



EN LA FRONTERA:

MEDICINA MILITAR PARA TODOS

TEXAS MARITIME SAILOR TRADES POLITICS FOR MEDICINE

By SGT Ann Benson

At first glance, Lt. Junior Grade Julius D. Jackson, looks like your typical Marine. He has the same uniform, similar haircut, and is built like a linebacker. Upon closer inspection however, there are a few key differences.

“I get mistaken for being a Marine all the time,” said Jackson, who is one of a few Texas Maritime Regiment Sailors participating in Operation Lone Star. “We are the saltiest bunch of sailors in all of Texas.”

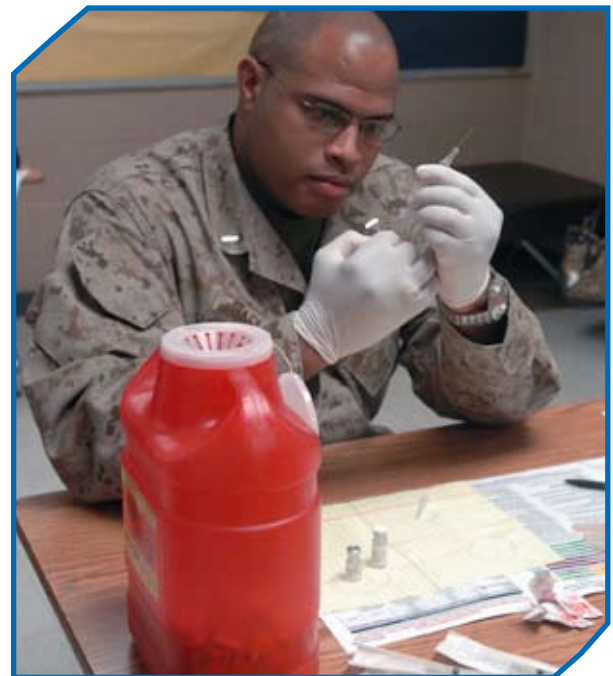
The Texas Maritime Regiment has the same responsibilities as all the other military services, the only difference is that their responsibilities are geared toward water assets. People who join the Texas Maritime Regiment come from all of the sea services.

“Our mission is tailored to things on the water,” Jackson said. “Most people don’t know about us until we show up.”

Jackson is just one of a few maritime officers that did not get commissioned through a sea service. Jackson received his commission while he was part of the Corps of Cadets training program at Texas A&M University.

When he is not helping out his fellow Texans as an Emergency Medical Technician-Basic, the Tyler native lives and works in Washington, D.C., as a special assistant to the deputy secretary of the Department of Transportation.

“Most people wouldn’t leave a job in Washington to come here. I am glad to be able to do that. I am glad to come home and take care of my people even though I don’t come from the Rio Grande Valley. It’s a personal thing,” he said.



Lt. JG Julius Jackson, Headquarters Texas Maritime Regiment, Texas State Guard, prepares an immunization at the Cesar Chavez Middle School on July 29 during Operation Lone Star.

“This is nothing like I do normally,” said Jackson, who has been in the Texas State Guard for eight years. “Typically I am writing speeches, keeping the secretary’s schedule....I am basically his administrative assistant.”

A past participant in OLS, last year Jackson worked as a logistics officer for a medical site. He was responsible for all



Diego Perez gets an immunization from Lt. JG Julius Jackson, Headquarters Texas Maritime Regiment, Texas State Guard, at the Cesar Chavez Middle School on July 29 as part of Operation Lone Star. (Photo by Sgt. Ann Benson)

“We have the required ones like measles and mumps, rubella and chickenpox,” he said. “We have the human papaloma vaccine, hepatitis vaccines, and tetanus boosters as well.”

Most of the vaccinations are given to children to make sure they are current with all their required immunizations, though some vaccinations are given to adults as well. The actual vaccination injections take less than five minutes depending on the number of

the medical supplies at that site and restocked each day to ensure the doctors, nurses and patients had everything they needed.

“I was a new officer, and they immediately put me in charge,” he said.

This year Jackson is assigned to the immunization clinic at the Cesar Chavez Middle School.

“I give all the required vaccinations,” he said. “Even though immunizations are required, parents can refuse to have their child vaccinated for any reason.”

immunizations needed and most of the children are receiving between two and five vaccinations, Jackson stated.

“We have a lot more vaccinations for children than adults,” he said.

Jackson performed 100 vaccinations at the Cesar Chavez Middle School on July 28.

