 years of service in a ceremony following the change of command. A native of Rowlett, Texas, he recently retired from his civilian career as well. He and his wife Antoinette have four children: Lester Jr., Solomon, Nathan, and Morgan.



*Texas Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. John F. Nichols, transfers the 36th Infantry Division Colors to incoming division commander, Maj. Gen. S. Lee Henry, and bids farewell to outgoing commander Maj. Gen. Lester Simpson during a change of command ceremony July 15, 2017, in Austin, Texas. (U.S. Army photo by Maj. Randall Stillinger, 36th Infantry Division Public Affairs)*

**12 TheDISPATCH** August 2017



## TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT



*The Texas Army National Guard's 36th Infantry Division issues an Artillery volley to welcome Maj. Gen. S. Lee Henry as their new commanding general while expressing praise and appreciation for Maj. Gen. Lester Simpson, who commanded the 36th since 2014, in a ceremony in front of the Texas state Capitol building in Austin, Texas, July 15, 2017. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Michael Giles)*

Henry recently returned from Kandahar, Afghanistan, where he had commanded the Train, Advise and Assist Command -- South (NATO) and represented the first time a National Guard Division Headquarters had commanded a Regional Command in Afghanistan.

"I am truly honored to command the 'Fighting 36th' Infantry Division who will celebrate its 100th anniversary on Tuesday [July 18th]," said Henry. "Now more than ever, the Army is turning to the National Guard... [and] we will answer the call whether it comes from the Governor or the President."

Maj. Gen. Henry, who was recently promoted to that rank, received his commission in 1983 as the Distinguished Military Graduate from the Texas A&M University in College Station, where he has Master degrees in Business Administration and Strategic Studies. As a civilian, he is employed by SAP, Inc. He currently lives in Austin with his wife Tricia, and together, they have three children and one grandchild.

"To the Soldiers of the 36th Infantry Division, our foundation will be individual and collective readiness," said Henry. "The 36th is recognized by both the National Guard and Active Duty Army for its excellence and consistently setting the standard for other divisions to follow."

The 36th Infantry Division of the Texas Army National Guard, which is headquartered at Camp Mabry in Austin, is made up of five brigades and more than 14,000 soldiers. Since Sept. 11, 2001, the division has trained and mobilized a total of 30,000 Soldiers in support of combat operations, natural disaster relief and border security. **-D**



[www.tmd.texas.gov](http://www.tmd.texas.gov) 13



## TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT

## CELEBRATING A CENTURY

The Texas Army National Guard's 36th Infantry Division celebrates its 100th anniversary July 18, 2017 and Soldiers from the division honored their 100 year legacy of service during their July drill, with sweat, reverence and festivities.

The celebration began as several hundred Soldiers marched along Congress Avenue from across Lady Bird Lake and up to the Texas State Capitol. When they arrived, they stood in formation behind unit colors, as Maj. Gen. S. Lee Henry, the division commander, and division Command Sgt. Maj. Mark J. Horn, ceremoniously placed a wreath at the base of the granite T-patch monument on the west side of the Capitol.

As the formation of soldiers solemnly saluted the monument, Henry spoke to them about the symbolism of the wreath and the granite.

"The Texas sunset red granite monument honors the soldiers of the 36th Infantry Division, both past and present," Henry said.

Story by  
Sgt. Michael Giles  
36th Infantry Division  
Public Affairs Office

(BOTH PHOTOS)  
36th Infantry Division soldiers march toward Texas State Capitol Building to commemorate the 100 year anniversary of the Units First Muster.





“The laying of the wreath today honors those 36th Infantry Division Soldiers who have gone before us, and the sacrifices both they and their families made for our freedom and security.”

As Soldiers listened silently, Henry related the symbolism to the 36th’s history of answering the call to serve. He referred to the division’s service in war abroad, in response to disasters at home and in support of domestic security.

