

THE DISPATCH

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OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT



JUNE 2019

FOCUS ON INNOVATION

TEXAS GUARDSMEN ARE HELPING TO BUILD THE FUTURE OF THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES

TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT

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*U.S. Air Force 2nd Lt. Seth Murphy-Sweet, Pilot Training Next student, takes a 3D vision test prior to virtual reality flying training at the Pilot Training Next Course hosted at the Texas Army National Guard Aviation Maintenance Support Facility in Austin, Texas, Feb. 5, 2019.
(U.S. Air Force Photo By: Sean M. Worrell)*





Sgt. 1st Class Robert Rodriguez, a platoon sergeant for 1st Battalion, 141st Infantry Regiment, 72nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 36th Infantry Division of the Texas Army National Guard, stands with several children in Djibouti. Rodriguez gifted 500 sandals to barefoot orphans and children during the deployment. Rodriguez coordinated the sandal donation effort with his daughter's school, The Blessed Sacrament in Laredo, Texas.

(Courtesy Photo By: Sgt. 1st Class Robert Rodriguez)



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TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT

FROM THE TOP

COMMENTARIES FROM TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT LEADERS



A NEW WAY OF FULFILLING THE GUARD'S MISSIONS

CHIEF MASTER SGT. CHRISTOPHER CASTLE
SENIOR ENLISTED ADVISOR - AIR

Innovation. We all know on some level that innovative change is essential to survival and progress. Nevertheless, it has been my experience that while people have no problem expressing interest and support when presented with innovative new ways of doing things, many tend to worry and stress internally. Our military leaders know that change is inevitable, that it is ultimately a requirement for the continuation of our organization. However, change is scary. Change threatens the status quo. Change alters the operating environment that leaders grew up in – and therefore change is often met with trepidation.

Over the years, I have witnessed many leaders respond to innovative changes with the phrase, “you can’t do that.” I understand where they are coming from. There is security, stability, and familiarity in keeping things as they are. That being said, we cannot let a fear of change stop us from progressing and embracing the exciting innovations that are coming down the pipeline. Our near-peer adversaries have recognized that in order to be top world powers, they must find new ways of doing things to increase efficiencies, lethality and readiness. We must do the same if we wish to maintain our status as a world military power.

There are many changes units in the Texas Military Department are working on and as the Texas Air National Guard Senior Enlisted Advisor, as well as the Network Cyber Center Branch Chief for J6, I am lucky enough to be involved in their appraisal and ultimate implementation. Two that I am particularly excited about are the Pilot Training Next program and potential changes to the DoD drug test. What I love most about these two particular programs is that they will give time back to service members and units. Pilot Training Next is a game changer. While it is currently focused on the Air side, the innovations in training techniques it champions will ripple out to the force as a whole, allowing for more efficient

training methods and eliminating wasted time and energy for both trainer and trainee. For reasons, I am sure I do not need to state, no one enjoys the drug testing process. I am by no means suggesting that this potential new policy will be “fun,” but it will cut down on time. Instead of spending the day waiting around in lines, a simple mouth swab with results in minutes will be all that is required. I believe it is little things such as this that can make a big difference. It will help remove stigmas and annoyances and enable service members to get back to their jobs.

As innovative changes continue to spread throughout the force, if you find you are defaulting to saying “no,” I challenge you to dive deeper into why that is your immediate reaction. Take a step back and look at yourself. Is it that you are truly worried about the good of the whole, or are you more concerned about what the changes will mean for you? Try to focus on what is best for the improvement of the force. If you still feel concerns, I would ask that you look for a solution, rather than simply digging your heels in and refusing to embrace the fact that change will come, whether you participate in its implementation or not.

Change is difficult to implement anywhere, especially in the military. Our system is set up to provide a stable and consistent environment. To execute change in a positive way is a challenge to any leader at any level, and we must work to find ways to do so. The speed with which technology advances makes the world an increasingly smaller place, leading to innovations of necessity. I would argue that with proper participation from leadership at all levels, we can work together to maintain a stable environment for our service members, while also paving the way for a more innovative, lethal and efficient force. The future is coming at us fast, whether we are prepared or not. We must adapt to not only survive but also to dominate. **- DUTY, HONOR, TEXAS -**

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AUGUST

ANNUAL TRAINING

Is your unit conducting the coolest AT this summer?

Let us know so we can cover the work you're doing to prepare Texas Guardsmen.

SEPTEMBER

DEPLOYMENT

Shoot us stories of Soldiers and Airmen serving overseas to strengthen the homefront defense. Contact us today with individual stories or unit articles.