“I got to learn something totally new this year” he said. “The first shot I gave I felt like I was the one who should be trembling and wanting to cry, but 50

shots later that day I was (no longer trembling).”

“It is a great joint exercise for everyone,” said Jackson. “I am proud to be a part of it. In the wake of a hurricane, we are still able to help our fellow Texans out.” ■



Dagoberto Lolis gets an immunization from Lt. JG Julius Jackson, Headquarters Texas Maritime Regiment, Texas State Guard, at the Cesar Chavez Middle School on July 29 as part of Operation Lone Star. (Photo by Sgt. Ann Benson)

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SETTING A NEW STANDARD

By Cadet Micah Barnes

HARLINGEN, TX (August 1, 2008) – Texas State Guard Colonel Frank Stead, State Medical Command, received the Lone Star Distinguished Service Medal in Brownsville, Texas, today, for his outstanding performance during the last year’s Operation Lone Star (OLS), a medical training exercise held annually in south Texas.

The award was presented during a luncheon held for important guests and visitors to OLS’s main operating facility, Besteiro Middle School.

Stead has shown the ability to not only execute, but to improve upon the task given to him from his superiors. “In addition to exceptional service to the Texas State Guard (TXSG), Frank had truly been the heart and soul of Operation Lone Star for a long time.” said Colonel Joel E. Hennessy, this year’s commander of Joint Task Force OLS.

The call to service had appealed to Stead ever since he was a graduate student at Ohio State University and was exempted from the Vietnam draft. This exemption increased his yearning to serve and protect this country, which inevitably led him to join the Texas State Guard. “I always wanted to serve since that time and I felt that this was my chance to do so after my retirement in Fredricksburg,” said Stead.

In February of 2003 Stead received his commission in the Texas State Guard, within the year he was the Logistics officer for Operation Lone Star. “Being the manager of the 11th largest public utility company in America the task was something I could handle.” In the following years, he continued to excel and by 2007 he was named operations commander.



LTG Charles G. Rodriguez, the Adjutant General of Texas presented Texas State Guard (TXSG) COL Frank Stead, Medical Brigade, with the Lone Star Distinguished Service Medal in Brownsville, Texas for his outstanding performance during last year’s Operation Lone Star 07 (OLS).

During his tenure as commander, Stead took the opportunity to visit the people out in their own communities. The understanding resulting from these visits led to great innovation and improvement in the service provided by the Texas Joint Military Forces during the medical disaster training exercise.

He continued pressing the need for community interaction this year by sending out a mobile team to serve those trapped by flooding from the recent landing of Hurricane Dolly.

This emergency preparedness that OLS encompasses is familiar to him as the head of Emergency Management at the Hill Country Memorial Hospital in Fredricksburg, Texas. When you tie this together with his part-time work as an Emergency Medical Technician and volunteer fireman for Fredricksburg, we are very grateful to have had him as a leader of Operation Lone Star. ■

FOLLOWING THE GOLDEN RULE

By SGT Ann Benson

Staff Sgt. Mark Bomblatus, a Soldier with the Temple Medical Reserve Group, Texas State Guard, wears a whole lot of hats.

Bomblatus is a high school math teacher at Northside High School in Fort Worth, Texas.

“I teach eleventh grade Algebra 2,” he said. “I will be starting my eleventh year (of teaching this fall).”

When he is not showing students how to solve for X, Bomblatus is also the assistant coach for the girls power-lifting team.

“The school I teach at in Fort Worth is 96 percent Hispanic,” he said. “You just try to lead by example and try to show the children that there is another life out there besides the one they are coming from.”

Bomblatus explained that there are a lot of low income and transient families there, which is similar to what is here in the valley. Bomblatus added that a lot of his students have family that came from the valley. “It gives me more of an appreciation of where my students come from.”



Staff Sgt. Mark Bomblatus, a Soldier with the Temple Medical Reserve Group, Texas State Guard, assists a young girl at Operation Lone Star.

Teaching is Bomblatus' second career. Prior to teaching, he spent 20 years in aviation management. “Leaving corporate America for the academic world was the best decision (I) ever made,” he said.

Bomblatus had always wanted to serve his country in some way. Though he didn't have a chance to serve in the military when he was younger, he joined the Texas State Guard.

“I was actually trying to get into the Marine Corps, but I was too old,” he said. “They wouldn't give me an age waiver and I wanted to serve.”