“It represents those who answered the call in July of 1917, as the nation ramped up for war, to form a new division made of Soldiers from both Texas and Oklahoma,” Henry said. “It represents those who answered the call when nature wreaks havoc in the form of floods, fire or tornadoes. It represents those who are currently deployed overseas and those who stand watch on our southern border.”

Spc. Josh Strickland, an all-source intelligence analyst with the 36th Infantry Division, said participating in this celebration strengthens his esprit de corps and reminds him of his own military heritage.

“It makes you proud to be part of a unit with such a great legacy,” Strickland said. “Both of my grandfathers served in World War II. Participating in this celebration adds meaning to my time in the Guard.”

The 100-year history of the 36th Infantry Division began July 18, 1917. It was formed to fight in the first world war, and decades later it was the first U.S. division to land on the European continent to fight in World War II. Since then, the division has supported the War on Terror with deployments to Afghanistan, Iraq and several other countries around

the world. At home, the 36th sent soldiers to respond to Hurricane Katrina and the Bastrop, Texas wildfires, and has played key roles both in border security and efforts to reduce drug trafficking.

During his speech, Henry also mentioned World War II veteran Sgt. Jim Niederer, living evidence of the 36th Infantry Division’s legacy. Niederer, who received six Bronze Star Medals for his service in Europe, expressed a belief that the 36th always has been, and always will be, a unit to be proud of.

“It’s a good outfit, and I’m sure it will get better,” Niederer said. “I’m just proud to have been one of the members of the 36th.”

During his more than two years in Europe, he explained, he landed in four invasions: in Sicily, Salerno, Anzio and in Southern France.

“All those things I still remember,” Niederer said. “So many things I just can’t forget. I was fortunate to be able to serve my country. Thank God I made it.”

Those Soldiers wounded in action or killed in action were also appreciated during Henry’s speech about the granite T-patch memorial.

“It recognizes the sacrifice made by those who are wounded and come back different people, both physically and mentally,” Henry said. “It memorializes and honors those who have made the ultimate sacrifice while wearing the famous T-patch on their shoulders.” **-D**