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Command Sgt. Maj. Kristopher L. Dyer, Army Senior Enlisted Advisor (left) plays alongside National Guard Soldiers at an Army recruiting event featuring Street Fighter V at the Camp Mabry Drill Hall in Austin, Texas on May 4, 2019.
(Texas Military Department Photo By John Thibodeau)

ARMY GUARD EMBRACES ESPORTS

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Story By: Spc. Jason Archer Texas Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention

AUSTIN, Texas – The Texas Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention department hosted a Street Fighter V video game tournament on May 4, 2019 at Camp Mabry, Texas.

The tournament was part of Army Entertainment Esports' annual Road to TwitchCon, a series of 12 video game tournaments leading up to the finals at TwitchCon North America, a convention celebrating the online gaming community. The Camp Mabry tournament was streamed live on the Army's Twitch account and was held in conjunction with the Army's STRONG B.A.N.D.S. campaign.

Sgt. Steven Johnson, marketing non-commissioned officer in the Texas Army National Guard, was in charge of coordinating between the Texas National Guard, National Guard Bureau, local vendors and participants to ensure a successful event.

"It was a big undertaking from the beginning," said Johnson. "Any time you have an event with so many moving parts, you're going to have challenges."

The tournament, originally slated for 60 gamers, brought almost 100 participants and 250 specta-

tors to the Camp Mabry drill hall. Amongst the gamers was University of Texas alumnus and New Orleans Saints rookie wide receiver Lil'Jordan Humphrey.

Texas Military Department enlisted leaders also showed their support for the event. Chief Master Sgt. Michael E. Cornitius Jr., Command State Senior Enlisted Leader, and Command Sgt. Maj. Kristopher L. Dyer, Army Senior Enlisted Advisor, each took turns at the controller talking with troops as they faced off in digital battle.

"This is great as far as morale and readiness for our Soldiers," said Johnson. "It also gives us a chance to interact with the people we serve and the communities we recruit in."

After a hard-fought battle through the crowd of contestants, Texas Army National Guard budget analyst, Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Brown, earned a top spot at the tournament. According to Brown, he had not played Street Fighter since the second version was released, but the controls were similar enough to provide some familiarity.

"I did not know most of the characters so I just looked for any player I could find from the previous games and picked them," said Brown. "I was able to figure it out and played until I figured out all the controls."

Brown said the event looked like a success based on the number of Soldiers from the Recruit Sustainment Program and the drill weekend interacting with the public both in person and online.

"I did not know what Twitch was, but I was surprised by how many people were participating online," said Brown. "Now all those viewers will get to learn more about the National Guard."

Brown won a mobile gaming pack that includes some of the latest games and a console system. He will travel to California to represent the Texas Army National Guard at the national competition in September at Twitchcon. **-D**



Texas Military Department Soldiers battle each other during an Army National Guard Esports event featuring Street Fighter V at the Camp Mabry Drill Hall in Austin, Texas, on May 4, 2019. (Texas Military Department Photo By: John Thibodeau)



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U.S. Air Force 2nd Lt. Charles Keller and Airman 1st Class Tyler Haselden, Pilot Training Next students, train on a virtual reality flight simulator at the Armed Forces Reserve Center in Austin, Texas, June 21, 2018. (U.S. Air Force Photo By: Sean M. Worrell)

Texas Guard Gives Pilot Training Next Room To Grow

Original Story By: 1st. Lt. Geneva Giaimo
Air Education & Training Command PAO
Story updates shown in italics

AUSTIN, Texas – When the active duty Air Force needed a location to launch a new technology-based pilot training they looked across the nation for the right mix of training space, flight operations infrastructure and logistical support. As they found many of the usable spaces occupied by other programs, a unique partnership in Austin, Texas, began to bear fruit.

Texas Air National Guard members working in the Air Force innovation team AFWERX heard about the program's difficulty in finding a home and began working on a solution. The answer was found in the Texas Military Department's unique Army and Air relationship, which allowed the Texas Army National Guard to volunteer space at the Austin Flight and Maintenance Facility.

Home of the 36th Combat Aviation Brigade, the facility provided ready hanger space, runways and control tower access for the fledgling flight school, along with enough room for traditional classrooms and virtual reality simulators.

This summer, the second class of students will graduate and field flight ready pilots into the United States Air Force.

During the program, student pilots learn to fly the T-6A (Texans), leveraging off-the-shelf training aids and virtual reality simulators. The instruction in this second version is shaped from the success of and lessons learned from the first Pilot Training Next program, where 13 officers graduated in June 2018 and progressed to advanced training across multiple platforms.

