



TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT



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The Texas Military Department Public Affairs Office would like to thank all the contributing writers and photographers who generously share their work with us. Without the hard work and dedication of Guardsmen and civilians, we would not be able to tell your TMD story.

(Cover) Members of the 149th Medical Group's Detachment 1 demonstrate their emergency response capabilities to Maj. Gen. Tracy Norris, the adjutant general of Texas on Jan. 24, 2020 at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas. (U.S Air National Guard photo by Mindy Bloem)

Aaron Gustavo Gutierrez, nine years old, tours the 149th Fighter Wing at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas, while taking part in the wing's Pilot for a Day program Dec. 20, 2019. The program offers a unique experience for children with life-threatening or debilitating medical issues, allowing them to spend time as an F-16 pilot for the majority of the day. (U.S Air National Guard Photo by Tech Sgt. Agustin G. Salazar)

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FROM THE TOP

COMMENTARIES FROM TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT LEADERS



SET GOALS AND PREPARE TO SUCCEED IN 2020

COMMAND CHIEF MASTER SGT. MICHAEL E. CORNITIUS
COMMAND SENIOR ENLISTED LEADER

A new year provides us with the opportunity to start fresh, reassessing our priorities and actions, and improving upon ourselves. As we progress forward into 2020, you will be receiving new guidance and expectations from leadership. I encourage each of you to make a plan with tangible steps and goals for how to achieve these objectives.

As your Senior Enlisted Leader, I have three lines of effort for this year that are nested in the Adjutant General's priorities for our organization. They are as follows: Retention, comprehensive fitness and force development.

You have heard it before and you will hear it again now, retention is the number one priority for Texas. Retention is beneficial for all involved. Our organization puts significant time and effort into training our service members, and they in turn work hard to perfect their given MOS or AFSC. Texas continues to show the nation that we are ready for increased force structure levels, and retaining our personnel is key to that success. If someone in your unit or wing is talking about leaving, find out why. Often there are simple changes that can be made to underlying issues, making staying in the service a positive experience and option for our Soldiers and Airmen.

Comprehensive fitness involves four aspects: physical, mental, spiritual and social. I expect our forces to be physically fit. I am working to support you in achieving this through things such as mandatory fitness activities and the recent gym consolidation on Camp Mabry. As the Army side prepares for the ACFT, the Air Force is looking at a fitness change as well, so let's all make improving our physical fitness a top priority. Mental fitness supports all elements of

comprehensive fitness. I have been personally investing in this sphere through trips to Warrior Transition Battalions and Air Force Wounded Warrior Program service members. We are all responsible for supporting the mental health of those around us, and for educating ourselves on the resources at hand, such as our incredible Family Support Services program. In order to support the spiritual side, I have been involving the Chaplain Corps in formations and any other opportunities I can find. I encourage all leaders out there to do the same. Socially, it is vital to the outlook and attitude of our forces to create and maintain trusted, valued friendships. We all need someone to fall back on, and to get new perspective from.

My final LOE is force development. We must support those who are rising in the ranks, and plan for the day when they will take our places as the leaders of this great organization. I encourage all current leaders to emphasize goal setting. Have career counseling meetings with your service members and work with them to map out concrete steps to achieve those goals. Life and career goals can often seem unattainable until a path to success is laid out clearly. I want our leaders to get back to truly knowing those they lead – what they're going through, what their hopes are, what they like or dislike about their time in service. This will allow us to better support them, making our force stronger as a whole.

Stay safe out there. Look out for one another. Take care of yourselves. You are our greatest asset.

- DUTY, HONOR, TEXAS -



Strong Bonds

BUILDING READY FAMILIES

Strong Bonds seminars are weekend retreats for Texas Military Department single Guardsmen, married couples and families to focus on their relationships. For the marriage enrichment seminars, the chaplain covers topics such as expectations, communication, reunion and friendship. He provides tools for the couple to use in the future. For the singles Soldier seminar, the chaplain helps soldiers establish relationship goals and gain essential skills in mate-choosing patterns. The family wellness seminar is for the entire family to come to an off-post retreat and gain skills to help sustain healthy interactions, relevant teaching and training. They will also have time for relaxation, recreation, fellowship and fun.

Types of Seminars:

Family Wellness

We understand the unique stresses of military life, so we want to serve your family through an off post, Strong Bonds weekend retreat. Children 8 years old and over may participate in most exercises of the Strong Bonds Family program. Your family and others from your unit will gain skills to help sustain healthy interactions throughout the trials of Army life. In addition to relevant teaching and skills training, there is time for relaxation, recreation, fellowship, and fun.

Marriage Enrichment

Whether you've celebrated one anniversary or twenty, as an Army couple you can anticipate more excitement — and expect more challenges — than the average civilian couple. Long separations, frequent relocations, and the stress of deployment can subject Army marriages to extreme hardship.

Single Soldier

Maybe you're in a relationship now, and are thinking about taking it further. Or perhaps you just left or lost a relationship and are contemplating taking that kind of risk again. Maybe you're not with anyone special, but you know it might happen some day. No matter what your "relationship stats" is right now, it's smart to take part in the Strong Bonds Single Soldier Program. One weekend could make a major difference in how you date and perhaps, who you choose for a lifetime.

