Stars & Stripes Air Show
14 February, 2010
During the event of Washington's Birthday Celebration in Laredo, Texas
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Texas Air National Guard, Camp Mabry

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Laredo celebrates Washington’s Birthday
By Chief Master Sgt. Gonda Moncada

Laredo, Texas 14, February, 2010 — It started with the Stars & Stripes Air Show and ended with the Anheuser Busch parade here in Laredo last month.

It is called the Washington’s Birthday Celebration “with something for everybody” and that is no exaggeration. For weeks on end, the festivities continue with the unveiling of the Poster, The U.S. Air Force Band of the West, Taste of Laredo, WBCA Carnival, WBCA Stars & Stripes Air Show, The Society of Martha Washington Colonial Pageant & Ball, the International Bridge Ceremony and finally the Anheuser Busch Parade.

The Air and Army National Guard for many years have supported this event with aviation assets, ground equipment and personnel and since 1939 the parade has featured The Adjutant General as the Parade Marshall during many of those years.

A brief history on the WBCA website reads:

On the morning of February 22, 1898, Indians and white men engaged in a “battle” for control of Laredo, Texas. The “battle,” centered at City Hall was fiercely fought, but to no avail.

In the end, the defenders fell and the mayor presented the key of the city to the Great Chief Sachem as a sign of unconditional surrender. The Great Chief in turn presented the key to the lovely Princess Pocahontas, who represented a lost tradition, “a vanishing race.” The ensuring celebration among neighbors lasted for two days, culminating with the reenactment of the “Boston Tea Party.” Thus was born the annual celebration of George Washington's Birthday in Laredo, Texas.

One of the most asked questions is, “Why celebrate Washington’s Birthday on the border?” The answer must be attributed to the original planners of the celebration, the patriotic Improved Order of the Red Men, local chapter Yaqui Tribe #59, whose members included prominent Laredoans of both Mexican and American ancestry. The committee was looking for a traditionally “American” holiday to celebrate that might offer the best of all cultures influencing the heritage of Laredo’s citizens.

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They found that during the fight for freedom, in the American colonies, the Sons of Liberty would disguise themselves as Indians to meet and discuss strategy using the forest as cover. George Washington served as “Sachem” and so within the history of their own society, they found the “American” holiday they sought. It was further discovered that the name "Washington" was not only revered in the United States he help create, but in areas south as well. Respected as the forerunner of such Latin American liberators as Mexico's Father Hidalgo and Simon Bolivar, Washington's esteem is not limited to the United States.

The first celebration was a phenomenal success. Its success and popularity grew rapidly and in 1923 the Washington's Birthday Celebration Association of Laredo, Inc. (WBCA™) received its state charter. In 1939, the Celebration featured its first Colonial Pageant, which featured thirteen young girls from Laredo, representing the thirteen original colonies. Charged with the overseeing of the annual celebration, the WBCA™ has continued its role as developer and leader ever since. The International Bridge Ceremony, one of the major events, serves as the "welcoming ceremony" between officials and dignitaries from Mexico and the United States by exchanging "abrazos," symbolizing the amity and understanding between two neighboring nations. Over the years, additional attractions and events have been added. Together with its Affiliate Organizations, the WBCA™ now boasts a celebration calendar, which includes more than twenty-eight events and covers a period of four weeks. It attracts approximately 400,000 attendees annually and has a tremendous positive economic impact on the City.

Photos by Sgt. Malcolm McClendon, JFTX-PAO

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And the Outstanding Airmen are……

By Chief Master Sgt. Gonda Moncada, Public Affairs

Five chosen to compete nationally

Camp Mabry, Austin, Texas – During the Outstanding Airman of the Year Awards Ceremony here Sunday, the best of the best were recognized by family, friends and attending Airmen.

