

THE DISPATCH

D



FEBRUARY 2018

# LOVE IN WAR!

## PLANNING A WEDDING IN A WARZONE

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT



*Texas National Guardsmen from 3rd Battalion, 144th Infantry Regiment "Fourth Texas" and 1st Brigade Combat Team, train in medical skills during training at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti. (Photo Courtesy of: 3-144 Infantry Regiment Facebook)*

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*(ON THE COVER) Texas Army National Guard Sgt. Cillia Edwards, with the 1st Armored Division MC-Pod conducts a bridal photo shoot during her deployment to the Middle East, January 16, 2018. With less than six months before her big day Edwards had to ship her dress overseas to have it tailored in time for her wedding. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Jason A. Young)*



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TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT

# FROM THE TOP

COMMENTARIES FROM TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT LEADERS



## BRANCHING OUT

**CCMSgt MICHAEL E. CORNIITIUS JR**  
TEXAS AIR NATIONAL GUARD SENIOR ENLISTED LEADER

Did you ever wonder what someone from another branch of service was thinking when they performed a task in a certain manner? Rising through the ranks, I became aware early on that each of our branches have a specific purpose in our nation's defense. Within our own respective branches, we easily identify with our roles, but we sometimes fail to stop and appreciate what each does and why they are important to the overall strategy for defending our great nation.

Being on the Air side, I'm proud of my branch because of what we bring to the fight in the way of air power, but I also recognize my Army brothers and sisters are just as proud of fighting the enemy on the ground. The hurdle we need to overcome is in understanding what each does best and extracting those best practices so as to benefit all branches within the Texas Military Department. In order to make that happen, we must cultivate a relationship with our brothers and sisters in arms in an effort to learn from one another.

Most of us can remember key impressionable points in our career that molded how we view things. My first memory was as an Airman meeting an Army private and

we both sat around talking about challenges each of us faced along with what we felt we needed to improve. My next significant memory was with a Marine sergeant major who has turned into my mentor and best friend for the past 10 years. When I was a newly promoted Chief Master Sergeant, he helped me navigate through some tough decisions by showing me things from another perspective. Our numerous discussions helped me see the viewpoint from other components versus only my own. The discussions with both were monumentally important because they reshaped my focus on getting the mission done while remembering to keep the troops' needs in the plans.

More recently, the encounters I've had in the TMD have paid great dividends for me both personally and professionally. When I promoted to senior master sergeant, I had the chance for more frequent interactions with our Army National Guard counterparts. In a Defense Support of Civil Authorities Liaison Officer class, I befriended several soldiers who helped provide a better understanding of the ARNG. Wanting to keep expanding my knowledge and situational awareness of the Army National Guard, I ensured I built time in my travel schedules for them to discuss the latest with the ARNG and soon had a much better understanding of their day-to-day workings. This also gave me a better understanding of how challenging it is for both components to maintain readiness while simultaneously focusing on both our state and national missions.

These examples from my career show how keeping an open mind and remembering to look across the table, installation, or state may provide the chance to learn from someone outside your normal circle of influence and get a different perspective that will help your career and personal life grow. Who will you reach out to and start the conversation with today? - **FROM THE TOP** -

**"Within our own respective branches, we easily identify with our roles, but we sometimes fail to stop and appreciate what each does and why they are important to the overall strategy for defending our great nation."**

## TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT

# IN THE MIDST OF WAR

## *There was Love*

Story by: Staff Sgt. Elizabeth Pena  
1st Armored Division Main Command Post  
Operational Detachment, Public Affairs

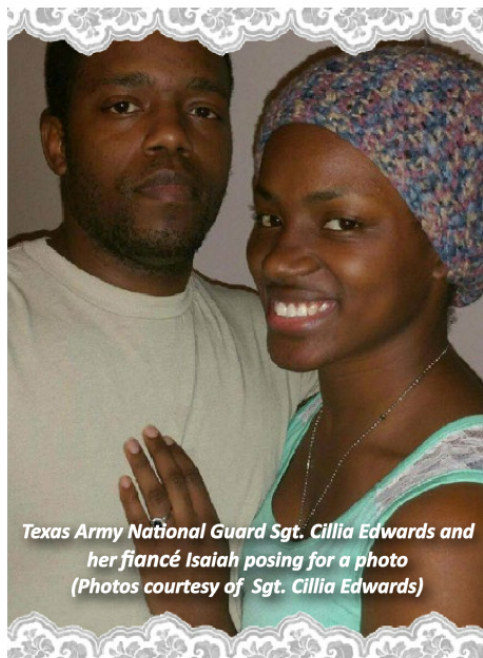
ERBIL, Iraq – Being married to a service member has its rewards and challenges, but being military-married-to-military comes with even more challenges such as being ready at a moments notice when the Army calls.

Texas Army National Guard Sgt. Cillia Edwards, newly engaged, breast-feeding and planning a wedding, received that call when she least expected.

"I had just had my baby, I was right outside of maternity leave," said Edwards. "You get 90 days when you have a C-section, I was on day 92 and someone called and said, 'hey your name came up on this deployment, here is the operational order.'"

Some would say, this was the worst timing to get called, but as a Citizen-Soldier Edwards knew her country needed her and this was chance to serve.

"I knew when I signed up that I was going to be deployed, at some point." said Edwards.



Texas Army National Guard Sgt. Cillia Edwards and her fiancé Isaiah posing for a photo  
(Photos courtesy of Sgt. Cillia Edwards)

As a mother of four, Edwards naturally had doubts about her children. A family care plan had to be figured out immediately.

"What am I going to do with my children, where are they going to go?" Edwards asked her fiancé. He replied, "They are going to stay here. I have a whole family that will take care of them."

Having a strong military fiancé at home brought ease to Edwards' worries and allowed her to focus on her military job. She would now have to plan her wedding from overseas.

Edwards finished her pre-mobilization training and began her nine-month journey in the Middle East as an intel-analyst with the 1st Armored Division Main Command Post Operational Detachment.

"They fell in love when they were already in the military together and he respects that about her and she respects that about him, so they have the ability to let one another fulfill that military calling when it comes up," said Kentucky Army National Guard Maj. Angela White, Army chaplain of Camp Erbil, Iraq.



## TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT

*Sgt. Stephen Schaus, 3rd Battalion, 1st Regiment, Texas State Guard sits in the navigator seat while Pvt 1st Class Kevin Stepherson, 3rd Battalion, operates the aerial rabies vaccine bait distribution equipment as they fly over the Del Rio-based Border Maintenance Zone during the Oral Rabies Vaccination Program, sponsored by the Texas Department of State Health Services Zoonosis Control Branch, January 17, 2018. (Texas State Guard photo by Sgt. Stephen Schaus)*



# STOPPING RABIES: TEXAS STATE GUARD AIDS IN ORAL RABIES VACCINE PROGRAM

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

ALPINE, Texas – Six members from the 1st Regiment, Texas State Guard, climbed into a Beechcraft on January 10-20, 2018 to support a vital public health and environmental program along the Rio Grande Valley.

The Oral Rabies Vaccination Program has been run by the Texas Department of State Health Services, Zoonosis Control Branch for the last 24 years. The Texas State Guard has provided Guardsmen to help distribute vaccination packets since the early 2000's.

The program pulls together participants from state and federal agencies with business partners providing additional support. ORVP Focuses on distributing vaccination packets to grey foxes and coyotes with the goal of helping to eliminate the threat of rabies from spreading to humans and domesticated animals. The operation covered 16,400 square miles in three border maintenance zones--Zapata, Del Rio and Alpine.

This year Guardsmen assisted in distributing more than one million vaccine baits across a zone covering 19 Texas counties.

"The Texas State Guard, as a force multiplier, was ready to support this vital operation in any way that we could," said Texas State Guard ORVP mission officer in charge, Capt. Stephen Walker, 3rd Battalion, 1st Regiment. "During this mission we provided manpower as navigators in the cockpit and operated the bait drop distributor in the back of the plane. On the ground we unloaded and loaded bait from delivery trucks onto aircraft and cleaned hangers and debris from the flight line."

The navigators, who serve as the eyes in the sky, monitor the GPS system for correct flight alignment as well as control the amount of bait distributed. Additionally, they are responsible for warning the pilot of aerial hazards and maintaining a comprehensive flight log.

The bait distributors funnel packages into the aerial distribution system, while also helping to load and unload plastic bags of bait, clean hangars, keep the area clear of debris, assist ground crews and maintain a safety zone around aircraft.

"We do any task from throwing out trash, cleaning toilets, moving equipment, policing runways and preparing baits for loading," said Staff Sgt. Joel Hernandez, 3rd Battalion, 1st Regiment, who operated a bait distribution equipment.

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# New Key Leadership Positions

## Ranada Williams. Texas Military Department Chief Financial Officer

### EXPERIENCE:

Ms. Williams has held various Finance positions throughout state government since 1998, but began her career at Camp Mabry in 2008 as Budget Analyst for the G4. Her most recent positions held include being the Budget Manager for OED and the Deputy Resource Manager for CFMO prior to that. She is also an Army veteran and served from 1999-2006.

### EDUCATION:

Bachelor's Business Administration from Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia. Master's of Business Administration from Concordia University, Austin TX.

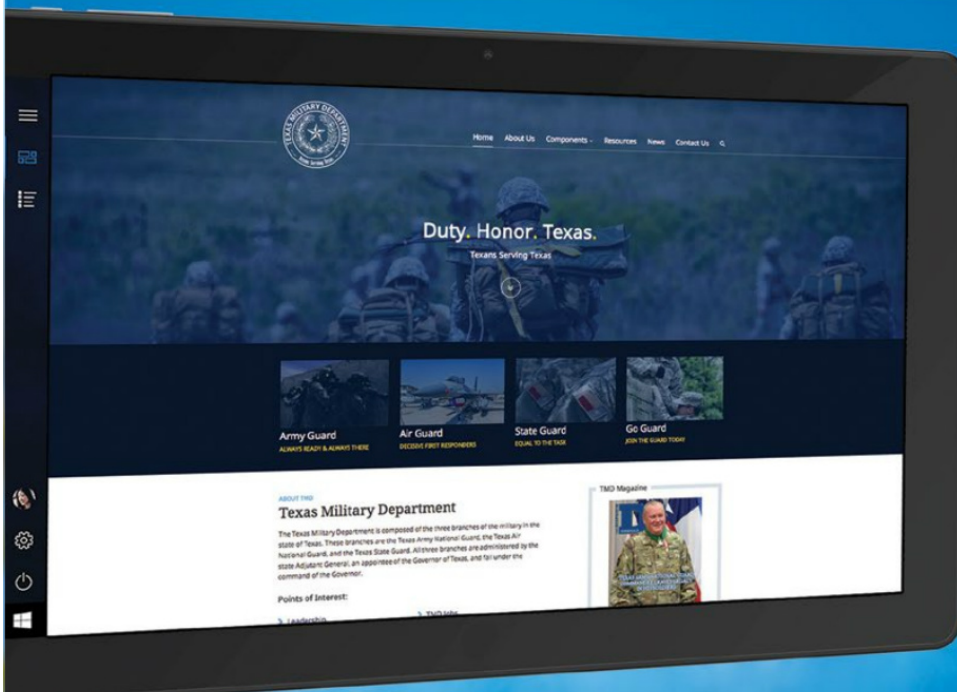
### DID YOU KNOW:

She is a candidate for her CPA designation in Texas as well as a Certified Governmental Financial Manager. She also loves to travel, scuba dive and snorkel with her family.

### IN THEIR WORDS:

"I am excited about the opportunity to serve this great agency in this capacity. I believe in serving with transparency and integrity. I look forward to leading an effective, resourceful, professional, Financial Services Division for the Texas Military Department."

# CONNECTING TEXAS GUARDSMEN



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## TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT

According to statistics from the Department of State Health Services, the program has been successful in controlling the spread of rabies since its inception. Not a single case of domestic dog/coyote variant rabies in South Texas has been recorded since 2005 or of the Texas Fox variant rabies in West-Central Texas since 2014. No human cases of the coyote and grey fox rabies virus have been reported since the program began.