This class is comprised of 26 students, including 16 active duty officer students (six of whom are participating in a remotely-piloted aircraft only track), two Air National Guard

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officers, two U.S. Navy officers, one Royal Air Force officer and five enlisted Airmen.

Instructor pilots from across Air Education and Training Command were selected to train the new students based on their skills and fit with the goals of the Pilot Training Next team.

“Innovation and change are necessary,” said Capt. Calogero San Filippo, PTN instructor pilot. “The freedom of movement in this program offers us the opportunity to really explore different avenues, and that is exciting. We are going to do the best we can as instructors to make sure our training is beneficial down the road.”

The five enlisted Airmen participating in the class, similar to the first iteration, are part of the effort to understand how people from non-traditional talent pools perform in this environment.

AETC senior leadership has challenged Airmen at the squadron level to take a deep look at their current curriculum and procedures to find the best way to inspire and develop Mach-21 Airmen. The PTN cadre has played a major role in this effort, studying both how students learn and how to effectively teach flying training.

“We have three focus areas for our team during this iteration of training,” said Lt. Col. Paul Vicars, PTN director. “First, we must empower our instructors and Airmen to be able to innovate by providing them the resources and authority to fail fast and learn. Second, we need to capitalize on that learning by scaling as rapidly as we can. Finally, we need to collect, analyze, understand and use the data to build a process of continual improvement.”

Like the first version of PTN, the second iteration is working collaboratively with AFWERX, building connections with industry to help them work solutions to issues they encounter as they develop the program.

“AFWERX hosted a pitch competition where we were able to look at available commercial solutions to some of our technology needs,” Vicars said. “They also supported us with two small business innovation research programs. The connection with AFWERX has been essential to our ability to rapidly advance.”

During his welcome to the new pilot students and cadre, Vicars highlighted the incredible amount of talent in the cadre and student class and charged the whole PTN program to further innovate and refine how we teach and learn.

“What you decide this will look like, it will look like,” Vicars said. “You are building the foundations for what flying training will look like long into the future.” **-D**

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U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Tyler Haselden, Pilot Training Next student, and Maj. Rachel Rehurek, PTN instructor pilot, prepare for a training flight at Austin-Bergstrom International Airport in Austin, Texas on June 22, 2018. (U.S. Air Force Photo By: Sean M. Worrell)



A U.S. Air Force instructor pilot and student from the Pilot Training Next program taxi a T-6 Texan during a training flight at Austin-Bergstrom International Airport in Austin, Texas, June 22, 2018. (U.S. Air Force Photo By: Sean M. Worrell)



U.S. Air Force Capt. Jeffery Kelley, Pilot Training Next instructor pilot, and 2nd Lt. Brett Bultsma, PTN student, look over the flight plans for their training mission at Austin-Bergstrom International Airport in Austin, Texas, June 18, 2018. (U.S. Air Force Photo By: Sean M. Worrell)

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Texas State Guard Technology Section Begins Best in Texas Award Streak

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

AUSTIN, Texas – For the second year in a row, the Texas State Guard Information and Technology Section has won the Center for Digital Government's Best of Texas Award for, "The Application Serving an Agency's Business Needs" category. The 29-person section earned the award for its ViQue system.

ViQue, short for "Virtual Quartermaster," is an intuitive platform that allows units to track and maintain accountability of personnel and assets. The origin of ViQue began with Hurricane Harvey in 2017, when Texas State Guard members Sgt. Andrew Williams, ViQue Project Manager, and Chief Warrant Officer 5 Thomas Dodd, ViQue team member, began thinking about how to automate the

in-processing and out-processing of deployed Texas State Guard members.

Williams and Dodd brought the concept to the State Guard Information and Technology Section for approval and were authorized additional help from Sgt. John Turner, a programmer with the section.

According to Turner, the initial concept included a small kiosk screen powered by custom programming with a bar-code reader. The system would allow Guardsmen to check into drill upon arrival and offered logistics personnel the ability to track property and equipment.

"Imagine having the ability to know immediately the location of your people, unit strength, number of available personnel to deploy and what supplies and materials are

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Members of the Texas State Guard Information and Technology Section pose with their 2017 Center for Digital Government's Best of Texas Award, For the Application Serving an Agency's Business Needs. They also won the award for the same category in 2018. (Texas State Guard Courtesy Photo)

available," said Turner. "ViQue provides this essential information to commanders who need to make quick decisions."

Taking the system from concept to execution required a ground-up build. After researching the required components, they located what was needed at a local electronics store and assembled five test kiosks. Simultaneously, the needed coding was developed to drive the hardware.