The Outstanding Airman Of the Year ribbon was authorized by the secretary of the Air Force on Feb. 21, 1968 with the criteria that the ribbon is to be awarded to enlisted Airmen nominated by the major commands, field operating agencies and direct reporting units to Headquarters, Air Force Personnel Center for competition in the 12 Outstanding Airmen of the Year. This year’s nominations for the Texas Air National Guard assembled in the Auditorium and nervously awaited the board’s decision.

Like in years past it was hard to make the final selection because the Airmen submitted for the award had exhibited the highest level of professionalism and leadership for their respective organizations and as Brig. Gen. John Nichols, Commander Texas Air National Guard, said: “The criteria for selection were based on infinitesimal differences.”

After the posting of the Colors and the singing of the National Anthem, it was finally time for the words the Airmen had been waiting for with nervous anticipation.

The Master of Ceremony said: “Today those individuals selected to represent the State of Texas at the national level will receive the Texas Outstanding Service Medal, a state flag that was flown over the Texas Capital in their honor, and Outstanding Achievement Medallion from USAA and a recognition crystal from the Senior Enlisted Advisory Council. All other nominees will receive the Texas Medal of Merit and a USAA Global War ON Terrorism coin.”

The first category to be selected was the Airman of the Year and the Most Outstanding Airman of the Year in the entire State of Texas is:

Sr. Airman Charity Pierce, 149th Fighter Wing (Deployed) Sr. Airman Pierce is a Security Forces Journeyman.

The second group to be announced was the Non-Commissioned Officers of the Year, and the winner in this category was:

Tech. Sgt. Daniel Alvarado, 204th SFS Tech. Sgt. Alvarado is a Security Forces Journeyman

Next up the Senior Non-Commissioned Officers category, and the Outstanding Non-Commissioned Officer selection was:

Sr. Master Sgt. Kevin White, 217th Training Squadron Sr. Master Sgt. White is an Imagery Analyst Instructor Supervisor

The next selection was for 1st Sergeant of the Year and the winner was:

Master Sgt. Darin Lacour, 149th Fighter Wing (Deployed)

Last but not least was the Honor Guard category and the winner was:

Tech. Sgt. Velia Mireles, 149th Fighter Wing

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These names will be submitted to the National Guard Bureau for competition at the National level against all Guardsmen from all states and territories. Thereafter, the winners will compete against candidates selected from active Air Force major commands to represent the entire Air Force.

“First of all I want to thank the family members,” said General Nichols, and he continued: “I saw quite a few of you yesterday – Thank you for coming. Thank you for loaning us your people, your family, your kids, your spouses. We take their talent and blend them into this organization. I want to thank the supervisors and leaders of the organization, to take the time and recognize these outstanding individuals.” To the winners he said: “I charge you to go back and share your energy.” He also addressed the Senior Enlisted Advisory Council, a group of people who every year put on a ceremony that is recognized by many as second to none. “They are the ones who got us all together and worked on the nomination packages. They are the ones who put this event together.”

He concluded: “One last thing to my Outstanding Airmen. This is a good time for you to mentor each other and to spread that enthusiasm at home. A perfect example of mentorship and growth is the 147th Fighter Wing, a unit who thought that flying F-16s was everything they always wanted to do in their lives, and now they are the 147th Reconnaissance Wing with predators and it is everything they always wanted to do in their lives. It takes every single Airman to make that mission successful. We cannot do it without you. Stay in, stay tough, stay smart.”


Ten graduate from NCO Academy

By: Chief Master Sgt. Richard Pena

149th Fighter Wing, Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas -- Satellite Non-Commissioned Officer graduates who had started their education at Lackland Air Force Base, completed their professional military education 15 December at McGhee-Tyson Air National Guard Base in Tennessee.

Ten 149th Fighter Wing students, including one 273rd member participated in the graduation ceremony were two of the ten graduates were recognized as distinguished graduates. They were Tech. Sgt. Sarah Johnson, 149th Medical Group and Tech. Sgt. Rodolfo Solis 273rd. All of the Graduates agreed that the Satellite NCOA was a great experience. Several officers and non-commissioned officers from the 149th Fighter Wing attended the Ceremony in support of their troops.