“We are proud to be part of a program that helps to prevent the spread of rabies and as a result contributes to savings in health care costs as fewer humans are exposed to rabies,” said Walker. “This impacts the environment and the economy in a positive way and reduces the exposure of livestock and wildlife to rabid animals.”

Guardsmen joined forces with partnering agencies to undergo the necessary training for a successful mission. Dr. Ronald Tyler, DSHS Public Health Region 11 Zoonosis Control Branch veterinarian and Angel Guevara, Public Health Specialist conducted training on the safe handling of the rabies vaccine packets.

“It is very important for us to understand the proper way to handle baits. We wear gloves and tight-fitting clothing so that our skin is not exposed to the vaccine. We stay hydrated while fly-

ing, just as we would do if we were on a mission on the ground. Drinking water also helps us to avoid air sickness from the very smelly fish meal that covers the packets,” said Hernandez.

For Private First Class Kevin Stepherson, 3rd Battalion, 1st Regiment, the importance of the program and stopping the spread of rabies is clear.

“There is no doubt in my mind that this program saves people’s lives. That is why I am here and why I am proud member of the Texas State Guard,” he said.

The Texas Oral Rabies Vaccination Program utilizes the services of such local, state and federal agencies and businesses such as the Texas Department of State Health Services, Texas Cooperative Extension Wildlife Services, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, U.S. Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services, Texas Military Department, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Dynamic Aviation Group, Inc. and the U.S. Army Veterinary Laboratory in Fort Sam Houston, San Antonio. **-D**

*Sgt. Stephen Schaus, 3rd Battalion, 1st Regiment, Texas State Guard, reviews the daily flight plan and the amount of bait to be dropped with Staff Sgt. Joel Hernandez, 3rd Battalion, during the aerial rabies vaccine bait distribution over the Zapata-based Border Maintenance Zone during the Oral Rabies Vaccination Program, sponsored by the Texas Department of State Health Services Zoonosis Control Branch, January 10, 2018. (Texas State Guard photo by Capt. Stephen Walker)*



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## TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT

Edwards worked as best she could on her down time to plan her wedding, which was scheduled for November 1, 2018.

"This process has been hard, it's been really hard," said Edwards. "Nobody wants to be deployed during an engagement. You want to be with your fiancé and doing all of these things together."

Six months into her deployment, Edwards received another roadblock, her fiancé had just been informed that he would be deploying to the middle east shortly after her return home. This meant he would not be in the U.S. on their wedding date.

"I had every vendor booked, honeymoon scheduled, everything," said Edwards. "We weren't going to move it back because that was just another year, so we had to move it up. We looked at the closest date we could find in April that probably wouldn't rain, which gave us less than six months to plan."

Edwards quickly began calling everyone she could, to move the dates up. Then she realized she would not be home in time to have her wedding dress fitted for her big day.

"I am not going to have time when I get home to do alterations and make sure that my dress is ready," said Edwards. "The vendor could not ship to Iraq, so I had my fiancé's mom send it to me, that whole process took over a month,"

After receiving her dress, Edwards immediately took it to the local tailor on post to have her dress altered.

"That was kind of weird and different," said Edwards. "Normally you would go to the bridal shop with your bridesmaids, but I didn't have that kind of time."

Through the fourteen hour work days, moving an entire wedding up seven months, college courses and trying to stay present in her children's life, Edwards is ready to go home and start her family life.

"I can speak for her and how much she cares," said U.S. Army Sgt. Maj. Jeffery Goodman, base operations support – integrations for Camp Erbil, Iraq. "They are willing to do whatever it takes and balance both home life and the military and they aren't letting time, distance or the Army deployments decide how they feel about each other. That's something that's true to them."

Edwards reflected back to how she met her fiancé, "He came to the squad, he had just been promoted to Sergeant and I was just getting a divorce. I didn't like him. I didn't like most men. I was very bitter about my divorce. Eventually I got promoted to sergeant and transferred out of the unit. He continued to court me and be patient with me."

Three years later, he asked her to be his wife.

"I can tell that I want to be with him forever," said Edwards. "He is the kind of man that I didn't think existed anymore. He does things I wasn't willing to hope for, after being divorced for the first time; I thought that those things were in fairy tales and they don't happen in real life."

Edwards understands her future will hold many unexpected surprises, long lengths of time apart and many sacrifices, but as with many military-to-military couples, their love to each other and their devotion to their country will ensure that there is always love present, in the midst of war. **-D**



*Texas Army National Guard Sgt. Cillia Edwards, gets wedding dress altered during her deployment to the Middle East, December 22, 2016.  
(U.S. Army National Guard photos by Staff Sgt. Elizabeth Pena)*

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## TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT

The security guard program for the Texas Military Department is largely funded by the federal government, with specific exceptions for firearms, firearms training and ammunition. Those expenses are appropriated at the state level.

When top Texas Military Department brass decided there was a need to arm the entire 40-person security guard roster, one officer, Ian McPherson, the night shift supervisor, played a critical role in putting a pistol in every gun belt, according to both Longo and Aguinaga.

McPherson is a certified Level III commissioned officer instructor licensed by the Department of Public Safety. With that credential, Longo says her department saves around \$3000 annually in firearms certifications by avoiding outside agencies' fees for both initial certifications and the annual renewals required to keep the officers packing.

"We are able to certify and re-certify our officers in-house, instead of paying a third party to provide the training, materials and testing required to be a qualified level-three commissioned officer," Longo said.

Being able to conduct in-house training also gives trainers the ability to take training to the next level. After all the requirements for certification have been met McPherson often teaches intermediate and advanced skills to the officers. In the past he has covered transitioning from one weapon to another, clearing stoppages and correcting malfunctions in a weapon.