After completion, the Texas State Guard deployed the kiosks to its Austin, Texas, headquarters. The initial version allowed Guardsmen to scan an identification card at drill to check-in. The information would then populate in real time in the Readiness Management System, the State Guard's personnel tracking system, and winner of 2018 Best of Texas Award.

Though the ViQue was tested at headquarters, the system is built to accompany State Guardsmen on real-world missions.

"This system is able to be used in emergency shelters, warehouses and food and water distribution sites," said Dodd. "You power it on and connect to the Internet and the program takes care of the rest."

When putting the hardware together, the team decided to focus on easy-to-find parts from a local electronics store, allowing repair and maintenance to be simple when needed.

"The system is dependable, field deployable and easily repairable," said Williams. "All you need is a screwdriver, some readily available small parts and an Android phone charger."

Lt. Col. Christopher Saucedo, T6 officer in charge, considers the team's win as a testament to their professionalism, quality of work and commitment to serve Texas. He explained that the kiosk can change the way the State Guard staffs its emergency response.

"By eliminating the need for personnel to input information, the program frees up essential manpower which can be assigned to critical tasks, such as shelter operations, distributing food and water, search and rescue, and operating the Emergency Tracking Network," said Saucedo.

The State Guard intends to field enough kiosks to supply each regiment of the force before the end of the year. **-D**

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Interview By: Bob Seyller
Texas Military Department Public Affairs

AUSTIN, Texas – Chief Innovation Officer for the Texas Air National Guard, Maj. Alex Goldberg, has earned the National Guard Individual Award for the 2018 General Larry O. Spencer Innovation Awards.

As the driving force behind Texas Air National Guard modernization efforts, Goldberg is responsible for synchronizing and driving the innovation strategy within the organization. This includes serving as a liaison between universities, local business and the DOD innovation ecosystem to locate and develop new technology that serves the needs of the military. Some of the programs Goldberg supports include the Air Force's AFWERX program, the Defense Innovation Unit, the Air Education Training Command Technology Integration Detachment, the national Geo-spatial Intelligence agency's innovation HUB program and the Army Futures Command.

We asked Goldberg about the need for an innovative mindset in the Guard and how to succeed in this environment.

INTERVIEW FOLLOWS

DISPATCH:

When you talk about innovative technologies, can you help us understand what that means?

GOLDBERG:

The advancements in game-changing technologies include the domains of virtual, augmented and mixed reality, big data analytics, drones, 3D printing/additive manufacturing, biometrics, machine learning/artificial intelligence and cyber. These technologies are no longer originating primarily from the DOD or even traditional defense contractors.

DISPATCH:

If the DoD system and their suppliers are not developing this technology, where is it coming from?

GOLDBERG:

Unlike the industrial age, which was focused on building physical equipment, the information age is focused on software and data. Technology that enables the advancement in this domain is now commonplace. Given the low barrier to entry, entrepreneurs have the ability to create software that can disrupt an industry. Given a military application, this technologies in our adversaries hands have the ability to present profound and far reaching challenges to our national security.

DISPATCH:

What has led to the Military's focus on creating these unorthodox military units focused on innovation? Why now.

GOLDBERG:

Some people think our greatest threat is North Korea, Russia or China, in reality the thing that worries our leadership the most is that as a nation we have lost our ability to go fast. The point of these units is to find a way to tap into the innovation of our communities to accelerate the fielding of new technology so we insure our nation has the technological advantage.

For every dollar the DOD spends on research and development the commercial sector spends 6 dollars in places like Silicon Valley, Austin and now the Texas corridor.

Within the United States, as many as 25 percent of all graduate students in math, engineering, and science are from China. Foreign entities are aggressively investing within our nation's centers of gravity and buying many of these promising technologies, and we are seeing them on the battlefield. In order to outpace the United States, our adversaries leverage these startups and have made it significantly easier to work with them, than our own government.

We need to find unique and novel ways to tap into and support our communities, we do that by making it easier to work with us than anyone else so we can capitalize on these disruptive technologies.

DISPATCH:

How does America's ability to field new technology compare to a near-peer competitor like China?

GOLDBERG:

Our nation's seemingly complicated and drawn-out bureaucratic acquisition processes are designed for the industrial age and not the information age. In China, technologies that are developed in the private sector must be shared with the military. According to the Defense Innovation Unit between 2015 and 2017, ten to 16 percent of all venture capital deals were funded by China. Baidu, which is the Google of China, is directly working with its military to help weaponize these emerging technologies and to bring to fruition its desire to be an artificial intelligence superpower.

DISPATCH:

What can the Military do to shift the innovation process in our own country?