The Instructors for the NCOA were Lead Instructor Master Sgt. Pedro Soriano III, and Assistant Instructor Tech. Sgt. Alan Columbo, both assigned to the 149th Fighter Wing.

Satellite NCOA consists of a Home Station Phase which is 12 weeks long. The Students attend Class from five to nine two nights a week, usually Tuesdays and Thursdays. During these two weeks the class communicates via satellite with Instructors at McGhee-Tyson. The second phase is an In-Residence Phase at McGhee-Tyson. This phase is 17 days long.

Satellite NCOA is a very good tool to use to meet professional military education that has to be completed within three years of promotion to technical sergeant without losing essential personnel for extended periods of time.

The Next Satellite NCOA is scheduled for 23 March to 10 June, 2010, for the Home station Phase and 14 to 29 June, 2010, for the In-Residence Phase and we are looking forward to an equally motivated student-body.

Distinguished Graduates were:

Congratulations to the entire class
TSgt. Roger Buentello          TSgt. Lisa Escobar          TSgt. Jesus Hernandez
TSgt. Sarah Johnson            TSgt. Mitchell Olivo          TSgt. Rodolfo Solis
TSgt. Donald Trevathan Jr.     SSgt. Jake Trevino          TSgt. Eliu Villarreal
SSgt. Marvin Williams
Biden: ‘This ain’t your father’s National Guard’

By Army Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill
National Guard Bureau

“It really is … like family,” Vice President Biden said. “The fact of the matter is that when you have a husband or wife or son or daughter or mother or father in the Guard, you get a better sense of what I knew all these years. I knew it. I knew what you do. I knew the role the Guard plays, but it’s not until you have somebody who’s in and deployed that you fully appreciate it.

“The public doesn’t really understand it. They appreciate it, but they don’t fully understand it. They don’t understand that [Guardmembers have] day jobs, and yet they’re doing everything anybody has ever asked of any warrior.”

Noting that 404,000 National Guardmembers have been deployed since 2001 and more than 600 “fallen angels” have paid the ultimate price, with others among the ranks of the wounded, the vice president said, “It just startles me watching these kids saddle up every day, day in and day out.”

He told the adjutants general, “I’m awed by what you’ve been able to accomplish, especially with the rotations that you’ve had and the operational tempo. The Guard and Reserve have made a gigantic contribution.”
Camp Mabry, Austin, Texas (25 Feb 2010) – After a stop at Camp Mabry Wednesday, the Better Business Bureau serving Central, Coastal and Southwest Texas invited Mrs. Holly Petraeus, Director of BBB Military Line - www.bbb.org/us/Military and wife of General David H. Petraeus. Mrs. Petraeus announced the launch of an innovative nationwide program aimed at promoting financial readiness education among military service members (Photo by: Chief Master Sgt. Gonda Moncada)

For more information on the program, please visit:

http://www.bbb.org/us/Military
EXECUTIVE ORDER

FEDERAL LEADERSHIP ON REDUCING TEXT MESSAGING WHILE DRIVING

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including section 7902(c) of title 5, United States Code, and the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, as amended, 40 U.S.C. 101 et seq., and in order to demonstrate Federal leadership in improving safety on our roads and highways and to enhance the efficiency of Federal contracting, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Policy. With nearly 3 million civilian employees, the Federal Government can and should demonstrate leadership in reducing the dangers of text messaging while driving. Recent deadly crashes involving drivers distracted by text messaging while behind the wheel highlight a growing danger on our roads. Text messaging causes drivers to take their eyes off the road and at least one hand off the steering wheel, endangering both themselves and others. Every day, Federal employees drive Government-owned, Government-leased, or Government-rented vehicles (collectively, GOV) or privately-owned vehicles (POV) on official Government business, and some Federal employees use Government-supplied electronic devices to text or e-mail while driving. A Federal Government-wide prohibition on the use of text messaging while driving on official business or while using Government-supplied equipment will help save lives, reduce injuries, and set an example for State and local governments, private employers, and individual drivers. Extending this policy to cover Federal contractors is designed to promote economy and efficiency in Federal procurement. Federal contractors and contractor employees who refrain from the unsafe practice of text messaging while driving in connection with Government business are less likely to experience disruptions to their operations that would adversely impact Federal procurement.