[www.tmd.texas.gov](http://www.tmd.texas.gov) 15



## TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT

# OPERATION LONE STAR

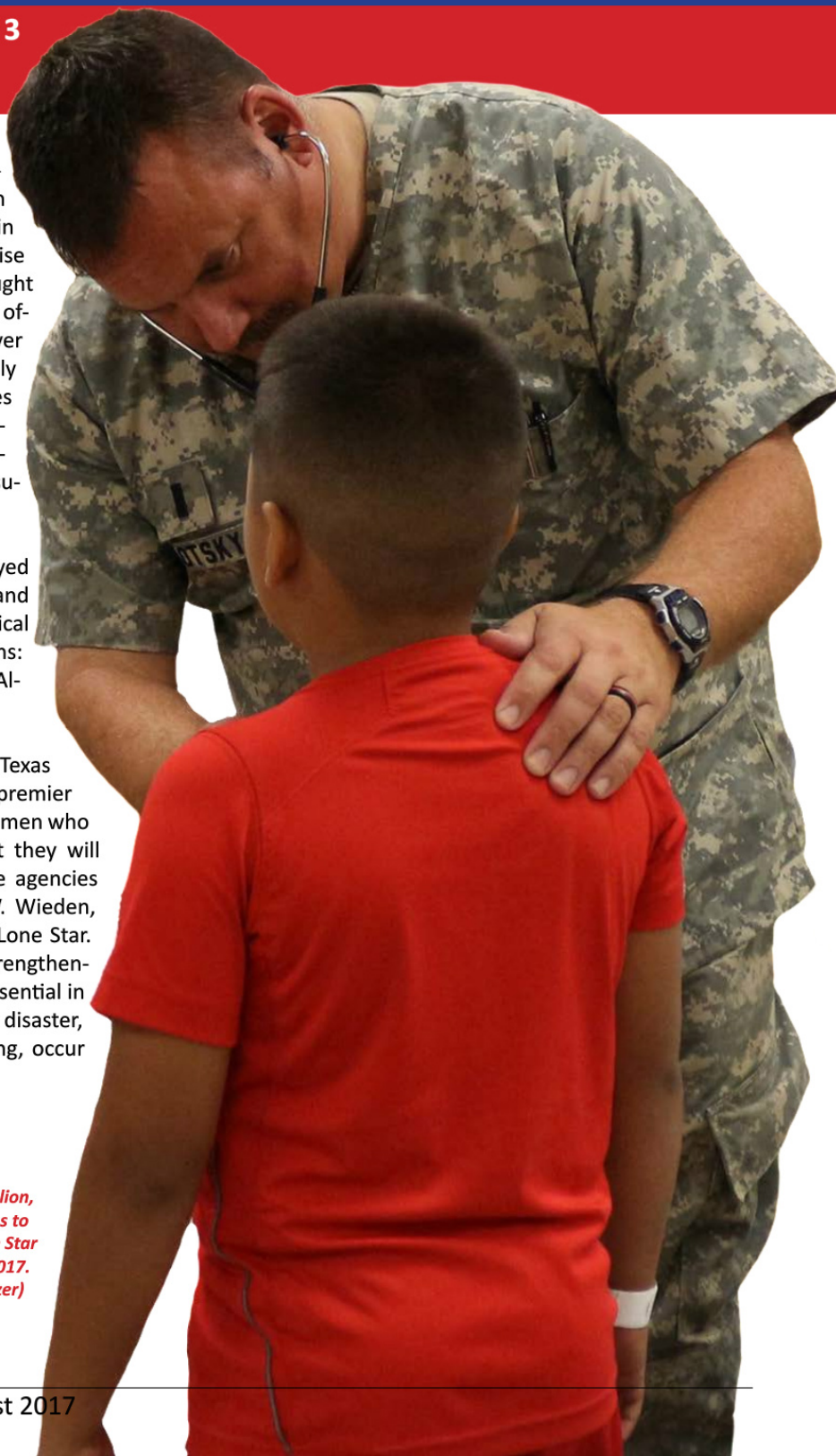
Story by: Chief Warrant Officer 3  
Janet Schmelzer  
Texas State Guard Public Affairs

WESLACO, Texas – Texas Military Department service members teamed up with local and state partners to participate in the largest emergency response exercise in the country. Operation Lone Star brought Guardsmen, medical teams and health officials to the Rio Grande Valley to deliver medical care to local residents during, July 24-28, 2017. The training also provides Guardsmen an opportunity to work alongside medical providers and first responders during a large-scale medical mass casualty emergency.

The Texas Military Department deployed Guardsmen from the Texas State Guard and Texas Air National Guard to provide medical and administrative support at five locations: Laredo, La Joya, La Feria, Pharr-San Juan-Alamo and Brownsville.

“Members of the Texas State Guard and Texas Air National Guard at this exercise are a premier group of officers and enlisted men and women who are training on the necessary skills that they will need if called to support local and state agencies during an emergency,” said Col. John W. Wieden, Joint Task Force Commander, Operation Lone Star. “We are developing partnerships and strengthening community relationships which are essential in joint operations should an emergency or disaster, such as hurricanes, tornadoes, or flooding, occur anywhere in the state.”

*LA JOYA, Texas—1st Lt. Larry Norotsky, 1st Battalion, Texas Medical Brigade, Texas State Guard, listens to the heartbeat of a patient during Operation Lone Star at La Joya High School, La Joya, Texas, July 26, 2017. (Photo by Chief Warrant Officer 3 Janet Schmelzer)*





## TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT

The exercise not only prepares the Texas Military Department, but also provides a way to offer basic medical services to the people of the Rio Grande Valley. Medical personnel from the Texas State Guard's Medical Brigade and the Air National Guard's 147th Medical Group performed physicals, basic dental care, gave vaccinations and tested for diabetes.