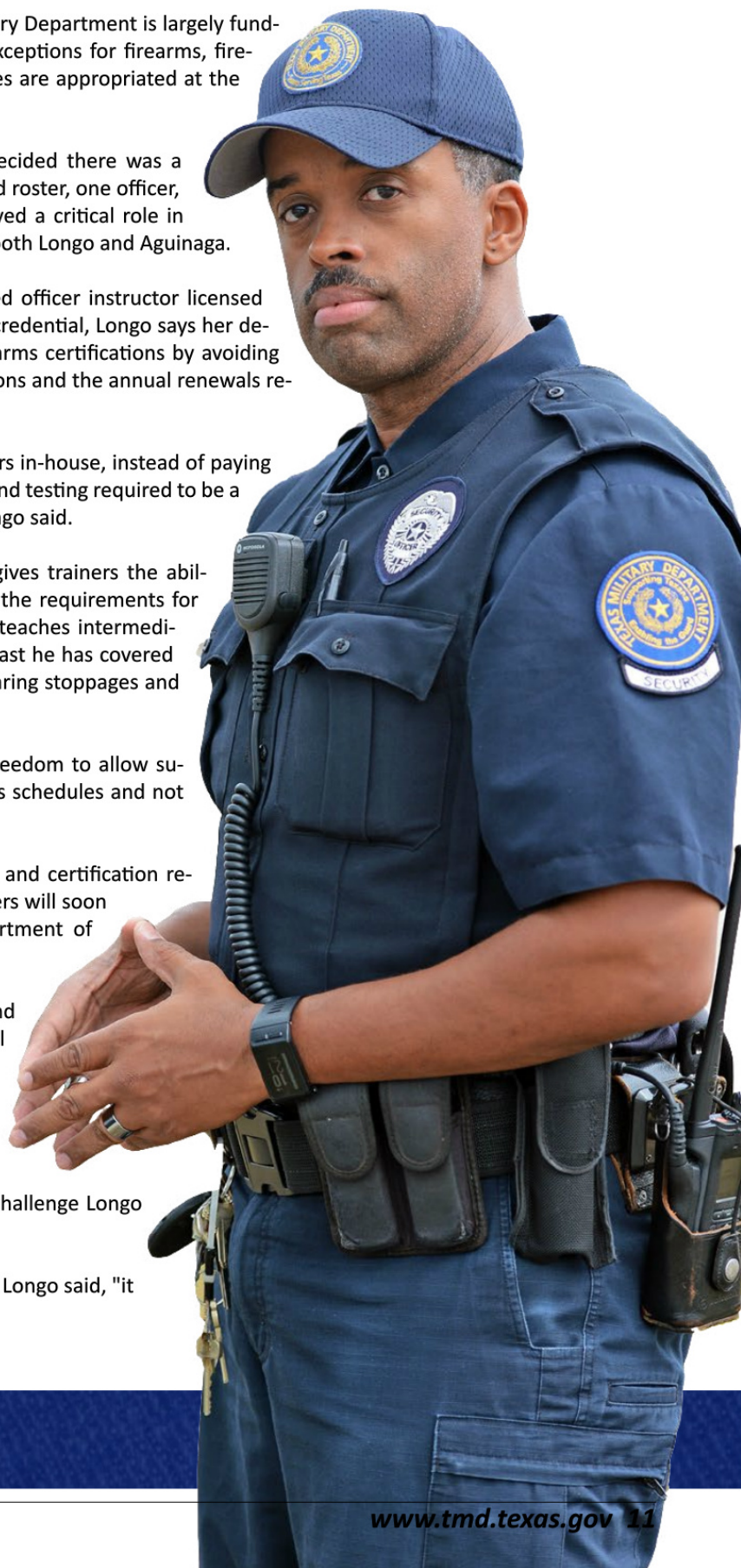
Another advantage Aguinaga noted was the freedom to allow supervisors to plan training based on the officer's schedules and not the availability of an outside trainer.

To keep up with the demand for the licensing and certification requirements of the department, two more officers will soon receive their instructor status with the Department of Public Safety.

The agency also requires the officers to attend training outside of the range, that in the real world could put those firearms skills to the test dealing with an active shooter.

As the National Guard continues to take on a larger national security role, the demand for a high level of security will continue to grow, a challenge Longo says she knows her officers are up to.

"If there was someone here who was a threat," Longo said, "it would be my officers who take them out." **-D**



*Chris Simpson, security officer for the  
Texas Military Department  
(U.S. Army photo by: Sgt Mark Otte)*

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## TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT

# GUARDING HEROES

Story by: Sgt. Mark Otte, Texas Military Department Public Affairs

AUSTIN, Texas – Most people coming to Camp Mabry Jan. 8, 2018 probably forgot that it was Elvis Presley's birthday. Not Officer Chris Simpson. As he checked credentials at the gate, he treated passers-by to some of the King's moves to mark the day.

While the light-hearted morning antics of the 10-year veteran of the post lifted the spirits of Texas Military Department employees and post visitors, base security is something Simpson and his colleagues take seriously.