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GOLDBERG:

The standard triple constraint of an innovation project is time, cost and quality. When the DOD moves to acquire new technology, it values cost above quality and time. With startups, the priority is often speed above all else. Launching 80 percent of a perfect solution is still often exponentially better than existing capabilities. This model enables the business to gain market share and user feedback to further dial in products and services. Our adversaries have already taken that rapid development approach.

DISPATCH:

If the consequences of falling behind our adversaries are so dire, why do people resist innovation?

GOLDBERG:

People tend to gravitate towards the status quo because that is what they know it also revolves around an aversion to taking risk. The military needs to take the time to understand what problems and pains that service members encounter before crafting a solution and getting feedback from a customer.

DISPATCH:

What can a Guardsmen expect when they work to innovate the technology or operation of their mission, unit or task?

GOLDBERG:

Change in any large organization can be challenging. The bureaucracy seems to have a never-ending supply of barriers designed to prevent constructive change. For the innovator and problem solver, the journey to have a positive impact is often lonely and not for the faint of heart. There will be the cynics, the critics and those that are simply set in their ways. It will most likely result in being passed over for promotion for those that simply toe the party line. Innovate nonetheless!

DISPATCH:

It seems like there could be a huge negative impact if you push for change. Why take the risk?

GOLDBERG:

Innovate not just because it is the right thing to do, but because the future security of our nation depends on it. From Billy Mitchell to John Boyd, the history of the U.S. Air Force from its inception to our present day is riddled with entrepreneurs who challenged the status quo from inside the organization. Do not let the bureaucracy stop your relentless efforts and adapt, overcome and persevere against the odds. **-D**

MAJ. GOLDBERG'S HINTS FOR INNOVATION SUCCESS

Communicating your vision is critical.
Be able to answer the following questions:

-What is the specific process/product being created/improved upon (3sec & 30sec pitch)?

-What is the problem that is being solved?

-What makes the solution unique?

-Who are the targeted customers? Be specific!

-What is the measurable benefit(s) of solving this problem? (Time reduced, money saved, lethality increased, potential lives saved, injuries reduced, resources saved, etc.)?

People "invest" in people, not ideas.

Execution! This is the secret to innovation that is most often overlooked.

It's not about taking risk, it's about mitigating risk.

Keep the team small. The key to flexibility is a fast decision-making process. The speed of decision making is the primary advantage versus the bureaucracy.

Bounce back from negative feedback, don't take it personally. Do not get defensive. Approach it from a place of positive professionalism and an opportunity to make the solution even better.

Be in love with the problem, not the solution. Keep your eye on the goal and not how you get there.

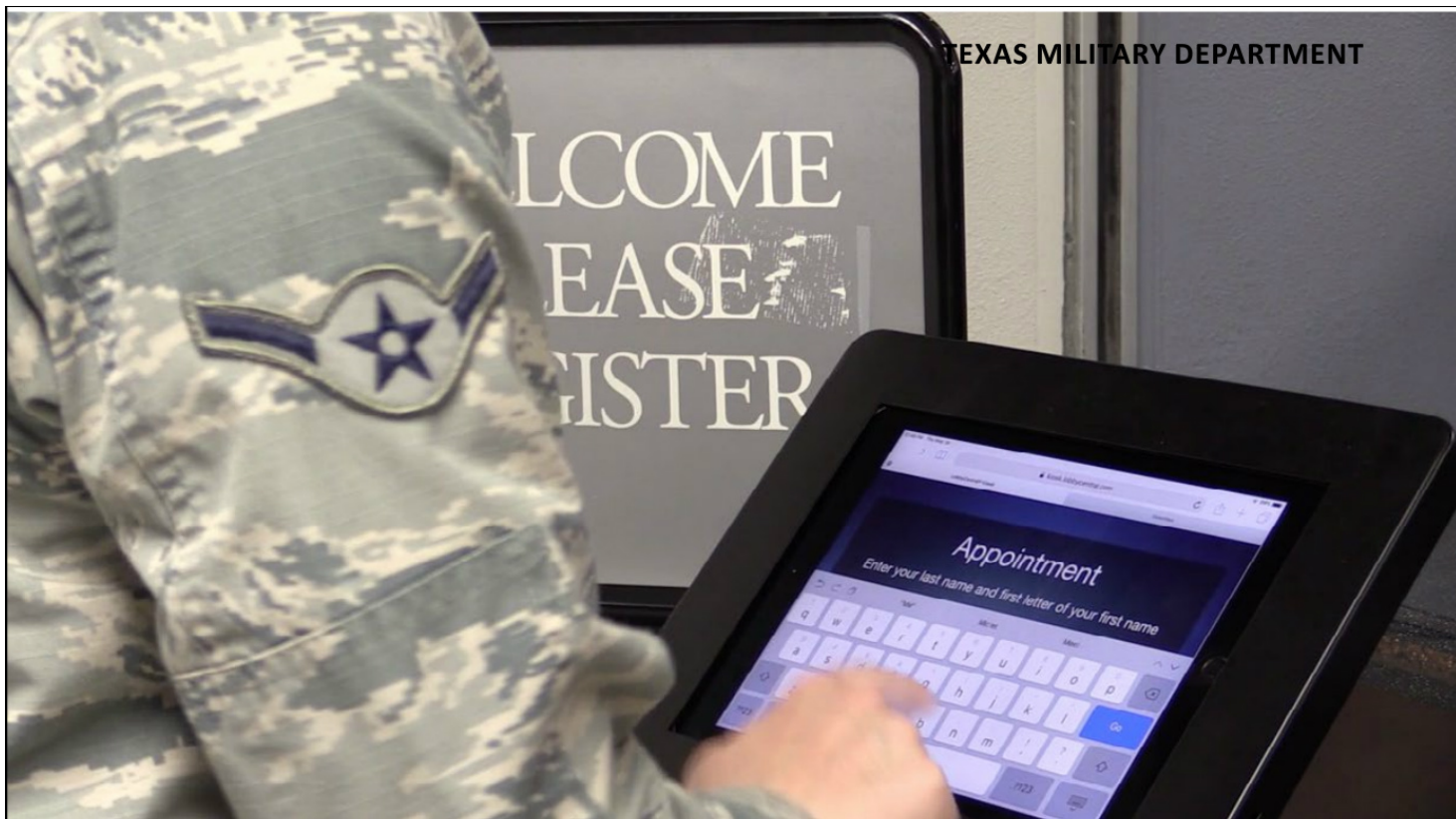
Prioritize learning goals over performance goals.