TO REGISTER FOR A STRONG BONDS SEMINAR, CONTACT

512-782-6697

or visit

tmd.texas.gov/strong-bonds

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THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

Story By: Bailey Olderog

Texas Military Department Command Group

Maj. Gen. Tracy R. Norris was promoted to the position of The Adjutant General of Texas in January of 2019. After a year serving as the commander of all Texas gGuardsmen, the Dispatch asked her to reflect on the previous year.

DISPATCH:

Now that you've spent a year as The Adjutant General, how has that been different from your time as the Deputy Adjutant General - Army?

NORRIS:

There is definitely a huge difference. As Deputy Adjutant General – Army, I was focused on Army-centric issues only, and took a long hard look at how to reorganize that component for maximum efficiency. When I became TAG, I did the same thing across the board with our reorganization into a truly joint headquarters. I believe this has led to more clarity and efficiency in roles, making us better able to support the field and respond to our state and federal level leadership. As we settle in to this new formation, I am proud that we have been able to stay on track with our mobilization schedule. I have also enjoyed getting to engage with the other Adjutants General on where they are taking their states in the future. Speaking of the future, as long as I am TAG I will continue to emphasize recruiting and retention within our forces. Many of you may have heard rumors of a Talent Management Advisory Counsel, a project I intend to focus on in the upcoming months and years to better facilitate succession planning within our formations. If we do not grow our future leaders, we won't be able to retain our status as the biggest and best Guard in the Nation.

DISPATCH:

In your time with the Military you served with Army National Guards in multiple states, can you tell us what makes Texas better... I mean unique?

NORRIS:

Texas is my home, and so it is extra special to me to get to serve here. Texans are independent and self-sufficient, and I see that attitude play out over and over again in our Soldiers, Airmen, State Guardsmen and civilian employees as they continuously take initiative to find solutions to difficult problems. In my humble opinion, we dominate across the board. We are the only state that is home to almost an entire



Maj. Gen. Tracy R. Norris, the adjutant general - Texas prepares for an orientation flight in an F-16 with the 149th Fighter Wing's gunslingers during a flyover of the University of Texas Football game on Sept. 8, 2019

(Courtesy Photo: MG Tracy R. Norris Twitter)

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Maj. Gen. Tracy R. Norris, the adjutant General of Texas greets Pvt. Kaveita Jones of the Texas State Guard during one section of Operation Lone Star held at the PSJA Early College Highschool in San Juan, Texas. Operation Lone Star is a multi agency event developed to bring medical care to underserved regions of South Texas during the month of July. (Texas State Guard Photo By: Staff Sgt. Eric Walden)

division – 95 percent of the 36th Infantry Division is stationed in Texas, and we have a great relationship with III Corps. Our Air component is leading the nation in multiple areas: the 149th Fighter Wing in San Antonio has more weapons school graduates than any other unit in the Air Force, and is home to our Formal Training Units. Our Reapers are one of many elements we have that put us on the cutting edge of military modernization, and the TXANG's C-130s have been instrumental in hurricane response efforts and other disaster recoveries. Texas is one of 17 states that has a State Guard force, and their ability to plug gaps during times of state-level crisis remains an asset to the TMD. Throughout it all, our state and federal civilian employees are at our side, holding a continuity as our forces are pulled all across the state and globe.

DISPATCH:

What has been your most rewarding moment as the Adjutant General, and what has been the most challenging event of the previous year.

NORRIS:

There are so many rewarding moments from the last year. I am lucky enough to benefit from being the Adjutant General for a state that executes more mission sets than any other state while still staying on track with our deployments. In this past year we responded to natural disasters both in Texas and in other states, we supported recovery from major cyberattacks, we

performed numerous DSCA missions, had a successful state legislative session, maintained positive relationships with our friends in DC, and still, in the midst of it all, continued forward with our aggressive mobilization schedule. It has been an exciting year, and I am looking forward to what this year brings.

In terms of challenges, I think my biggest challenge has been working to get the message across that one suicide, one SARC incident, is one too many. The military is a family, we have no place for people to not have each other's backs, and we must ensure that all our service members feel supported and heard. Our business is a hard one, going between disasters or combat zones and the civilian world requires much of an individual. As an organization we must keep fighting against these internal enemies.



Maj. Gen. Tracy R. Norris, The Adjutant General - Texas Chief Warrant Officer 4 Brandon Briggs with the Lone Star Medal of Valor for his rescue efforts during Hurricane Harvey in a ceremony August 16, 2020 at the Texas Army National Guard Army Aviation Flight Facility in Austin, Texas. (Courtesy Photo: MG Tracy R. Norris Twitter)

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DISPATCH:

Last year you said you wanted to focus on growth for the organization both in mission and personnel, what success have you seen in expanding the Texas Military Department?

NORRIS:

I think we have been extremely successful in this. Just last month, TXARNG Recruiting and Retention was recognized as being the leader in the nation for Guard recruiting efforts. We have strong momentum forward on the Army side to getting the RTI at Fort Hood, as well as returning an armored brigade to Texas. Air is making huge advances in modernization and moving toward upgrading our C-130s. Thanks to the number of active Air bases in Texas, I hope we can continue to grow the Air component by capitalizing on the fact that many Airmen are coming off active duty and already have roots here in Texas. At the State Guard level, we were able to have a successful reorganization of its personnel, and secure additional funding at the state level.

DISPATCH:

What efforts do you foresee for the department in the next year, and what long-term goals are you setting for your Guardsmen and your staff?

NORRIS:

Retention and succession planning will continue to be my primary focuses, as they affect both the short term and long term success and abilities of this agency. As a part of that, I want to stay on top of bringing armor back to Texas and continuing to modernize our equipment for all components.