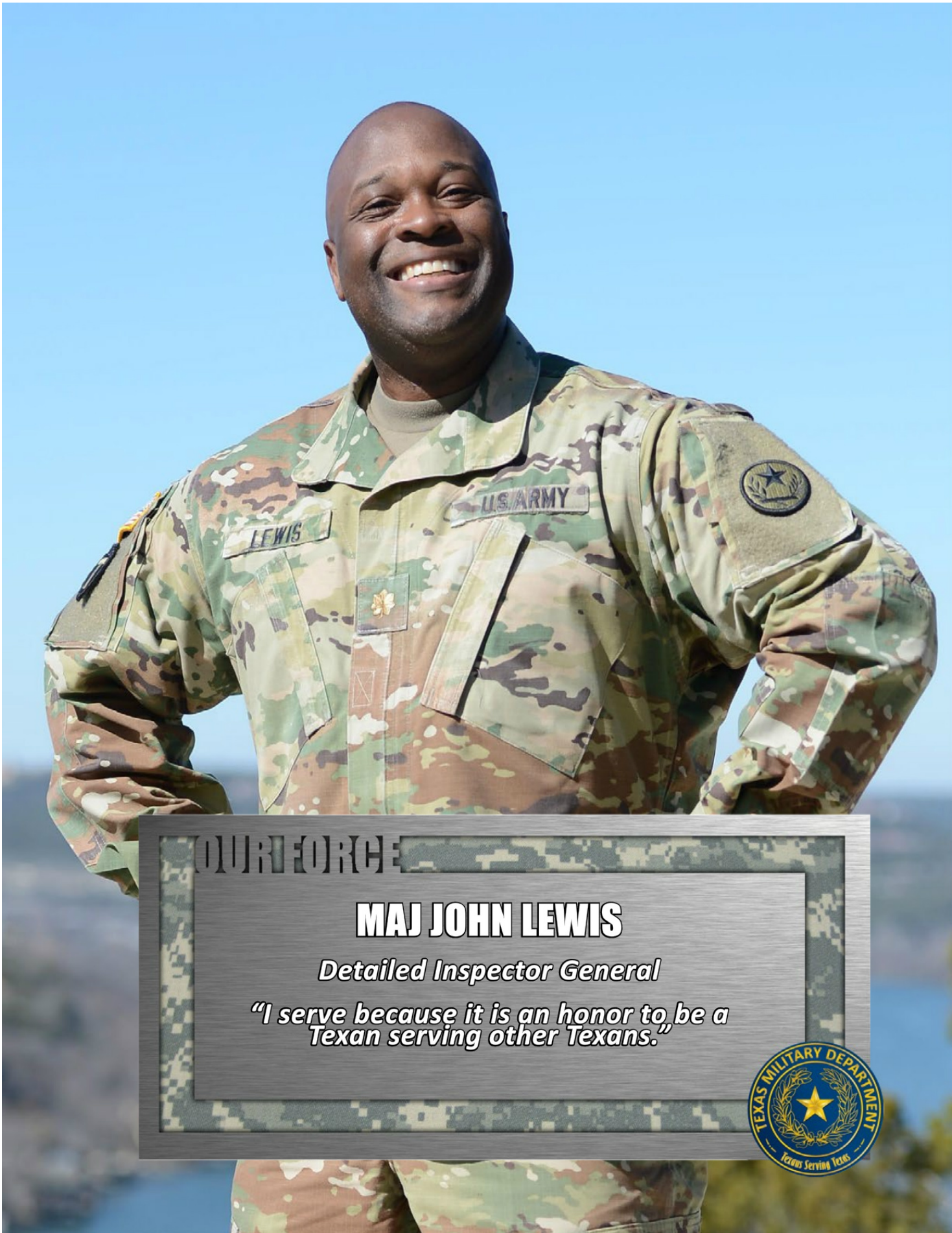
Officer Albert Aguinaga, the day shift security supervisor, said that the officers he works with, including Simpson, are working and training in a way that more closely resembles a modern security force, leaving behind the days when a security guard's job stopped with checking IDs at the gate.



*Texas Military Department security officer, Fernando Mendez, center right, partners with the Austin Police Department, and Austin SWAT while conducting active shooter training during the 2017 Force Protection Exercise in Camp Mabry, Austin, Texas, February 16, 2017. The Texas Military Department facilitated and participated in training with the Austin Police Department and the Austin Fire Department. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Kaycee Stocker)*

"I think there has been a real culture shift in our department," said Aguinaga. "Today, the way we do our job can have an effect on national security."

Provost Marshal, Capt. Lisa Longo agreed that there have been sweeping changes in the department charged with the security at five Texas Military Department installations across Texas. Those changes haven't always been easy, as appropriations for the security guards come from a variety of sources.



OUR FORCE

**MAJ JOHN LEWIS**

*Detailed Inspector General*

*"I serve because it is an honor to be a Texan serving other Texans."*



## TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT



*J.D. Davis, third baseman for the Houston Astros signs a World Series Championship Shirt for Texas Guardsman Spc. Fullworth during a victory tour stop at Camp Mabry, in Austin, Texas on January 11, 2018*

*Story & Photos by Sgt Mark Otte  
Texas Military Department Public Affairs*

AUSTIN, Texas – Newly-crowned Major League Baseball World Series Champions, the Houston Astros, paid a visit to Texas Air and Army National Guardsmen January 10, 2018, at the Texas Military Forces Museum at Camp Mabry in Austin.

The afternoon stop was part of the team's 2018 Astros Caravan, a sort of victory lap around the state that gave fans a chance to interact with the team as they signed autographs and took pictures.

Pitcher, James Hoyt; 3rd baseman, J.D. Davis and pitcher Brad Peacock were joined for the event by Astros broadcaster Todd Kalas at the 45,000 sqft World War I era building at Camp Mabry that now houses the exhibits from 1825 to present.

Peacock, the most notable of the three, commanded game three of the 2017 World Series from the mound at Minute Maid Park, pitching the longest hitless relief since 1964, closing out the 5-3 Astros victory without allowing a single hit and striking out four batters.

Soldiers and Airmen lined up around the museum to have a chance to rub shoulders with the big leaguers. While the Soldiers showed admiration for the champs, the players offered thanks to those who serve in the Texas Air and Army National Guard.

The two organizations were brought together earlier in the year as Hurricane Harvey ravaged the Gulf Coast, dumping rain for days on the Astros home field, leaving Houston, the city they call home, under water.

It was the men and women of the Texas National Guard that came to the rescue with high water vehicles, helicopters and airplanes to pluck Houstonians from the from the rising water and deliver life-save supplies. So, when the Astros were planning the caravan, stopping by the Joint Forces Headquarters was high on the priority list.

While Garrison Commander at Camp Mabry Lt. Col. Paul D. Mancuso said the day was intended to celebrate the Astros victory, he also said it was nice to be remembered during the event.

"It was really gracious of the Astros to come to our installation to share in another Texas success with the military members who live and work here and also serve the great state of Texas," he said. **-D**

## TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT

AUSTIN, TX – The Texas Domestic Operations Task Force is designed to partner with local civil authorities and active component forces to provide unique capabilities to accomplish their goals of serving Texans in their times of need.

“When authorized and at the request of the governor, we provide direction and oversight of all military forces throughout the state during defense support to civil authorities or civil support events,” said Lt. Col. David Burger, Domestic Operations Deputy Operations Officer. “This includes state active duty and federal forces within a dual-status command for immediate and long-term events.”

The structure of the task force enables the state to quickly and efficiently leverage local and federal military resources to respond to any natural or man-made emergency, hazard or event which may occur.

These capabilities were notable during the Hurricane Harvey response in which Domestic Operations was the lead when the governor of Texas activated the entire Texas National and State Guard.