For Sgt. Silverio Salas, 1st Regiment, Texas State Guard, training exercises like this prepare Guardsmen to assist the community when disaster strikes.

"Helping out the community and guiding guests to the correct medical stations here at Pharr-San Juan-Alamo High School is similar to what happens during a real world emergency," said Salas. "For me, this exercise is the best training for the Texas State Guard when called to support local and state agencies during an emergency or disaster."

One patient, Maria Rodriguez, was grateful for the program that provides free dental care to local residents.

"I came for dental services. I am very appreciative," said Rodriguez. "I congratulate you on your work, in helping the community, at no cost to those that come for services."

Operation Lone Star is led by the Texas Department of State Health Services with multiple agencies, such as the Texas

Department of Emergency Management, the Hidalgo County Health and Human Services Department, Cameron County Department of Health and Human Services and the City of Laredo Health Department, plus multiple organizations and volunteers, providing support.

According to James Archer, director of regional health and medical operations center (Weslaco), Health Service Region 11, Texas Department of State Health Services, the Texas Military Department's contributions are integral to a effective exercise.

"Operation Lone Star 2017 was a very successful operation. The Texas Department of State Health Services cannot do this exercise without our partners such as the Texas Military Department, local health departments, volunteer organizations and local emergency agencies, which contribute and participate at OLS," said Archer, "It is an opportunity to train for real world events and we want to be ready. The Texas Military Department is a key supporting agency."

The Texas Military Department was also joined by fellow military partners from the 139th Medical Group Missouri Air National Guard, the 8th Medical Brigade, U. S. Army Reserves (NY), the Chilean Army and Air Services and the Czech Republic Medical Army Services. **-D**

*LA JOYA, Texas—Spc. Steven Butler, 1st Battalion, Texas Medical Brigade, Texas State Guard, tests a patient for diabetes during Operation Lone Star at La Joya High School, La Joya, Texas, July 26, 2017. The Texas Military Department partners with local, state, and federal agencies during the eighth annual Operation Lone Star, which is a full-scale emergency response and public health exercise along the Rio Grande Valley, July 24-28, 2017. This exercise prepares responders to assist Texas during an emergency or natural disaster, such as a hurricane or tornado. (Photo by Chief Warrant Officer 3 Janet Schmelzer)*





TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT

# GOING ANYWHERE FOR A GOOD STORY...

Story By Multiple Writers  
Photos by Mark Otte  
100th Mobile Public Affairs Det.





## TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT

PABRADE, Lithuania —Eight Texas Army National Guard Soldiers from the 100th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, stationed in Austin, were sent to the Baltics to support a training exercise that spanned through four countries and brought together 11,000 Soldiers from 20 nations.

Texas Soldiers provided public affairs support to the exercise in Pabrade and Vilnius, Lithuania, June 4-19, 2017.

Saber Strike 17, an exercise designed to promote regional stability and security while strengthening partner capabilities and fostering trust, is the sixth iteration of the exercise, but the first, in the series, Texas Guardsmen have provided public affairs support for. The exercise series facilitates cooperation between the U.S., Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland and other Allied and partnered nations to improve joint operational capacity in a variety of capabilities.

While on the ground, the 100th MPAD provided photo, video and print journalism coverage for training and field operations.

One new soldier said the training gave him an appreciation for the work military public affairs does.

“I think the stories we put out are key to capturing what our multinational partnerships are all about,” said Sgt. Mark Otte. “We are sharing Soldier stories for families back home and providing transparency. Public support is key, and I think our role will ultimately have a hand in the strength of next year’s exercise.”

During an interview for a print story highlighting NATO’s role in the exercise, Otte spoke with Col. Jakob Larsen, commander of the Lithuanian NATO Force Integration Units.

“NATO’s mission is not a stand-alone mission,” said Larsen. “We are not only working hand-in-hand with the Americans for Saber Strike but also with the host nation [Lithuania]. I think it is important that you are transparent and predictable so that your neighbors will not be concerned about what you do.”