DISPATCH:

Sometimes junior enlisted soldiers don't see the bigger picture in how their efforts impact the organization. Can you explain how their work and drill time contributes to achieving your goals as the commander of the Texas Military?

NORRIS:

Bottom line is this: the junior Soldiers and Airmen on the ground that actually execute the mission are our most important asset. Without them we would not

be able to complete our missions. As leaders, it is our job to protect them and be a buffer between them and distractions, allowing them to grow and eventually be in leadership positions themselves.

DISPATCH:

What is one piece of advice would you give to a Soldier or Airmen about how to develop their career with the military?

NORRIS:

I would say, be as engaged as you can be. Engage with your leadership to learn about the bigger picture and how you fit into it, and if your leadership doesn't engage back, find someone who will. Be proficient in your MOS or AFSC, whether that is an aircraft mechanic, a cook, or a pilot. No matter who you are, what you do matters, do everything you can to be the best at your job. No matter your rank, be the subject matter expert for the rank you are, and the professional that our agency, Texas, and the nation rely on.

MAJOR GENERAL TRACY R. NORRIS BIOGRAPHY

Major General Norris received an Army ROTC scholarship and began her military career in 1986 after graduating from Florida State University with a Bachelor of Science in Anthropology. She went on to receive her Master of Science in Urban and Regional Planning, a Master of Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College, and a Master of Business Administration from The University of Texas at Austin. She has attended the Human Resource Management Qualification Course, Homeland Security Executive Course and is Dual Status Commander Certified.

Major General Norris currently serves as the Adjutant General of the Texas National Guard. She previously served as the Deputy Adjutant General for Army and Commander of the Texas Army National Guard, Assistant Deputy Adjutant General, Commander of the 176th Engineer Brigade, Chief of Facilities and Maintenance, Chief of Staff of 36th Infantry Division, and deployed to Iraq in 2010, in support of Operation New Dawn, where the 36ID commanded and controlled the nine southern provinces of Iraq. The Division returned in September 2011 after assisting in the set-up of the U.S. Consulate in Basra for the U.S. Department of State.

She has been assigned to leadership positions as platoon leader, company commander, operations officer, executive officer, battalion commander of the Recruiting and Retention Battalion, and battalion commander of the 176th Engineer Battalion. During her tenure at National Guard Bureau, Major General Norris worked as a program manager for several programs such as Executive Officer Environmental Division; Range & Training Lands; and, Chief of the Training Facilities Team, Training Support Branch.

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THE FIRST ALL-ARMY INTEGRATED PERSONNEL, PAY AND TALENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The Integrated Personnel and Pay System-Army (IPPS-A), an online Human Resources PeopleSoft (9.2) solution, is the vehicle that will allow the Army to transform from an industrial age personnel system to a 21st Century talent management system. IPPS-A integrates personnel and pay while providing three main capabilities: Total Force Visibility, Talent Management and Auditability.

HOW TO PREPARE TO GO LIVE 25 FEBRUARY 2020

- 10) Be a champion for change
- 9) Verify HR professionals are provisioned for proper roles
- 8) Review training plan and class rosters.
Send all updates to State Training Coordinator
- 7) Stay proficient and practice using UPK's within the IPPS-A program
- 6) Stay connected! Follow IPPS-A on Social Media
- 5) Resolve personnel and pay discrepancies
- 4) Complete 100% DTMS input for all Soldiers in your unit (ACFT, Height, Weight, Weapons Qual.)
- 3) Complete proper position excess number coding
- 2) Contact your TXARNG Helpdesk for assistance
ng.tx.txarng.list.ipps-a-elm@mail.mil
- 1) Talk to your formations and Soldiers about IPPS-A and its capabilities

BENEFIT TO THE SOLDIER

IPPS-A automates numerous manual HR and pay processes, allows mobile access to personal pay and HR data, tracks personnel actions from start to finish (approved changes reflect in pay and personal profile immediately), captures talent within units, shows unit readiness and captures all actions in one place. IPPS-A is auditable and reduces errors affecting Soldiers.

SPECIFICATIONS

- ★ Online comprehensive personnel and pay system
- ★ Provides 24/7 self-service capabilities
- ★ Accessible to Soldiers, commanders and HR Staff
- ★ Provides visibility of the total force in one system
- ★ Enables Army to manage the talents of the total force based on knowledge, skills and behaviors
- ★ Provides audit capability for pay and benefits to ensure best use of Army dollars to employ human capital



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STAY INFORMED**



IPPS-A.ARMY.MIL



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DEPUTY ADJUTANT GENERAL - ARMY -

Story By: Charles Spirtos

Texas Military Department Public Affairs

Brig. Gen. Greg Chaney was promoted to the position of Deputy Adjutant General Army in January of 2019. After a year serving as the commander of the Texas Army National Guard the Dispatch asked him to reflect on the previous year.

DISPATCH:

You began your career in the Texas National Guard when you were in college, now you have served as the Deputy Adjutant General - Army for over a year. How has the organization changed in that time?

CHANEY:

Over the last 30 years, technology has changed almost everything about the day-to-day of the job. When I first enlisted, I didn't own a cell phone, and a fax machine was the most advanced piece of technology a company commander needed to master. Now, I get hundreds of emails a week, and can be contacted 24/7. It's not enough for a new Soldier to be able to

run two miles and do push-ups – they also need to be able to use a computer. The speed of communication has made the job for command teams more difficult, and systems like GCSS-Army and IPPS-A are essential to running their companies.