Willing to tackle any task assigned him, Bomblatus worked security Operation Lonestar, though his job in the TXSG is counter intelligence and terrorism. “I am a non-medical person attached to a medical unit,” he said

OLS has afforded him the opportunity to experience a few firsts. It is his first time in the valley and his first time working the medical mission.

“I actually had to request to be deployed here,” explained Bomblatus. “They only took five people from my unit,” he said. “I am having a great time and this is a very worthy mission.” ■

147TH MED GROUP, SUPPLY & DEMAND

By SMSgt. Marcus W. Falleaf

WESLACO, TX – Through wind and rain and hurricanes, the Air National Guard will deliver. The U. S. Mail has nothing on Senior Master Sergeant Kenneth Arsenault and Technical Sergeant Archie Grigsby, both members of the 147 Reconnaissance Wing's Medical Group, host unit for Operation Lone Star 08.

It's pretty tough to conduct a medical mission without medications, blood pressure cuffs, stethoscopes and all the other equipment that comes with a medical deployment package.

Although the host unit Med Group doesn't come onto the

scene until the second week of the operation, several members had the responsibility of ensuring the formulary/supplies were on site, ready for distribution and re-ordered daily.

Driving from Ellington Field Joint Reserve Base in Houston, the two airmen rented a large U-Haul truck in San Antonio, loaded the truck, drove to Weslaco, TX and unloaded the truck at the supply point of distribution, the armory, which is the current headquarters of two operations that were underway.

A seemingly mundane mission of delivery, the trip proved to be much more exciting than anyone could have imagined,



TSgt Grigsby (left) and SMSgt Arsenault (right) from the 147TH Medical Group faced the grueling conditions of Hurricane Dolly to deliver supplies in support of Operation Lone Star 08.

MEDIC IS THERE WHEN NEEDED

By SPC Melissa Shaw

HARLINGEN, TX – As Army National Guard Specialist go, Anuar Valdez, of Laredo, Texas, is the kind of Soldier that commanders dream of; well educated and ready to do whatever is asked.

As a medic for Bravo Company, 3rd of the 141 Infantry Battalion out of Laredo, his presence was not surprising as logistic support at Operation Lone Star, OLS, a medical outreach program held annually in south Texas.

What is surprising is how he was hand picked to join 13 other soldiers under Staff Sergeant Benito Uribe, Fox Company 536th out of Weslaco, to provide logistical and security support. In particular Valdez was picked to join Uribe because of his demonstrated ability to follow through and his attention to detail.

The 25-year old Valdez spent 4 years as a medic in the regular Army before he separated to pursue his degree. Throughout college he maintained his Emergency Medical Technician certification, working different ambulance companies while attending the University of Texas at San Antonio for his bachelor's degree in Sociology.

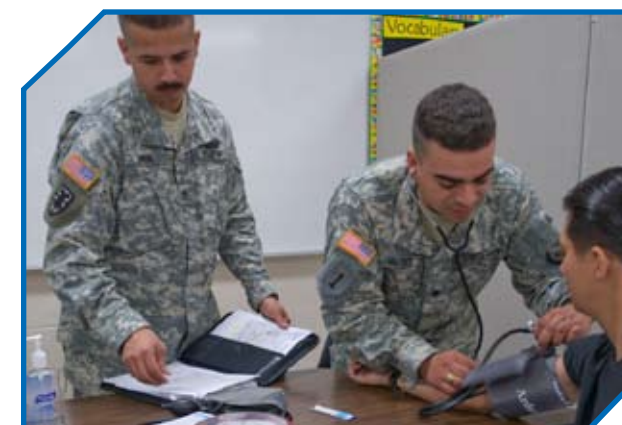
After graduation, with his goal of becoming a parole officer, he chose to stay at UTSA to pursue his masters in Justice Policy. Meanwhile, he continues his work in the medical field at Sea World, San Antonio for their emergency medical stations.

thanks to Hurricane Dolly. Time after time, wind gusts of over 60 mph threatened to blow the large truck from the road. Sheets of water from each band of Dolly's rotation came in surges that made for almost zero visibility and needless to say to South Texans, the heat does not let up in July, even during a hurricane.

A regular 4-hour drive turned into a nerve wracking, 7-hour test of endurance. “We were so lucky,” said SMSgt. Arsenault. When we pulled into Weslaco Armory, we realized that there was a large bubble on the passenger side, front tire of the U-Haul, he continued.

“That bubble wasn't there when we inspected the van in San Antonio,” chimed in TSgt. Grigsby.