During the 13 days spent in the Baltic state, the 100th MPAD Soldiers published seven print

stories, eight videos and over 150 photos shared by the Armed Forces Network, the National Guard Bureau and other publishing agencies. But after hurdling every challenge faced in covering an operation of this magnitude, the MPAD Soldiers say the relationships built during the operation were by far their greatest achievement.

“The challenge of coming to an exercise where we’re covering operations for 20 participating nations across four different countries is absolutely logistical,” said 1 Lt. Allegra Boutch, officer in charge of 100th MPAD operations in the Pabrade area. “The benefit of bringing an MPAD to Saber Strike, however, isn’t just that we are able to accomplish our mission with limited resources and information, but as we build our network, we’re contributing to the multinational partnerships with every interaction and every interview we have.”

While in the region MPAD leaders also partnered with Lithuanian and Croatian public affairs officers to collaborate, share information and learn what each partner could do to improve their own public affairs practices.

“Our hope is through the images we take our Soldiers will never forget the friendships built here, and the world will see the strength of our convictions,” said Boutch. ■ **D**

*Texas Army National Guard Sgt. Mark DeLeon, center, 100th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, and Sgt. Amberlee Boverhuis, right, 100th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment interview U.S. and Czech Soldiers supporting Operation Saber Strike 17, in Pabrade, Lithuania, June 9, 2017.*



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# The U.S. Uniformed Services Blended Retirement System

## Reserve Component



**Effective Date: January 1, 2018**

The Fiscal Year 2016 National Defense Authorization Act provides our military force with a modernized retirement plan built for retirement savings. Beginning in 2018, Reserve Component service members can get **automatic and matching Thrifts Savings Plan contributions, a mid-career compensation** incentive, and if they obtain 20 years of service, **monthly retired pay** for life starting at age 60.\* All service members under the current system are grandfathered into today's retirement system.

### Retirement System Selection



Reserve Component members with more than 4,320 retirement points will remain under the legacy retirement system.



Reserve Component members with less than 4,320 retirement points as of December 31, 2017, will have the choice of whether to opt into the new Blended Retirement System or remain in the legacy retirement system.



New accessions after January 1, 2018, will automatically be enrolled in the new Blended Retirement System.

## Reservists and Guardsmen While Serving

### Thrift Savings Plan Contributions



You Contribute	DoD Auto Contribution	DoD Matches	Total
0%	1%	0%	1%
1%	1%	1%	3%
2%	1%	2%	5%
3%	1%	3%	7%
4%	1%	3.5%	8.5%
5%	1%	4%	10%

The DoD automatically contributes 1% of your basic pay or Inactive Duty Pay to your **Thrift Savings Plan** after **60 days of service**.

You'll see matching contributions at the start of 3 years through the completion of 26 years of service, and...

**You're fully vested — it's yours to keep — after completing 2 years of service and it goes with you if you leave.**

### Continuation Pay

Received at the mid-career point



At the mid-career mark, you may receive a cash payment in exchange for additional service.

## Retired Reservists and Guardsmen Eligible for Retirement Pay

### Monthly Annuity for Life

$$2\% \times \text{Years Served} \times \text{Retired Pay Base}$$

Calculate your **retired pay base** by averaging **the highest 36 months** of basic pay.

You'll gain this monthly annuity for life after completing 20 qualifying years of service and attaining age 60\*

*\*or earlier based on qualifying active service.*

### Collecting Your Retired Pay

OPTION 1

Full retired pay annuity beginning at age 60 or earlier based on credited active service

OPTION 2



25% or 50% lump sum and reduced monthly annuity at age 60\*  
Monthly annuity bumps back up to 100% at full retirement age (67 in most cases).