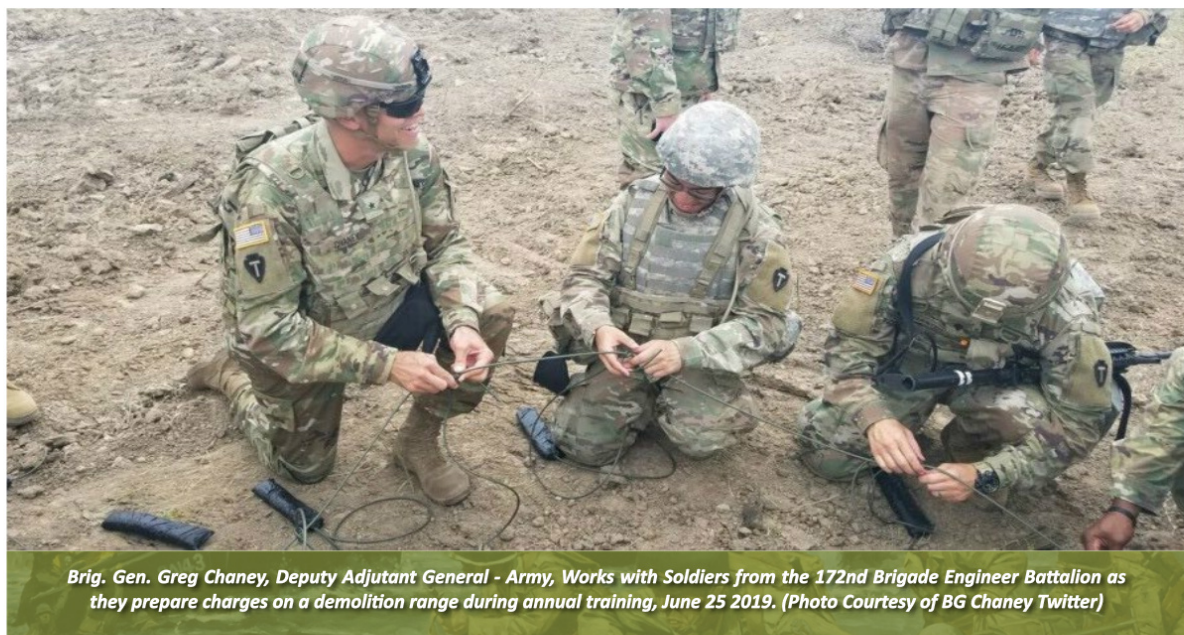
Conversely, what has not changed is the organization's need for strong leaders of character. The new decade will present unique and unprecedented challenges both locally and abroad, but our mission of protecting the homeland will remain.

DISPATCH:

What has been your most rewarding moment as the Deputy Adjutant General and what has been the most challenging event of the previous year?

CHANEY:

Since the beginning of my career, the most rewarding part of my job has been to help Soldiers succeed. I have been the Deputy Adjutant General for about a year now, and in that time I have had the honor of promoting several lieutenant colonels, presenting



Brig. Gen. Greg Chaney, Deputy Adjutant General - Army, Works with Soldiers from the 172nd Brigade Engineer Battalion as they prepare charges on a demolition range during annual training, June 25 2019. (Photo Courtesy of BG Chaney Twitter)

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awards like the Legion of Merit and handing out challenge coins. When I see people succeeding, I feel like the organization is moving in the right direction.

The most challenging thing is changing the culture of the organization to prioritize Soldier lethality and equipment maintenance. For years, we have relied on what I call the “industrial readiness model,” where units have over a year’s notice to prepare for a deployment. In the future, I believe units will have a month or less to deploy from home station to an active combat theater - these types of deployments will succeed or fail based off of Soldier and equipment readiness. Preparing for these types of scenarios is a massive undertaking, and I would consider this the most challenging part of my job over the past year.

DISPATCH:

Last year you said you wanted to focus on individual readiness. Have you seen Soldiers increase their efforts toward this goal?

CHANEY:

That’s an interesting question – I think the answer is yes, but sometimes it takes time to change organizational culture.... you start to see results in a round-about way. whether a mechanic is turning a wrench, or a culinary specialist is preparing a meal in the field ,that is increasing individual Soldier lethality. The recent safety stand-down placed additional emphasis on drivers training and equipment readiness, which also increases individual readiness.

I think Soldiers doing the jobs they signed up for is the best, fastest and most efficient way to increase readiness and lethality, and to that effect I have seen an increased effort and focus on Soldier readiness. I am excited to see the progress we can make this year during annual training, and look forward to working with leaders to continue the push for individual readiness and lethality.

DISPATCH:

You also focused on preparing Soldiers to face a near peer threat by adjusting their training, and updating equipment. Is there a specific unit you would point to that is leading the way for others to follow in this initiative? What are they doing right?

CHANEY:

Not a specific unit, no. I refer to my earlier comments – preparing to face a near-peer threat is going to require units to deploy from their home stations with the Soldiers and equipment they have on hand. We as an organization still have a way to go in our efforts to increase both individual and equipment readiness, but I believe we are on the right track.

DISPATCH:

Previously you’d claimed and joked about being an “accidental general” not intending to pursue a career in the military. Looking back as the commander of the largest Army National Guard in the nation would you call that a happy accident?