Their coordination of personnel and logistics was critical along the Texas coast during flood rescues, medical support and humanitarian assistance.

“The Domestic Operations Task Force was recently awarded the inaugural 2016 Department of Defense National Preparedness Award,” said Burger, “and the Texas Emergency Management Council 2017 Agency of the year due to our role in response to Hurricane Harvey.”

The task force structure allows support of civil authorities during other events such as wild fires, border security and as a homeland response force for the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region VI for a federal response and the Texas State Operations Center for state responses.

“The FEMA Region VI Homeland Response Force can activate and deploy to conduct detection, search and extraction, decontamination, medical triage, security and mission command for any incident in the region,” said Burger.

Although the Domestic Operations Task Force has officially been around since 2012, the Texas Military Department has always responded to natural and man-made disasters to include the Space Shuttle Columbia disaster recovery, hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and the fertilizer plant explosion in West, Texas.

To be ready to support these events, Texas service members must learn the principles of emergency management and their roles in their support.

“We are governed by State Code 418,” said Burger, “the sourcing document for the state’s emergency management lead agency and work with coordinators to establish the domestic operations all hazards plan.”

The Texas Division of Emergency Management has broken the state into seven coordination regions and 30 disaster districts in which TMD provides a military district coordinator liaison to represent the capabilities and planning guidance needed for support.



*Texas National Guard Light Medium Tactical Vehicle (LMTV) taking Texas Task Force 1 responders to various locations to rescue citizens. Texas Guardsmen evacuated Texans in need from severe flooding in Fort Bend County, Texas, June 2, 2016. Texas Guardsmen supported local first responders during search and rescue operations following severe weather.*  
(Texas State Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Timothy Pruitt)

TMD provides capabilities and expertise in 47 of the 69 specified tasks identified in the State Emergency Management plan. These capabilities are scaled into Mission Ready Packages for specific requirements to enhance a lead agency’s mission to support fellow Texans.

“The primary purpose of a MRP is to communicate TMD civil support capabilities across the full spectrum of emergency management agencies,” said Burger.

Domestic Operations planners have created a Mission Ready Package catalog which give details about each type of package from number of personnel to types and sizes of vehicles, and defines operational limitations to choose the best support for the requested requirement.

Once a request is initiated, the Domestic Operations Task Force begins the planning, deployment, tracking and command of activated forces for responses.

“Requests for assistance are generated at the lowest level, the first responders who communicate the deficiency

## TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT



*Story by: Sgt. Mark A. Otte  
Texas Military Department Public Affairs*

Members of the 1-124th Cavalry Squadron, 36th Infantry Division from the Texas National Guard were honored on January 06, 2018 by hundreds from the community at the Waco High School as they prepared to deploy.

About 200 Soldiers from the Texas National Guard will make their way to the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt in the coming days. The Cavalry troopers will partner with around 12 other nations in support of the Multinational Force and Observers who implement the security provisions of the Egyptian-Israeli Peace treaty.

The Cavalry troopers are no strangers to the mission, as this is the group's second rotation to the peninsula.

"It is an honor to recognize such a storied unit with cavalrymen that are the best at what they do," said Brig. Gen. Michael Adame, Assistant Division Commander, 36th Infantry Division. "They achieve positive result every day as they help others and continue to serve our country."

The peace treaty rose from the Camp David Peace Accords in 1978 with the treaty being signed in 1979. The nearly 40-year legacy of lasting peace in the region is a point of pride for those who serve to maintain the provisions of the treaty.

"This is our second time doing the MFO mission," said Command Sgt. Maj. Marius Puzar, the squadron sergeant major. "It is an absolute honor to be a part of something that does so much good in the world." **-D**

*Family, friends and community members gathered at the Waco High school as the 1-124 Cavalry deploys. This will be the third Texas Army National Guard unit to support the and the 1-124's second time supporting the effort.  
(U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Mark Otte)*



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TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT



# DOMESTIC OPERATIONS

*Story & Photo by: Michael Leslie  
Texas Military Department Public Affairs*

*Photo Illustration by Robert Seyller*

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## SOLDIERS FIRST, LAWYERS SECOND: STAFF JUDGE ADVOCATE MENTORS ARMY LAWYERS

Story & Photo by: Staff Sgt. Michael Giles  
*36th Infantry Division Public Affairs*

"You have the profession of arms and the profession of law," said Capt. Daniel Murphy, a judge advocate with the 36th Infantry Division. "There's no one who exemplifies the best of those professions like Col. Farr."

Col. David Farr left his position as the 36th Inf. Div. Staff Judge Advocate in Jan. 2018, to bring his legal expertise to the Texas Military Department's Joint Force Headquarters. His legacy is his reputation for inspiring and mentoring judge advocates and paralegals. His valediction: For judge advocates to be effective, they need to be Soldiers first, and lawyers second.

"It means they've got to learn to walk the walk, and talk the talk," Farr said. "If I'm going to stand there and give advice to a 2-star [Maj. Gen.] division commander, if I'm not squared away as an Army officer, that advice will fall on deaf ears."

"Any smart commander is going to want to listen to their JAG attorney as a rule," Farr said. "That being said, you sure have a

better impact with that legal advice, and it has more credibility if you already have a reputation with that commander of being a squared-away Army officer."

Lt. Col. Doug Whitaker, who filled the vacancy left by Farr's transfer, expressed admiration for how Farr's ability to handle legal concerns enables commanders to focus on their missions.

"He's a great force-multiplier," said Whitaker, who previously worked with the Regional Defense Counsel for the Army National Guard Trial Defense Services. "He enables commanders to get their job done. He removes distractions from them so they can focus on the fight."

Murphy explained that Farr set the bar high, and it will be no small task for Whitaker to meet that standard.