For a copy of the entire executive order, please visit:

Third Annual Joint Public Affairs Conference

**Bee Caves Armory, Austin—23 Feb, 2010—** After a snowy start, the Third Annual Joint Public Affairs Conference went into full throttle, at times literally and figuratively here in February.

Army, Air and civilian attendees from multiple states and two foreign countries arrived in Austin to get away from in some cases cold climates, and were treated to a rare Austin snow fall that turned the Bee Caves Armory sitting on a hill-top, a winter-wonder land.

It did momentarily detract from the important business at hand, but soon returned to more important matters like: “When good PAOs go bad.” By taking a humorous look at how certain interviews could have been done better, it afforded everybody in attendance the opportunity to learn from not so stellar performance and avoid pitfalls for themselves.

One of the attendees was Sr. Master Sgt. Dale Hanson, from the 136th Airlift Wing in Fort Worth, who was one of the busier photo journalists at the conference. He moved between Camp Mabry and Bee Caves to cover Mrs. Petraeus’ visit to Camp Mabry (see information on page 7).

The attendees were also invited to fly aboard two Blackhawks, called into service to provide a realistic platform for media training for embedded reporters and their crew.

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Photos by: Sr. master Sgt. Dale Hanson, 136th Air-lift Wing Public Affairs Office.
Three vaccines now available at Tricare network pharmacies

FALLS CHURCH, Va. (AFNS) -- Tricare beneficiaries can now receive select vaccines with no out-of-pocket expense at retail pharmacies.

For the first time, beneficiaries can visit Tricare retail network pharmacies to receive seasonal flu, H1N1 flu and pneumonia vaccines at no cost. This expanded coverage is available to all Tricare beneficiaries eligible to use the Tricare retail pharmacy benefit.

Other vaccines still must be administered in a doctor's office or authorized convenience clinic to be fully covered by Tricare's preventive health services cost-share waiver.

"Vaccines are the most effective defense against the seasonal and H1N1 flu and pneumonia," said Rear Adm. Thomas McGinnis, Tricare's chief pharmacy officer. "We hope this new, convenient and affordable option encourages Tricare beneficiaries to get their vaccinations."

To receive the vaccines, beneficiaries can call their local Tricare retail network pharmacy to make sure it participates in the vaccine program and has the vaccine in stock. To locate a participating retail network pharmacy, go to http://www.express-scripts.com/Tricare or call Express Scripts at 877-363-1303.

New program helps Tricare beneficiaries battle lung diseases

Smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke are leading causes of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Tricare covers the tests necessary to diagnose COPD. Beneficiaries with any of the following risk factors should talk to their primary care manager about a COPD screening:

- Current and ex-smokers; those with a family history of emphysema; and those who have or had a job with exposure to dust, chemicals, fumes, smoke, gases or vapors. Tricare's regional contractors all offer COPD management programs.

Airmen transition into new fitness program

Officials published the new fitness program Air Force instruction (AFI 36-2905) to the Air Force Publications Web site Jan. 12, with an effective date of July 1. To learn more about the new fitness program and view scoring components that become effective in July, visit www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/affitnessprogram.

Budget for 2010 to help Guard equip, modernize

Increased funding in the fiscal 2010 budget will allow the National Guard to modernize and equip its forces for state and federal missions. The Defense Appropriations Act's provisions include $710 million in additional equipment funding; $575 million for the Army Guard and $135 million for the Air National Guard.