You can find additional information at <http://militarypay.defense.gov/BlendedRetirement>

Sources: Fiscal Year 2016 National Defense Authorization Act, sections 631, 632, 634, and 635

Created: 8/2016



TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT

# AIR ENGINEERS BUILD A BETTER NETWORK

Story & Photo By Senior Airman De'Jon Williams  
136th Airlift Wing Public Affairs Office

Members from the 272nd Engineering Installation Squadron, 147th Attack Wing, Ellington Field, Texas Air National Guard worked with 136th Communications Flight to assist in upgrading the communications facilities for the 136th Airlift Wing and the 136th Medical Group.

The project began April 27 2017 and is scheduled to be completed in July.

"The medical building and the wing multipurpose room are being completely rewired from category five to category six network cabling," said Master Sgt. Patrick O'Connor, the 136th Communications Flight infrastructure non-commissioned officer in charge. "This switch will give better bandwidth, more port availability and putting us [136th Airlift Wing] ahead for future services."

The 272nd provides installation and engineering for communication systems. This includes replacing outdated systems and network cabling. Another aspect of their work includes moving cabling from one location to another, which is what is being updated for the two facilities.

"We were able to move the cabling to the network control center in the communications room," said Master Sgt. William Taylor, a cable and antenna system craftsman with the 272nd Engineering Installation Squadron. "The benefit for us is that we get to learn from them [the 136th Com-

munications Flight] as well. They've been very supportive since we've been here. Anything we've needed, they've provided."

The two units worked together to provide the 136th Airlift Wing and Medical Group with better communication technology to support the unit's missions.

"There is only so much our communications flight can do here on our own," O'Connor said. "Outsourcing gives us the opportunity to train together; it allows us to present project plans that we need implemented to better our facilities and it gives the 272nd the opportunity to execute communications plans."

The projection execution and training provides the resources and man hours to upgrade the facilities as necessary. This training included position knowledge, how to approach and manage projects and supervision of Airmen, and leadership expectations.

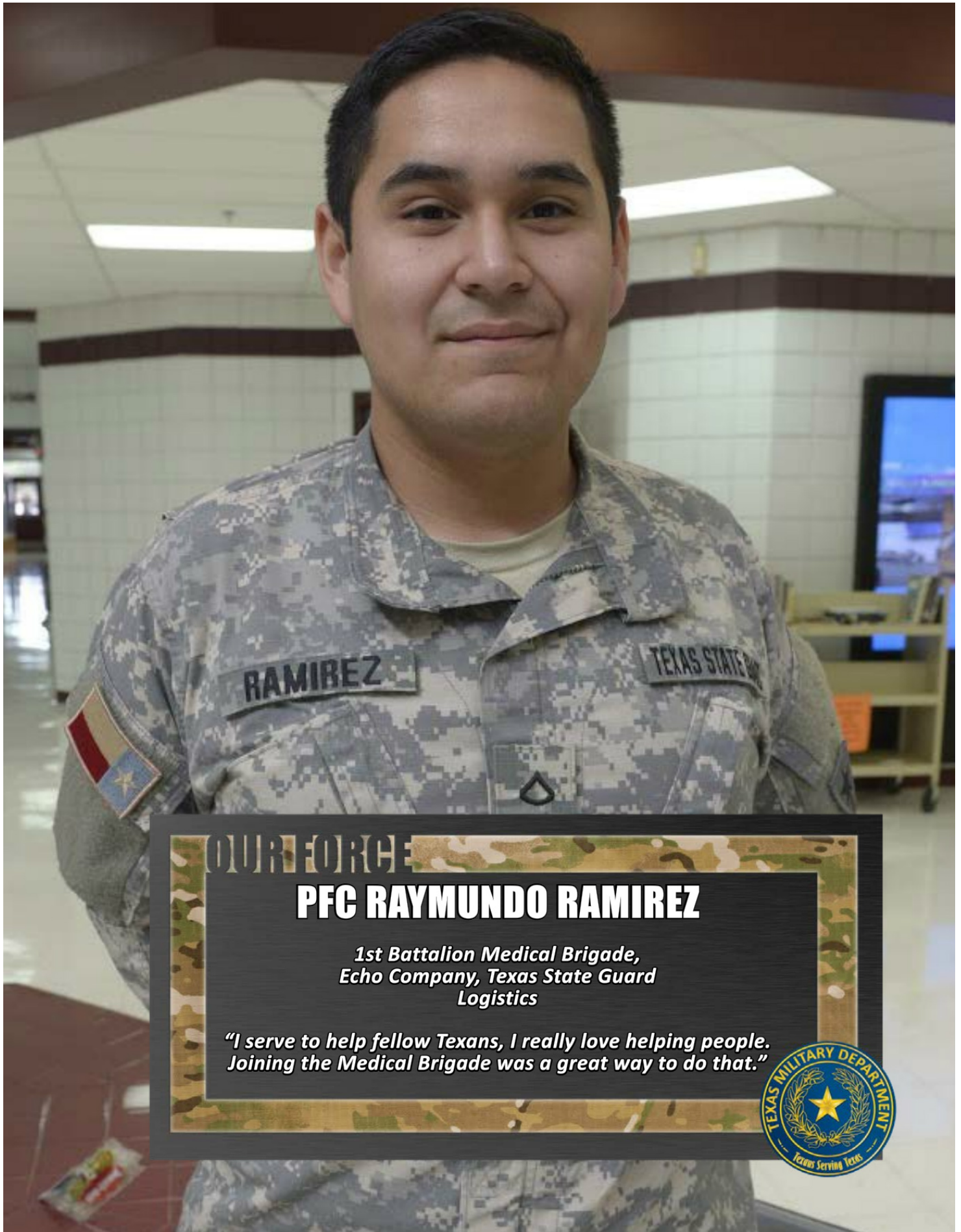
"It's all about building good relationships, feeding off of each other's knowledge bases and using our expertise along with theirs to complete a common goal," O'Connor said. "The experience has been positive, and it's good to have other units you can rely on to accomplish the mission." - **D**