"Lt. Col. Whitaker has been a mentor to a lot of soldiers as well, but he's got some big shoes to fill," said Murphy. "Col. Farr's visionary leadership has inspired all the attorneys and the paralegals in the Texas Army National Guard. He's the man." **-D**

*(Photo Above) Army Col. David Farr, former staff judge advocate for the Texas National Guard's 36th Infantry Division (right), stands with Lt. Col. Doug Whitaker, formerly with the South Central Region National Guard Bureau's Trial Defense Service (2nd from right), and a group of 36th Inf. Div. judge advocates and paralegals at the Garrison Command Headquarters at Camp Mabry, Texas, Nov. 3, 2017. Col. David Farr left his role as 36th ID's staff judge advocate in January 2018, to bring his legal expertise to the Texas Military Department's Joint Force Headquarters.*

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future construction and renovation projects. Additionally, this group helps the military department annually to receive tens of millions of additional dollars to renovate facilities from state and federal agencies.

“During their service, our unit members have contributed thousands of hours of professional skills and labor to the Texas State Guard and the Texas Military Department,” said Col. Robert Hudnall, Executive Officer, Engineer Group. “They have saved the state almost \$700,000 in consulting and labor costs.”

While providing support to other Texas Army National Guard Engineering units when this unit was also tasked to perform special demolition projects at Camp Mabry in Austin, Texas, these guardsmen led the demolition of Building 32, the Texas State Guard Headquarters. As well as the preservation of the building’s historic architectural support and roof beams during the renovation phase, they also conducted the exterior demolition, remediation, compaction and backfill of the 15-foot sign in front of Building 34 and are assisting with the layout and construction of a new Camp Mabry soccer field.

For the Engineer Group, mission readiness during a disaster, such as flooding, hurricanes, and tornadoes, is to provide augmentation, in a surge capacity, for the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. Last year, Hurricane Harvey demonstrated just how critical the engineer group was to disaster response. With flooding and high winds damaging hundreds of water and sewage systems, forcing residents to boil drinking water and swamping sewer systems, the primary tasks for the unit were to assess water and wastewater facilities to determine what should be done to get services back online and helping residents to begin to recover from the disaster. As a supporting agency, the Texas State Guard engineers worked in coordination with the commission and the federal Environmental Protection Agency, traveling to the devastated areas to conduct visual assessments of water and wastewater facilities.

The guardsmen also provided professional advice on the restoration of water and waste water systems to municipalities and Councils of Government. In this way, local governments could begin planning time lines for the restoration of drinking water to residents. These assessments would also assist Texas in securing emergency assistance to recover the damaged or inoperable systems.

In Rockport, Texas, the engineers assessed the condition of a water tower that had sustained a broken a cross support arm from high winds during the hurricane. Without the cross support, the tower would, at some point, begin to spin and collapse. The engineers concluded that the condition of the tower was a serious risk to residents and the local municipality took the tower out of service.

“We want to be there when Texans need our engineering expertise following a disaster,” said Lt. Col. Thomas Loftis, Operations Officer, Engineer Group, Texas State Guard. “We can help them and their communities to regain some normalcy with essential water and wastewater service. We want to make sure that each resident can turn on a faucet at home and drink a glass of good, clean water. That is why we serve in the Engineer Group of the Texas State Guard.” **-D**



*Texas State Guard Engineer Group assisted the Construction and Facilities Management Office of the Texas Military Department with the layout and construction of the track at Camp Mabry, Austin, Texas, October 17, 2014. The engineers will also be assisting with the construction of the new soccer field. (Texas State Guard photo by Lt. Col. Thomas Loftis, Engineer Group)*

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# TEXAS STATE GUARD ENGINEERS CLEAR THE WAY

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

AUSTIN, Texas –The Texas State Guard Engineer Group is a little-known asset utilized by the Texas Military Department and municipalities throughout the state. Over the past five years, these 44 members have built a reputation as the “go-to” resource when engineering and technical service support are needed to assess infrastructure and critical facilities, including military installations, water plants, wastewater treatment, power plants and environmental impact.

The engineers in this unit are highly qualified professionals who hold professional licenses in architecture, civil, mechanical, electrical and environmental engineering and are project and construction management experts in their civilian careers. Many are members of the Society of Military Engineers and the Texas Society of Professional Engineers, and hold state licenses or certifications in water and wastewater treatment.

“The members of this Engineering Group, like all members of the Texas State Guard, are volunteers who give back to their communities and to the state through their service in the Guard,” said Col. Patrick Fink, commander of the Engineering Group, Texas State Guard. “The engineers and technical support members are bringing their civilian skills, knowledge and expertise to their tasks and missions. Many of our members have previously served in state and federal military forces as well as the Army Corps of Engineers.”

These engineers and technical support personnel therefore became a perfect choice to assist the Construction and Facilities Management Office of the Texas Military Department with annual installation status assessments. In the past five years, Texas State Guard engineering teams have conducted installation status reports at 36 Texas Army and Air National armories and facilities in Houston, Austin, San Antonio and the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex.

These reports included specific and detailed information on the conditions of facilities which the Texas Military Department utilizes to prioritize funding for



*Texas State Guard Engineer Group performed the demolition of the 15-foot sign in front of Building 34, conducted the compaction and backfill of the hole where the sign stood, Camp Mabry, Austin, Texas, August 19, 2017. The Engineer Group works in coordination with the Construction and Facilities Management Office of the Texas Military Department. (Texas State Guard photo by Lt. Col. Thomas Loftis, Engineer Group)*

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# GONE FISHING

## CAMP MABRY WELCOMES AUSTIN COMMUNITY

### *Story & Photos by Sgt Mark Otte Texas Military Department Public Affairs*

AUSTIN, Texas – The frigid temperatures didn't stop Austin youngsters from stringing a line and heading to the pond Saturday Jan. 13, 2018 for the 4th annual Fishing Derby at Camp Mabry in Austin.

Organizers said the event wasn't about catching the biggest or the most fish, but rather to connect local youth with nature.

"We wanted to bring military families and families from the surrounding communities to Camp Mabry to share this wonderful natural resource," said Linda Brown the natural resource manager for the Texas Military Department. "We want to give the kids an opportunity to fish, look at birds, and go hiking."

The derby is part of the Texas Military Department's Construction and Facilities Maintenance Office Environmental Program and included volunteers from the Texas Parks and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Garrison Command.

Every winter the pond at Camp Mabry is stocked with trout, but while the trout may be plentiful and make a good meal, the pond also has a few whoppers, so her fishing story goes.