Forum on Women in the Guard Planned for March

The National Guard Educational Foundation will host a forum on the role that women have played throughout the history of the Guard on March 11 at the National Guard Memorial in Washington, D.C. The inaugural event, titled "A Half Century of National Guard Women" will feature the stories of Guardswomen told in an academic setting.

The forum will be divided into two sessions: Overall experiences and deployment/combat. Coffee will be served at 8 a.m. and the first session starts at 8:30 a.m. Some of the issues to be discussed include the reasons women join the Guard, the unique challenges faced by Guardswomen, deployment expectations and realities and the effects military service have on a Guardswoman's civilian life.

The forum is limited to 80 seats. To reserve a seat, contact NGEF director Jonathan Bernstein at jona-than.bernstein@ngaus.org.
Air Force officials restrict Portal access beginning Jan. 15

WASHINGTON (AFNS) -- Global Combat Support System-Air Force computer officials will begin restricting access to the Air Force Portal to only users with a common access card or valid public key infrastructure certificate Jan. 15.

Air Force Knowledge Now began restricting access to CAC/PKI users Jan. 1, and Air Force Personnel Center officials will begin restricting access to only CAC/PKI users Jan. 28.

"Air Force Portal, AFKN, and AFPC Secure users are encouraged to obtain a CAC reader or PKI certificate now to ensure future access," said Maj. Kevin Johnson, the Secretary of the Air Force Office of Warfighting Integration and Chief Information Officer.

This PKI/CAC restriction will impact regular off-base users such as Air National Guard, reservists, Department of Defense contractors and other home users, the major added.

"GCSS-AF and AFKN are committed to supporting the warfighter while meeting Air Force and DOD PKI/public key encryption mandates," Major Johnson said.

The major said there are benefits of CAC/PKI restriction for both the user and Air Force. Members will receive secure worldwide access to information and applications with better security of their account identity, with fewer usernames and passwords to maintain.

The Air Force benefits from easier user account administration by using the CAC/PKI as the method of self-registration and maintenance, Major Johnson added.

"More importantly, the Air Force achieves a greater information assurance posture, thereby reducing the overall risk to data, networks and mission systems," Major Johnson said.

Summer Fun: Air Guard, Reserve Sponsor Teen Summits

The Air National Guard and the Air Force Reserve will sponsor three Teen Leadership Summits this summer in Georgia and Colorado. The camps are open to all 14- to 18-year-old dependent children of current Air Guard and Air Force Reserve members. The application deadline is April 16. Applications and instructions are available at www.georgia4h.org/AFRANGTeenSummit.

The camps are:

- Classic Summit, June 13 to 18, Wahsega 4-H Center, Dahlonega, Ga.
- Survival Summit, July 20 to 25, Colorado Youth Programs, Boulder, Colo., and
- Adventure Summit, Aug. 10 to 15, Cheley Camps, Estes Park, Colo.

Each camp also needs adult chaperones. Information is available at the same Web site.

By The Way:

Free, online tutoring is available for service members and their families at www.tutor.com/military. Professional tutors are available 24 hours a day to help with homework, test preparation, resume writing and more. ... Janell Kellett, wife of Maj. Michael Hanson of the Wisconsin Army National Guard, was a guest of first lady Michelle Obama when President Barack Obama delivered the State of the Union address Wednesday evening. Kellett is lead volunteer for the Wisconsin Guard's Family Readiness Group.
TXSG Corporal John Wells from the 4th Civil Affairs Regiment (National Colors) and Master Sergeant Todd Barringer from the 4th Air Wing (Air Force Colors) performed in the Honor Guard colors detail prior to the opening kickoff at the Dallas Cowboys vs. Philadelphia Eagles game on Saturday, January 9, 2010 at Cowboys Stadium in Arlington, Texas.