The ability to see things differently is an essential quality to problem solving.

Ask everyone for feedback, ideas and input. Diversity of thought is critical!

Ask lots of questions. Ideas are often born from other ideas. Challenge yourself and existing methods of solving problems.

Constraints (time, resources, etc.) are a great tool to spur creativity.



NEW KIOSK SPEEDS UP SERVICE TO AIRMEN

*Story & Video By: Staff Sgt. Sean Kornegay
136th Airlift Wing Public Affairs*

FORT WORTH, Texas – As part of the newly launched Texas Air National Guard Innovation Program, members of the 136 Airlift Wing members developed a customer service kiosk system that provides convenience for Airmen while scheduling appointments.

The kiosks are a check-in system designed to eliminate wait times and congestion, speeding up appointment times. According to Tech Sgt. Aubrey Ramos, Financial Manager for the 136th Airlift Wing, the system eliminates barriers as far as time constraints go and benefits the wing as a whole.

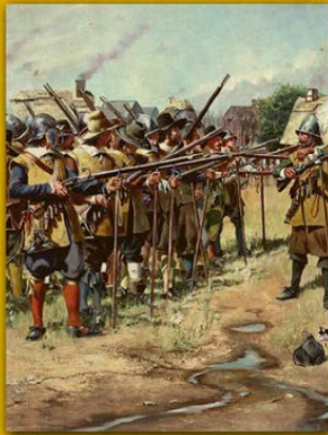
"First we established there was a need to streamline the process of servicing customers," said Ramos. "After that we moved on to the creation phase.

Airmen interested in innovative solution finding can participate in brown bag lunch-and-learns during regular drill at the 136th Airlift Wing. **-D**



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A TIMELINE OF AMERICAN MILITARY INNOVATION



1636

COLONIAL MILITIA

The new world required colonists to develop a defense structure that rested not on untrained civilians or full-time troops but trained citizens in military tactics, developing the citizen-Soldier.



1893

BODY ARMOR

Gunpowder changed the way militaries armed and armored their Soldiers, as body armor proved useless against ammunition. Bulletproof vests returned body armor to the battlefield reducing combat deaths.



1775

THE TURTLE

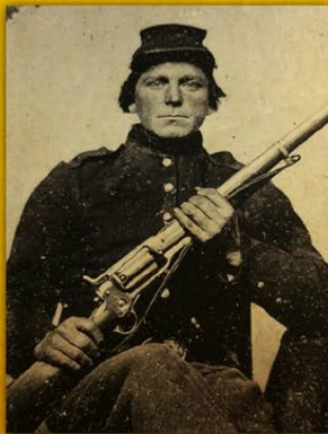
The world's first submersible sea craft was used in an unsuccessful attack on the British blockade of colonial ports during the American Revolution.