*Members of the 272nd Engineering Installation Squadron, Ellington Field, Texas pose for a group photo May 24, 2017, at the 136th Medical Group, Naval Air Station Fort Worth Joint Reserve Base, Texas. The EIS team traveled to Fort Worth, Texas from Houston to assist the 136th Communications Flight with category-five cable installations throughout the wing.*



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**OUR FORCE**

**PFC RAYMUNDO RAMIREZ**

*1st Battalion Medical Brigade,  
Echo Company, Texas State Guard  
Logistics*

*"I serve to help fellow Texans, I really love helping people.  
Joining the Medical Brigade was a great way to do that."*





# New Key Leadership Positions



## LTC John C. Crawson

Commander, 36th Sustainment Brigade, Texas Army National Guard

### EXPERIENCE:

Crawson commissioned as a Quartermaster Officer through the ROTC program at Tarleton State University in 1995. His previous assignments include: Student, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania and Commander, 636th Brigade Support Battalion in Marshall, Texas. Additional key assignments include various staff positions at Battalion, Brigade, Division and Corps level. His deployments include: Material Management Chief for Multinational Brigade-East, KFOR7; Brigade Logistics Officer (S4), 56th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Baghdad, Iraq; and Brigade Operations Officer (S3), 136th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, Kabul, Afghanistan. He also served as the Chief of Staff, Joint Task Force 136 (MEB), FEMA Region VI Homeland Response Force.

### EDUCATION:

He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from Tarleton State University, a Master of Science degree in Emergency and Disaster Management from Trident University International and a Master's degree in Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College.

### DID YOU KNOW:

He is an Eagle Scout and currently serves as an Assistant Scoutmaster for Boy Scout Troop 345 in Round Rock, Texas.

### IN THEIR WORDS:

"It is an honor to lead the best sustainment professionals in the United States Army. Tricia and I look forward to serving with each and every member of this amazing organization. AS THE PHOENIX RISES, SUSTAIN WITH FIRE!"