TEXAS STATE GUARD AIR DIVISION HAS NEW COMMAND CHIEF

By Texas Military Forces Public Affairs

Austin, TX – Brigadier General Robert Cheeseman, the Texas State Guard’s Deputy Commanding General for Air, has selected a local Austin resident to be the Command Chief Master Sergeant of the Guards Air Division. Chief Master Sergeant Norm King will replace Chief Master Sergeant David Dallas who is retiring after 35 years of military service. Chief King will serve as the senior enlisted advisor to General Cheeseman. He will also serve as a mentor to the states two Air Wing Command Chiefs and seven Air Support Group Chief Enlisted Managers.

Chief King entered the active duty Air Force in 1967. He was assigned to 70th Security Police Squadron at Clinton-Sherman AFB Oklahoma as an aircraft security specialist. He continued to serve in the Security Police career field with assignments to Cam Rahn Bay AB, Vietnam; Sheppard AFB, Texas and Ellington AFB, Texas. In 1972, King cross-trained into the meteorology career field. He was assigned as the Chief Weather Observer at Detachment 11, 24th Weather Squadron, Reese AFB, Texas. He left active duty in 1975.

King enlisted in the Texas State Guard in June 2001 at the 449th Air Support Group, Lackland AFB, Texas. He has served with the 4th Air Wing, 401st Air Support Group and Headquarters Air Division at Camp Mabry.

His USAF active duty deployments include service as a Recon/Ambush Team Assistant Squad Leader and Security Comm. Plotter, at Cam Rahn Bay AB, Vietnam. His State of Texas active duty deployments include Operations Katrina/Rita; Rio Grande; Border Watch; Wrangler and two years on Operation Border Star as the NCO In Charge, Laredo Joint Operations Intelligence Center.

His awards include the Air Force Commendation Medal; Vietnam Service Medal and Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry. His state awards include the Texas Outstanding Service Medal; Medal of Merit; Adjutant Generals Individual Award and Louisiana Emergency Services Medal.

King has completed the USAF Air Police Supervisors Course; Security Police Combat Preparedness Course; Special Tactics Ambush Training Course and Air Force Weather Observer Course. He has also completed the USAF Advanced NCO Professionalism Course; USAF Supervisors Course; USAF Senior NCO Academy and numerous Red Cross Shelter Management and FEMA Disaster Management Courses.

Chief King is active in military organizations including the Air Force Association; Air Force Sergeants Association; National Guard Association of Texas and Vietnam Security Police Association.

He has an Associates Degree from San Jacinto College and a Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of Houston at Clear Lake. He is employed as a Branch Manager with the Texas Department of Transportation Environmental Affairs Division in Austin.
Final combat boot test results are in

by Brad Jessmer
Air Force Uniform Office

1/29/2010 - WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio (AFNS) -- The results from the test of a prototype Airman Battle Uniform stain-resistant boot for wear in industrial environments have been released. These results are based on testing that concluded in October 2009. The wear test choice is a full-grain leather boot, that incorporates a rubber toe and heal cap that resists staining and increases durability.

In 2008, the Air Force Uniform Office here began investigating various options for increasing the stain-resistant properties of the current issue suede ABU combat boots. The first test of a stain-resistant boot was unsuccessful in meeting the needs of Airmen. As a result, AFUO officials conducted a follow-on test with different materials. This follow-on wear and lab testing provided the research and development project team with data to make the best selection for acceptable stain-resistant ABU combat boots.

"The latest test boots have smooth leather, like the old black boots," said Richard Keefer, AFUO chief. "The intent was to try a boot that is easy to clean, will not stain and hides scuffs and wear from industrial use."

In late August 2009, AFUO testers outfitted Airmen at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz., for a large-scale boot wear test of various options to increase boot stain resistance. Four different boot manufacturers provided sage green, full-grain leather boots for the wear test. These configurations were:

· "Style A" - A hot weather, safety-toe boot construction with full-grain, smooth sage green leather.
· "Style B" - A temperate weather boot constructed with full-grain, smooth sage green leather. This test boot was the only non-safety toe boot included in the wear test. This boot was only tested on Airmen in non-flight line, non-industrial work environments that did not require a safety toe.
· "Style C" - A hot weather, safety-toe boot constructed with full-grain, smooth sage green leather. The heel and toe areas of the boot had rubber reinforcements that are also sage green in color.
· "Style D" - A temperate weather, safety-toe construction with full-grain, smooth sage green leather.