1862

USS MONITOR

The Monitor and her confederate counterpart the CSS Virginia made little impact on the Civil War. Their impact on ironclad warships, however, continues to today.



1836

REVOLVING GUN

The high rate of fire convinced the Army to invest in revolving guns, but long reload times reduced the gun's use in battle. The rifle may never have caught on, but its ammunition is the basis for today's bullets.



1861

GATLING GUN

Providing the world's first multi-shot self-loading weapon the Gatling saw use in the American civil war and Charge on San Juan Hill. The guns technological breakthroughs are still used in rotary machines.

Building the nation's greatest military through innovative training, programs, technology and weaponry from 2019 to today.



1905

AIRCRAFT

An investment from the U.S. Army took the Wright Brothers Flyer and developed the first usable aircraft, leading the way for use in warfare and commerce.



1969

ARAPNET

The Internet was developed as a partnership between academics and the military with universities sharing data nationwide on a closed computer network developed by the DOD.



1938

WALKIE TALKIE

Radio waves changed communication, allowing messages to be instantly sent worldwide. The Walkie Talkie brought this tech to combat troops enhancing coordinated action.



1945

FAT BOY

Nuclear weapons provided an abrupt end to the war in the Pacific and shaped the standoff between the U.S. and Soviet forces for the decades of the Cold War.



1942

100 MPH TAPE

Duct Tape was developed to seal water out of ammunition containers as they were sent to the European theater in WWII. Its cult status and multiple colors came later as the product entered the marketplace.



1944

HELICOPTERS

Vertical take-off provides a new platform for the delivery of air support, personnel and supplies. The ability to remove and treat casualties is greatly improved reducing the lethality rate on the battlefield.

TMD



NEW GUARD INNOVATION CENTER LOOKS FOR SOLUTIONS TO MODERNIZE WARFARE NEEDS

Story By: Bob Seyller
Texas Military Department Public Affairs

AUSTIN, Texas – The scope of technology that the U.S. Department of Defense is looking to develop has begun looking less like conventional warfare and more like the pages of a science fiction novel. More than \$13.7 billion dollars of the 2019 defense appropriation is directed toward developing artificial intelligence, directed energy weapons and unmanned systems to compete in cyberspace and outside the earth's atmosphere.

In response, the Army launched Futures Command and the Air Force opened AFWERX, alongside multiple civilian organizations. All of these DOD-funded agencies focus on making America's war fighters the best-equipped and most lethal force on earth.

Missing from the equation has been a state-run National Guard innovation hub, until now. The Texas Military Department is fielding TMD X.

TMD X will provide a connection between the business community, academic institutions and Texas Guardsmen to work collaboratively on solutions to Guard-centric issues. Maj. Alex Goldberg, project officer for TMD X explained the reason Texas should be leading the Guard's innovation charge.

"The vision is to be America's pathfinder in how to leverage a state military and capitalize on the unique skillsets of our Airmen and Soldiers in order to tap into the innovation within our communities," said Goldberg.

According to Goldberg, don't look for TMD X at the local armory. These modern innovation facilities are going to be strategically located in the heart of city centers where other defense programs and strategic partners can collaborate. The flagship TMD X will launch in downtown Austin, followed by more locations in Houston, San Antonio and Fort Worth.

Texas' push toward innovation aligns with the priorities Gen. Joseph Lengyel, Chief of the National Guard Bureau, laid out during his most recent Senate appropriations request, where he explained how the Guard is uniquely qualified to solve some of the DOD's largest problems.

"Innovation is inherently in the DNA of the National Guard," said Lengyel. "Many of the scientists, engineers and technology experts we see in the private sector, are also members of the National Guard bringing unique solutions to different problem sets using their dual military and civilian experiences."

To support this push toward innovation Maj. Gen. Tracy R. Norris, the Adjutant General of Texas, is pushing all three Texas Military Department components to be involved.

"This cannot be a single component effort driving the push to the future," said Norris. "We have highly educated Guard members with creative innovative solutions serving across the force and there is an opportunity for TMD X to harness that talent in a unique way." **-D**

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PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD:



Lt. Col. Randy Stillinger
Texas Army National Guard
36th Infantry Division

36th Infantry Division Soldiers returned to Ft. Hood after a nine-month deployment to Kuwait and Iraq.

2nd Lt. Sonya Martinez
Texas State Guard
1st Battalion, 39th Regiment

1st and 2nd Battalions of the 39th Regiment help with a hot air balloon rally in Lamesa, Texas.



Maj. Paul Hernandez
Texas Military Department
Joint Force Headquarters



Maj. Gen. Tracy R. Norris, the Adjutant General of Texas, and Brig. Gen. Greg Chaney, Deputy Adjutant General - Army, await the arrival of the Acting Secretary of Defense, Patrick M. Shanahan.

REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCES OF TEXAS GUARDSMEN FROM TRAINING, STATE ACTIVE DUTY & DEPLOYMENTS



Petty Officer 2 Benjamin Behnam
Texas State Guard
1st Battalion, Bravo Company

Bravo Dive Team proctoring swim qualifications for new recruits to the Texas State Guard.

Maj. Robert Chamberlin
Texas Army National Guard
C Company ,3rd Battalion, 141st Infantry

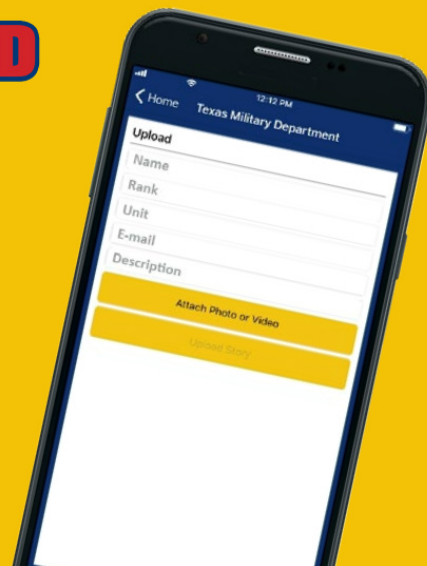
1st Sgt. Eric Ueckert leads Soldiers from the Copperheads through morning physical training in Weslaco, Texas.



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OUR FORCE



The Adjutant General of Texas Maj. Gen. Tracy R. Norris and Commander of the 36th Infantry Division, Maj. Gen. Patrick Hamilton presented the Lone Star Medal of Valor to Army aircrews of the Texas, Nebraska and Utah National Guards at a ceremony during the Texas Military Department's Open House on April 14, 2019 at Camp Mabry in Austin, Texas. The crews were awarded the medal in recognition of their service and rescue efforts during Hurricane Harvey. (Texas State Guard Photo By: Staff Sgt. Timothy Pruitt)

**Story By: Spc. Miguel Ruiz
100th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment**

AUSTIN, Texas – The Texas Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Tracy R. Norris, presented the Lone Star Medal of Valor to National Guard aircrews at a ceremony at Camp Mabry, April 13, 2019.

The service members with Bravo Co., 1st Battalion, 114th Aviation Regiment, Texas Army National Guard, earned the recognition for their response and rescue efforts during Hurricane Harvey.

“It is with great humbleness and respect that I would like to bring to your attention the efforts of several individuals here with us today,” said Maj. Gen. Hamilton. “During the catastrophic events of Hurricane Harvey, these brave Soldiers put their own safety to the side, willingly putting themselves into danger in the effort to save the lives of others.”

The aircrews were part of the 12,000 Texas Military Department service members who responded to rescue efforts within the first three days after the hurricane made landfall in August 2017 and train year-round for events just like this. Earlier that year, the crews were certified in specialized training and not a moment too soon.

“For the first time, I had approved selected crews for nighttime rescue operations,” Hamilton said. “I never knew when I approved those crews, who were very qualified, that they would have to execute that mission just a few months after they were certified.”

Three aircraft crew members from Nebraska and Utah Army National Guard units were also awarded the medal at the ceremony for their support of Hurricane Harvey. In total, National Guard members from 22 states supported the search-and-rescue operations, resulting in 1,457 rotary aircraft evacuations, 371 of which were hoist rescues. **-D**



TMD Key Leader Changes

Lt. Col. Frank Simoneaux

172nd Engineer Battalion Commander

EXPERIENCE:

Simoneaux was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Texas Army National Guard in 2000 as a traditional guardsman. He was assigned to the 386th Engineer Battalion and deployed to Iraq in 2004-2005 as a platoon leader. After his return, he commanded the newly formed 272nd Engineer Company (Vertical). He served the 72nd IBCT as Brigade Engineer before deploying to Afghanistan with the 176th Engineer Brigade in 2010-2011. He served at Joint Force Headquarters and 36th ID before deploying again with the 176th Engineer Brigade to Kuwait in support of Operation Spartan Shield in 2016-2017.

EDUCATION:

Simoneaux holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Texas A&M University in Civil Engineering and a Master of Business Administration from Louisiana State University. He is a Licensed Professional Engineer in the state of Texas.

DID YOU KNOW:

Simoneaux and his wife, Fabiola, were married on leave from his last deployment.

IN HIS WORDS:

"I am honored to lead such a professional organization with a rich history."

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