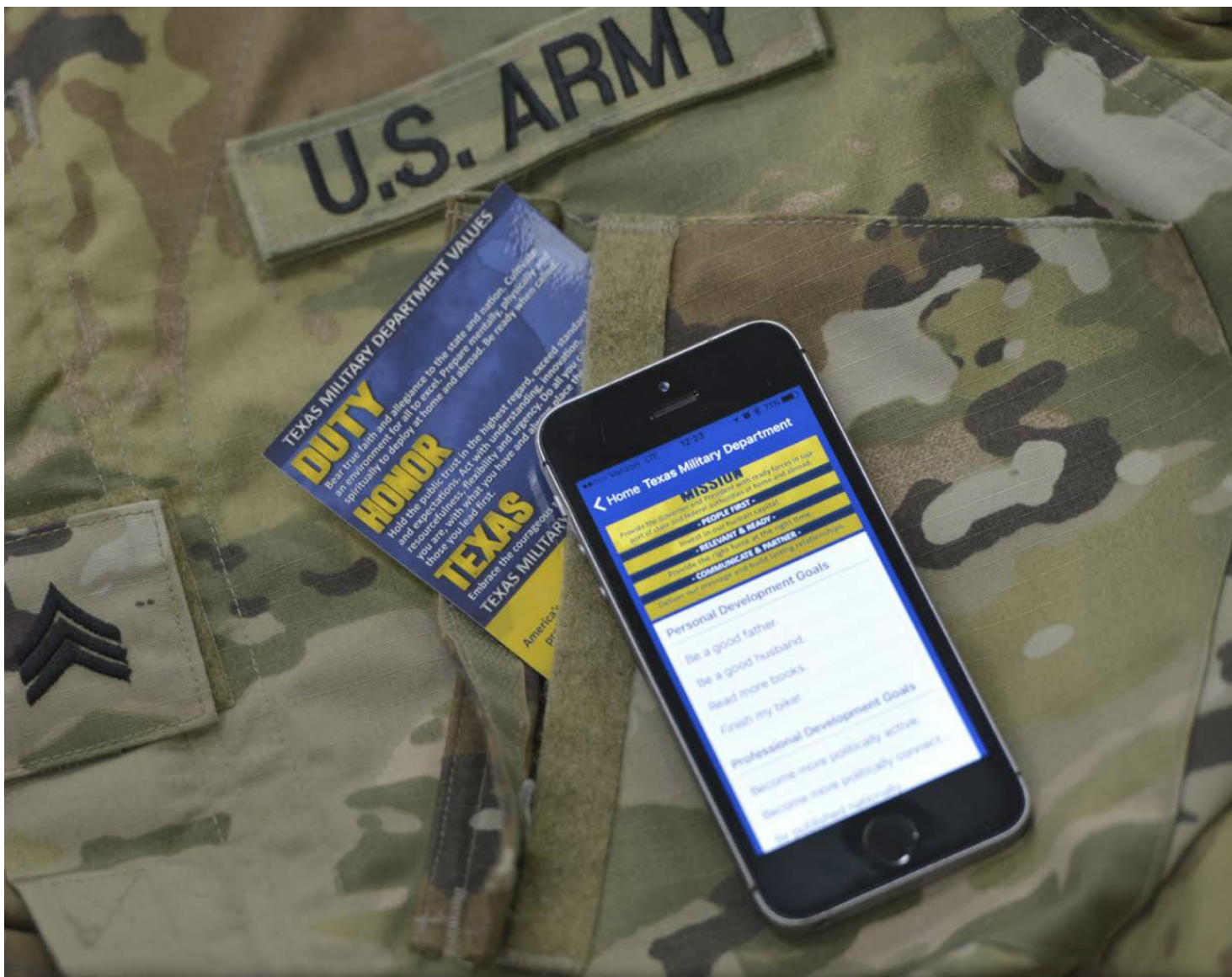
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