CHANEY:

I am absolutely happy in my role within the organization! Serving as the Deputy Adjutant General has been the honor of a lifetime, and I feel fortunate every day for the opportunity to work with my fellow Soldiers and Texans. I think I should expand on the accident part a bit more though. . .

I joke about being an “accidental general” because even after I joined the Guard, I never planned my career path to becoming a general officer. If you had asked me when I was a captain or major, I would have thought that becoming a general was unachievable, or something that would never happen to me. Now that I have more experience in the organization, I have realized that the opposite is true – young officers, warrant officers and enlisted Soldiers should sketch out their careers through 20+ years. Having an end goal in mind will help Soldiers make the best career decisions.

DISPATCH:

When people think about the Army they often visualize infantry Soldiers, helicopters and tanks, but you have always prided yourself on being an engineer. Do you think that focus building and creating gives you a different insight into the military?

CHANEY:

I grew up as an engineer, and the lessons and best practices I learned from my time in engineering units have certainly shaped my point of view and decision making process. However, my time spent with combat arms, human resources and logistics leaders have also shaped my career, and help me see the bigger

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picture. One of the great things about being a general is that I am surrounded by incredibly talented people from all backgrounds, and I am able to pull from their experience as well as my engineering knowledge.

All that being said, every officer thinks that his or her branch is the best – the difference is that engineers are correct.

DISPATCH:

Why does America need a Texas Army National Guard? What do your Soldiers bring to the table that the nation needs that they can't find in an active duty unit?

CHANEY:

Great question. The first thing that comes to mind is our ability to respond to domestic disasters, specifically hurricanes. We have refined our response processes and procedures to the point that I am comfortable claiming that we are the best natural disaster response force in the 54 National Guard states and territories. Hurricane Harvey is the most recent major example, but Texas Guardsmen have been deployed to every major natural disaster for decades, and have

often provided aide to our neighboring states.

In addition to natural disasters, we have many Soldiers who are working every day to protect Texas and the U.S. Our Joint Counter Drug Task Force does incredible work at stopping drug trafficking across the state, and have helped build strong connections between the Texas Military Department and state and federal law enforcement agencies. The 6th Civil Support Team helps protect our cities against chemical, nuclear, and biological threats. We have Soldiers deployed to the southern border who work a variety of jobs in support of Customs and Border Protection. On top of all of this, we have several units currently deployed overseas in multiple theaters.

I greatly appreciate our active duty counterparts, and enjoy working alongside them when we get the chance. However, the Texas Army National Guard plays an essential role in the defense of our nation that an active duty unit could never fill. I have served in the Texas Guard for over 30 years, and am still amazed at the sheer number of concurrent missions that Texas is able to accomplish.



Brig. Gen. Chaney addresses Soldiers following a vehicle operators course conducted by the 712th Military Police Company during annual Ttraining held June 9, 2019 (Photo Courtesy of BG Chaney Twitter)

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DEPUTY ADJUTANT GENERAL - AIR -

*Story By: Andrew Smith
Texas Military Department Public Affairs*

Maj. Gen. Dawn Ferrell was promoted to the position of Deputy Adjutant General Army in November of 2015. The Dispatch asked her how 2019 compares to previous years and where she is directing the Texas Air National Guard for 2020.

DISPATCH:
You began your career in the Texas National Guard as an enlisted airman and now you serve as the Deputy Adjutant General - Air. How has the organization changed in that time?

FERRELL:
Overall being a female in a predominantly male organization back then was a challenge, but I grew up

with brothers so I am used to being around a lot of folks. I was enlisted in the 136th Air Lift Wing that flew C-130's and while I was interested in being a pilot, back then C-130's were considered a combat aircraft so females could not fly them. That changed in the late 80's and that allowed me to change paths. The opportunities for women to serve not just in the Air Guard but in all branches of service is very different from what it was. In terms of the organization itself I think that when you are younger your focus is more on a personal level, you don't tend to look at the big picture, you focus on your mission. When I was enlisted and a junior officer, I didn't think about the Texas Military Department but as I grew I realized that this umbrella that oversees the National Guard is so much more encompassing than what I ever realized. I think that our leaders really care about our Airmen and Solders and that makes a huge difference in how we move forward within the organization.

DISPATCH:
What has been your most rewarding moment as the Deputy Adjutant General and what has been the most challenging event of your term?

FERRELL:
As the Deputy Adjutant General, the most challenging event had to be Hurricane Harvey. The mass involvement of our Airmen and Soldiers in that event and the logistics it took to get those folks involved and to make sure they were taken care of and paid. On the air side it was massive for us, because when it comes to domestic operations the Air National Guard does not play as big of a role as the Army National Guard. We provide airplanes and support, but we don't always deploy en-mass like we did for that. We learned a lot from that mass activation and it really gave us here in Texas a chance to see how important our role is in domestic operations.

I don't really have one rewarding moment so to speak but I have had rewarding moments getting to see the Airmen that work with me as they move up in the



Col. Michael Reid, then vice commander of the 149th Fighter Wing and current chief of staff, discusses the wing's mission with Lt. Gen. Steven Kwast, commander of the Air Education and Training Command, Army Maj. Gen. Tracy Norris, the adjutant general of Texas and Maj. Gen. Dawn M. Ferrell, deputy adjutant general and commander of the Texas Air National Guard, during the joint leadership's visit to the wing at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas, March 22, 2019. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Mindy Bloem)

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ranks and take command of squadrons or wings. That is very rewarding for me to see and be a part of.