"The trout are catch and take, but we also have trophy size Catfish and Bass," Brown said. "Those fish are catch and release so that everyone has an opportunity to catch them."

For urban dwellers, like the Shultz family, a fishing trip with the kids can eat valuable weekend family time in the car, just traveling to a suitable fishing hole. So, for them, the quick trip to Mabry for a family outing meant more outdoor time for the kids and less time in car seats.

"We only live a few minutes from here," said Linda Shultz who with her husband brought their two kids to the derby. "They had been asking to go fishing for a while so this was a great way for us to get them out to enjoy nature."

With nearly 200 kids signed up it became clear the program would need to expand. The Construction and Maintenance Facilities Office is planning a fishing derby at Camp Bowie near Brownwood, Texas and at Camp Maxie north of Paris, Texas in the spring.

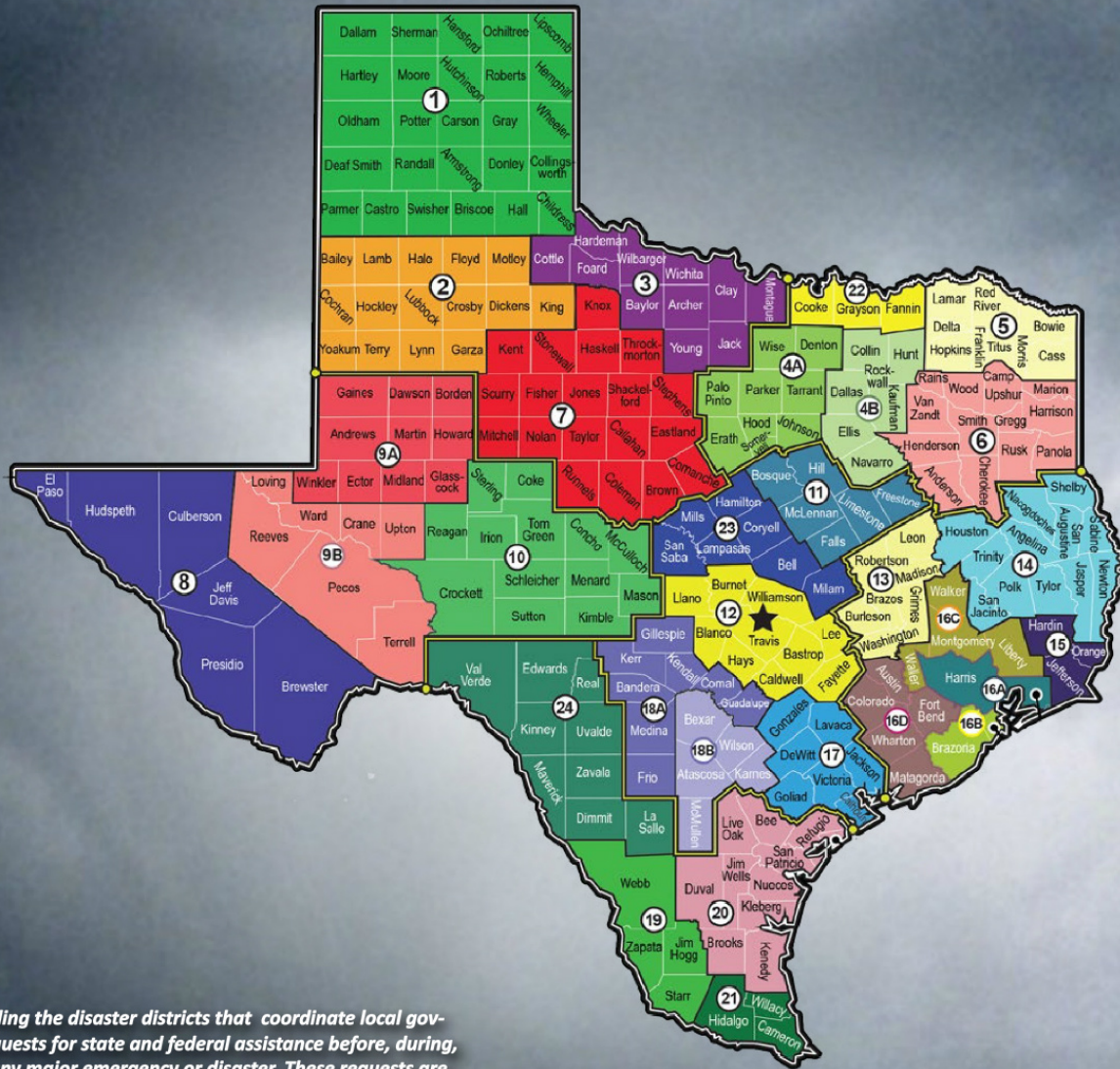
The pond at Camp Bowie currently lacks a name, so Brown says it will officially be called "Derby Pond". Both of those ponds are larger than the pond at Mabry and will also be stocked with trout that participants can take after catching.

Texas Military Department Environmental Branch Chief, Maj. John Rote said that Camp Mabry is a sort of hidden treasure of environmental resources in the middle of an ever-growing city.

"We have 300 acres here and we always welcome the community to come share what we have," Rote said. "Not everyone knows about everything we have, from the museum and walking track to the fishing pond, so this kind of event helps get the word out." **-D**

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*Map detailing the disaster districts that coordinate local government requests for state and federal assistance before, during, and after any major emergency or disaster. These requests are processed through Texas Department of Emergency Management. (Map Courtesy of Texas Department Of Emergency Management)*

to the disaster district to the State Operations Center to coordinate with us to assign mission tailored packages to enhance lead agency capabilities,” said Burger.

Preparation for responses starts with a plan which includes the most likely and most dangerous events that will impact the citizens of Texas. Training is tailored to those types of events.

“We conduct preparation activities to invest in our human capital to include training, validating staff members and certification by lead agencies we would support,” said Burger.

This preparation allows the TMD and the Domestic Operations Task Force to support the citizens of Texas through various missions with multiple capabilities.

“As a learning organization, we analyze lessons learned after every event and add or modify packages based on the needs of the state and out interagency partners,” said Burger. “Every state is different in their organization, this is how we have decided it is best to support the governor and the needs of the citizens of Texas.” **-D**