According to 1st Lt. Ashley Hawkes, an AFUO project officer, 200 Airmen participated in this wear test, selected primarily by Air Force Specialty Code. Participants included members working primarily in the maintenance, medical and civil engineering career fields.

To accomplish the outfitting of wear-test boots, a team of military, Department of Defense civilians and contractors traveled to Luke AFB to distribute the boots for the wear test. Airmen here also participated in the wear test.

Feedback from participants varied depending upon which boot configuration they wore. The most common concern that maintenance Airman had for each prototype boot was poor traction.

After weeks of testing, the overall choice was a boot configuration that included a rubber heel and toe cap, with the only issues being the boot's weight, breathability and traction. User feedback and lab testing prompted AFUO officials to recommend adoption of the sage green, full-grain leather boot with rubber heel and toe reinforcements. The requirement will be for this maintenance specialty boot to be designed with a lighter weight, improved breathability and a better sole.

"It's vital for Airmen to have equipment that, first and foremost, enables them to stay mission focused," said Maj. Darien Hammett, 648th Aeronautical Systems Squadron commander. "These boots will provide functionality while also maintaining a professional appearance. It's a great example of senior leadership responding to feedback from the field."

More information will be available on the approval and production of a new stain-resistant boot by early summer.
Safety Notes

Texting and Driving
A Fatal Attraction
State Active Duty
A Primer Series to Get Ready

TXMF Member Responsibility - SAD Missions

Take preparation for State Active Duty seriously and do your part!

**Readiness:** Expect to participate in a readiness drill prior to hurricane season.

Ensure your mailing address and dependent status is up to date with your unit. Mailing address error is the most common payroll problem.

Tell your unit if you are taking prescription medication or are under the care of a physician. You do not need to disclose your specific condition or prescriptions you take to your command. You will be interviewed by a TXMF medical provider before any SAD deployment. They will protect your HIPPA rights.

If you are cleared for deployment, make sure you have 30 days of prescriptions! You cannot get your regular prescriptions refilled through the military or Worker’s Compensation while on SAD.

If you are a member of the TXSG, remember to bring your drivers license and social security card.

**Accounting:** Tell your unit if you are a fulltime employee of the TXMF. If you are a technician, tell the full time unit representative in which leave status you will be. Otherwise, you will not be placed on SAD orders. Report to your unit full time representative if you get released from SAD early.

**Orders:** SAD is involuntary and you have reemployment rights. If you are not provided individual orders at assembly, ask for the Component order and an Employer FAQ Sheet for your employer. There are no ‘reenrollment’ type rights for students.

**Medical:** While on SAD, you are covered by Texas Worker’s Compensation for injury and illness. Any pre-existing condition will not be covered, so you will be responsible for costs even if SAD aggravated the condition. There are no benefits for family in SAD.

**Pay:** Units submit payroll for the mission as a whole, not by individuals or sections. It is submitted at the end of the mission and takes two weeks to a month to pay. If SAD is extended, the state may decide to conduct a 2-week payroll. Wait 30 days before inquiring about your pay.

You will receive prorated military pay and allowances. By Texas law, no one receives less than $121/day. Due to Social Security Act §218(c)(6), no FICA is withheld, but federal income tax is deducted and if you owe a state debt, your pay may be on hold. Holds are most often for child support or school debt. The initiating agency will send you a notice with instructions. After 30 days the state can apply your pay to the debt.

Many improvements have been made since last hurricane season and you can improve your chances of getting paid correctly and on time!

[Link to website for more information]
A copy of the Texas Declaration of Independence on display outside the Alamo in San Antonio on March 2.

Photo by: Sgt. Jennifer D. Atkinson, JFTX-PAO