DISPATCH:

Last year you said you wanted to focus on taking care of Airmen, have you seen a payoff in this service member focused mission? What does this look like when applied to the wing level?

FERRELL:

To me taking care of the Airmen involves a lot of different factors. Obviously making sure that they are trained, equipped and prepared to do their job like every guards me is important, but also that they get paid on time, are recognized for their efforts and are promoted when they are able to promote. One of our biggest challenges is the amount of time it takes to do those things. I think we have improved on the timeline of accomplishing the administrative stuff, but there are always ways to improve.

DISPATCH:

What will be your focus over the next year for the Texas Air National Guard?

FERRELL:

My sort of motto is 'mission first, people always,' and I always tell the troops if you take care of the mission, I will take care of you. So my focus is always going to be on taking care of the Airmen. That also includes making sure the mission sets are viable, that they are current and that we have the most modern equipment and aircraft that we can get to do our job. That is sometimes easier said than done, but we are really focused on making sure our three wings and their flying missions stay viable and all the support functions that go with that as well. I would like to see the Texas Air National Guard grow. We stand at about 3,300 Airmen and I feel we could comfortably go as high 5,000 Airmen, which would mean going from three wings to five wings. I am very confident we can do that, the challenge is always getting the man power and the resources to do that. I am always looking for new mission sets and more man power.

DISPATCH:

Previously you spoke about the importance you place on education, what impact can an Airman see in their career by achieving a higher education?

FERRELL:

I am an educator by trade, love school, love formal education and that is why I am passionate about it. I worked in higher education for a long time. When I look at higher education I don't just look at the liberal arts education, I also look at anything beyond high school. Whether you are a welder going to welding school or in another kind of trade school, I think it is important for someone to find their niche in education and continue to learn. In the military we have our professional military education we all have to do and we have our technical training that we all have to do to learn our skill and that is great, but I think higher education, whether it's a trade education or liberal arts education, really expands your knowledge and your view of the world. It also helps to define and have a goal so when you do leave the military, and all of us do at some point, you have something on the civilian side that really speaks to your skill-set as well.

DISPATCH:

You spent the first decade of your career as an enlisted Airman, how does this experience shape how you serve as the Commander of the Texas Air National Guard?

FERRELL:

I enlisted right out of high school. I was very young, and I knew I wanted to do something with the military. My father was a career enlisted Airman, my brother joined the Marine Corps and I just knew I wanted to do something, but I also wanted to go to college. The guard was the perfect answer back then. I spent the first 25 years of my career as a drill status guardsmen. The first 10 years of that was enlisted and then I got an opportunity to commission and loved it ever since, but really the challenges that come with the officer corps were things I was very interested in. In the officer corps you have a trade but your focus is on leadership, mentoring and management and that is really the area I am passionate about. I think having prior enlisted experience lets me understand the importance of the enlisted Airmen to the Air Force, as 75 percent of all Airmen are enlisted. They are a big part of how we get things done in the Air Force and Air National Guard. I understand their perspective, I think it really brought a good understanding to me of the enlisted side and how we all fit together. I often see that officer who has never been enlisted does not

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always have that viewpoint because they have never been in those shoes.

DISPATCH:

Why does America need a Texas Air National Guard? What do your Airmen bring to the table that the nation needs that they can't find in an active duty unit?

FERRELL:

For Air National Guard Airmen, the majority of them are drill status manning meaning they have a civilian job and a civilian life and with that comes an additional skill-set. The active duty don't have the benefit of experience in the civilian world. It is a bit of a misnomer to look at an Airman in uniform and to assume that is all they are because there is so much more to them. The Airmen we provide are very strong in their

skill-sets, they are good at their mission and that is not just important to Texas but to the nation. Airmen are excited and dedicated to the mission here in Texas. The National Guard really needs us because we help take care of the nation's business here in Texas.

DISPATCH:

Is there anything else you would like to share with your Airmen?

FERRELL:

I have spent my entire career in the guard so my passion for the guard is deep and my history with it is long. It is the best part time job in the world especially for a young Airman wanting to do some other things in life. It is not for everyone but it is a great life.



Maj. Gen. Dawn Ferrell, the deputy Adjutant General - Air meets with Lt. Gen. Steven Kwast, Commander of the Air Education and Training Command at the Air Force Innovation hub, AFWERX, during the South by Southwest Technology symposium in Austin, Texas held during March 2019.

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COMMANDER OF THE TEXAS STATE GUARD

Story By: Brandon Jones

Texas Military Department Public Affairs

Maj. Gen. Robert Bodisch was promoted to serve as the Commander of the Texas State Guard in January of 2019. The Dispatch asked him to reflect on the previous year and discuss his intent for the Texas State Guard moving forward.

DISPATCH:

How does your previous career in Law Enforcement and with the Department of Public Safety shape your vision of the Texas State Guard?

BODISCH:

My 45-year law enforcement career began in 1973, the last nine years of which were with the Texas Department of Public Safety as Department Chief of Staff and Deputy Director of Texas Homeland Security. DPS employs over 11,000 personnel with a budget of over \$1 billion per year. As Chief of Staff, I was responsible for several divisions and individual sections representing approximately 4,800 employees. Texas Homeland Security included the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) and the Intelligence and Counter-Terrorism Division. I was successfully leading and managing these significant responsibilities, of which the knowledge gained from each helped form my vision and outlook for the overall professionalization of the Texas State Guard.

DISPATCH:

What has been your most rewarding moment as the Commander of the State Guard, and what has been the most challenging event of your term?

BODISCH:

My most rewarding moment was the honor of being appointed by Governor Abbott to serve as the Commanding General of the Texas State Guard. I also have the opportunity to serve our outstanding professionals who give of themselves, their time, talent and resources. The most challenging aspect has been the

significant transformation we have just undertaken to align our command structure with the Department of Public Safety and Texas Division of Emergency Management Disaster Regions. The entire year-long planning process required all our officers and enlisted personnel to buy-in to the vision of 'One Texas State Guard' – and they have done so.

DISPATCH:

There has been a focus on increasing the size of the State Guard. Previously you said Brig. Gen. John L. Scribner convinced you to join, give us your pitch to convince a possible young recruit to join the State Guard.

BODISCH:

For any Texan looking for a way to give back to their state and community, I can think of no other comparable professional organization. The Texas State Guard provides critical emergency response during catastrophic events. Our troops stand ready to deploy anytime, anywhere and can be on scene within 24 hours of deployment. I call this selfless service at its finest.

DISPATCH:

The State Guard has undergone a significant transition from a three-component force to an Army-centric system, do you have advice for your Guardsmen as they integrate into a single force?

BODISCH:

During this transformation to one uniform, one team, one mission, one Texas State Guard, we have worked very hard to provide the necessary communication and justification to our Soldiers. The one uniform brings the Texas State Guard into the universal Operational Camouflage Pattern. The reorganization to brigades makes the Texas State Guard more efficient and effective, especially in terms of monthly training/drills and annual training. Personnel who live in a particular brigade's area aligned with the Texas Division of Emergency Management regions, will now

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drill and attend yearly training in that location, significantly reducing travel time and travel expenses. Command and staff are also able to visit their respective units within a localized geographic area rather than needing to travel state-wide to do so.

DISPATCH:

What are your goals for the State Guard over the next year?

BODISCH:

Some of our primary goals for 2020 are (1) to continue recruiting high-quality Texans into our force; (2) enhance our retention efforts to retain our outstanding Soldiers; (3) maintain a high state of readiness; (4) continue providing high quality professional military education and training; (5) maintain our wellness

program; (6) maintain our personnel evaluation program and (7) develop new mission ready packages in consultation with the Texas Military Department.

DISPATCH:

The State Guard maintains a roster of nearly 2,000 members serving without a contract, what keeps these Guard members committed to the organization?

BODISCH:

I would have to say selfless service. But different people join for various reasons, some because they had a disqualifier to join federal service or did not have an opportunity to join federal service and now are past the maximum age to enter. Some want to be a part of a uniformed service and others join to enjoy



Maj. Gen. Robert Bodisch, Commander of the Texas State Guard meets with a child patient to deliver toys during the Texas State Guard Toy Drive visit to St. Davids Medical Facility, Austin, Texas in December 2019. The State Guard aims to collect and distribute toys to children in medical facilities throughout Texas. (Courtesy Photo: Texas State Guard Facebook)

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the camaraderie that comes with being a part of a professional military organization. Overall, the desire to serve and assist their fellow Texans is what truly inspires their dedication and commitment to the State Guard.

DISPATCH: Why does Texas need a Texas State Guard?

BODISCH:
With the many current and on-going global threats from rogue nations and nations that support or direct terror activities, large federal military deployments are always a possibility. Concurrently, the operational tempo for our federal and National Guard troops is very high, and Texas has the majority of natural disasters of any state in the nation. Our citizens expect a ready and trained military force that can deploy swiftly to any impact area to assist in rescue and life-saving efforts. The Texas State Guard fills that role as a critical component of the Texas Military Department. Whether operating independently or jointly with the

Army and Air National Guard, the Texas State Guard brings safety and comfort to our citizens by managing large shelter operations, distributing commodities, evacuation tracking of people, pets and belongings; medical, chaplain and legal support; as well waterborne and ground search and rescue services, to name a few.

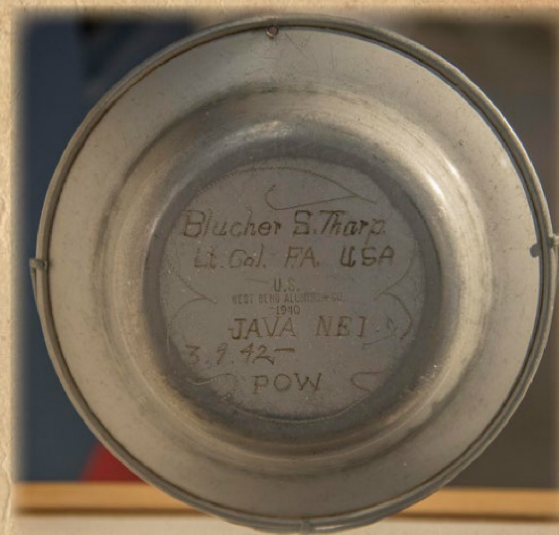
In my opinion, people forget the Texas State Guard sometimes, even though it is most likely one of the, if not the, most cost-efficient state agency in the Texas government. On the national stage, the Texas State Guard receives recognition as the premier State Defense Force in the country. The Texas State Guard has proven itself time and again, since 1941, during emergencies and natural disasters, and continues to do so today, providing valuable mission-ready packages when called needed. Our Soldiers are second to none and are true Texas patriots. They epitomize selfless service and give a new definition to the term "selfless service."



Deputy Surgeon General of the United States, Rear Adm. Erica Schwartz meets and discusses exercises of Operation Lone Star (OLS) 2019 with Texas State Guard Commanding General, Maj. Gen. Robert Bodisch. OLS is the largest mass emergency preparedness exercise that provides no-cost basic health care and ancillary services to under-served communities of its kind in the nation. (Photo Courtesy of Texas State Guard Medical Brigade Facebook Page)

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TEXAS GUARD ARTIFACT OF THE MONTH



MODEL 1937 ALUMINUM MESS BOWL

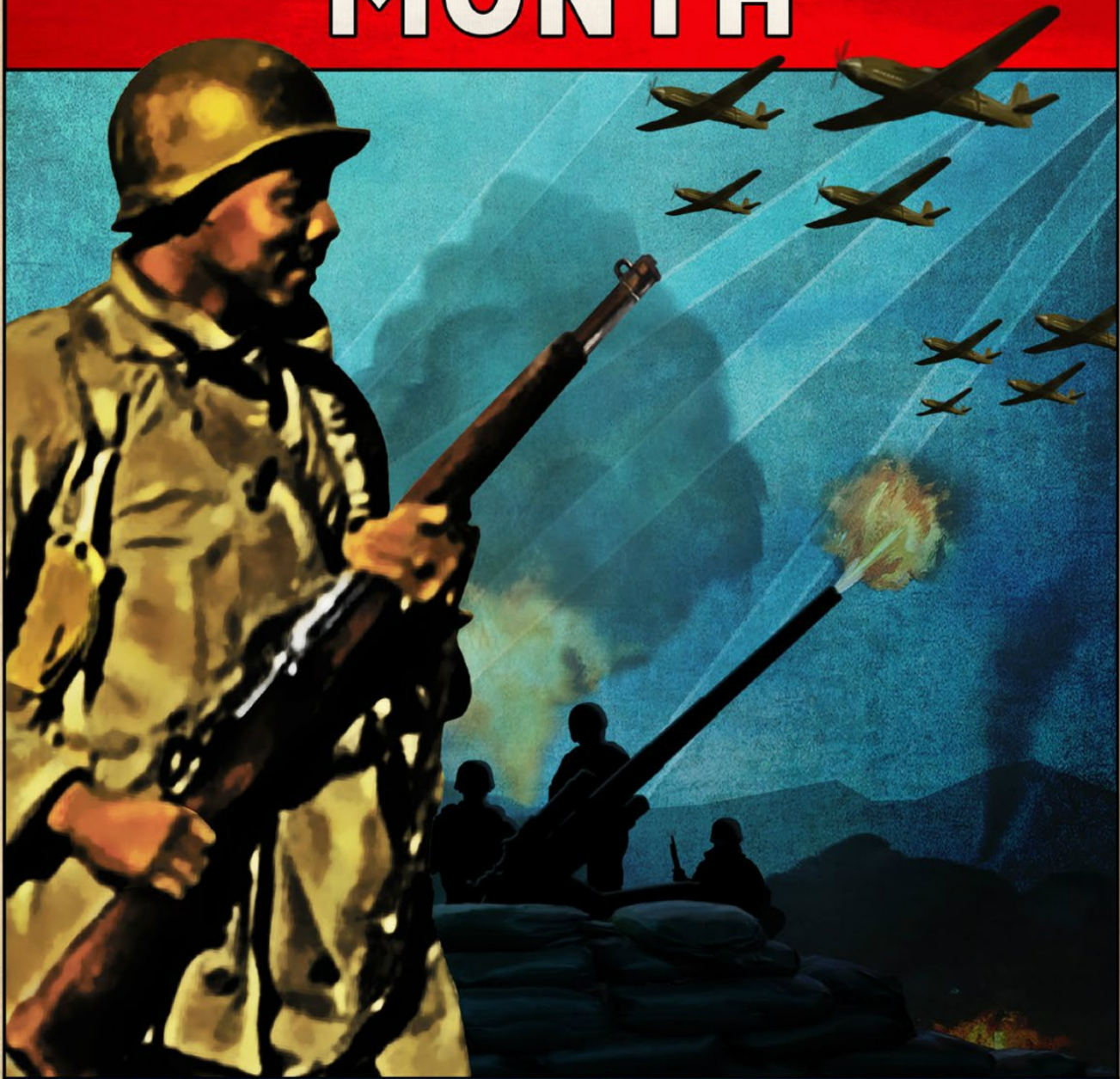
This aluminum bowl, manufactured in 1940, is from a Model 1937 officers mess kit. Each kit was housed in a heavy wooden box and contained enough plates, cups, bowls and other items to set a table for up to eight officers. This bowl was used by Lt. Col. Blucher Tharp during his time as a prisoner of war in Java, Singapore, Burma, Siam (Thailand) and Japan. Tharp carved his name, rank, unit and start date of his captivity on the bottom of the bowl..

MODEL 1910 CANTEEN

This model 1910 canteen was issued to C.J. Eaton of Battery E, 2nd Battalion, 131st Field Artillery. He carried it from Texas to Java and used it as a prisoner of war. During his time as a prisoner, Eason carved the various locations of his imprisonment into the canteen.

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BLACK HISTORY MONTH



**HONORING THE PAST,
SECURING THE FUTURE!**