Operation Lone Star, a joint medical assistance mission between civil authorities and Texas Military Forces, is currently in progress and is seeing increasing numbers of patients daily. But, the mission would not have been possible without the efforts of these two Air National Guardsmen and perhaps a bit of luck. ■



SSGT Benito Uribe and SPC Anuar Valdez, Army National Guard, Texas, work with patients during Operation LoneStar in Laredo, Texas, August 5, 2008.(USAF Photo by MSgt M Lachman)

During his time at the Cesar Chavez Middle School site, he has distinguished himself through his temperament, discipline and time management, said Uribe.

Specifically, even in the heat and humidity when he became ill and the doctors told him to leave, Valdez remained at La Joya to assist with transportation between sites due to the already limited number of people the command could draw support from, said Uribe.

The ability of support to create relationships with civilians that attend OLS, and other services that participated, often can mean the difference in making a difference.

It is because of soldiers like Valdez that Operation Lone Star has had such success, everyday missions are completed and our Armed Services continue to provide excellent care to those who need it most. ■

AIR GUARD SPREADS WINGS TO HURRICANE DOLLY

By Lt. Col. Shaunte Y. Cooper

Hurricane Dolly slammed ashore 23 July 2008 and then loitered over south Texas as a tropical storm. It dumped as much as a foot of rain in places, ripping roofs off buildings with 100 mph winds, just a few hours after the advance team for Operation Lone Star arrived in Weslaco to set up operations. Rick Perry, the Governor of Texas, declared four South Texas counties disaster areas and more than 800 Guardsmen were activated in support of civil authorities for Hurricane Dolly.

Operation Lone Star is an annual event led by DSHS Region 11 in partnership with the Texas Military Forces to provide free public health services such as immunization, physicals, health screenings, dental services, and pharmacy to medically underserved areas. OLS has provided essential medical services to under-served communities in South Texas since 1999, while also providing Emergency Preparedness training for state military members.

Colonel Marvin Miller of the Texas Army National Guard's Standing Joint Interagency Task Force (SJIATF) was forward deployed to the Weslaco Armory in Hidalgo County, one of the disaster zones, to set up emergency operations. Col. Miller and his team, comprised of Army, Air and State Guard members hit the ground ready for operations. The only joint staff area on his team requiring additional assistance was the J-1, Personnel area. All of the J-1 staff did not make it into Weslaco before the hurricane, creating a shortage in this critical area.

Lieutenant Colonel Shaunte Cooper and Senior Master Sergeant Priscilla A. Malone, 147th Reconnaissance Wing,

both in town for OLS operations volunteered their expertise and worked more than 30 hours to account for all of the military members activated in support of Hurricane Dolly. This make-shift J-1 staff from OLS was able to attain and maintain 100% accountability of soldiers who were continuously arriving in theater or moving between points of distribution and shelter sites the entire time they were assisting the hurricane efforts.

"I know the key to a successful mission is the accountability of the people and the equipment available from the very beginning," said SMSgt Malone.

This team of Air National Guard members worked tirelessly in the dark, because of power outages, for almost two days to get accountability of all of the soldiers and airmen deployed to the Rio Grande Valley.

"I volunteered to work J-1 issues because it was the right thing to do," said Malone, the Service Flight Superintendent from Houston.

In the ANG, the Services and Personnel career fields are in the process of merging; therefore, SMSgt Malone was very comfortable performing J-1 duties.

Lt Col Cooper and SMSgt Malone received Achievement Medal for their expertise, knowledge and the outstanding manner in which they established accountability for the Hurricane Dolly



Col. Marvin Miller, from the Texas Army National Guard's Standing Joint Interagency Task Force (SJIATF) presents an Army Achievement medals for outstanding support during Hurricane Dolly operations to Lt. Col. Shaunte Y. Cooper and SMSgt. Priscilla A. Malone, both assigned to the 147 RW in Houston. (Photo by: Texas State Guard/CPT. J. Michael Spraggins)

mission. According to Col. Miller, "There are not many Air Force members who receive this award."

It was remarkable how the ANG team stepped up and worked the hurricane issues while simultaneously setting up operations for the OLS events scheduled for the following week.

"Our initial team could not have gotten 100% accountability without the Operation Lone Star personnel," said Col. Miller. ■

DOLLY MEETS BIG BLUE

Texas Military Forces uses mobile command center to provide critical communications for the Rio Grande Valley recover after hurricane Dolly.

By CPT J. Michel Spraggins

WESLACO, TX – The Weatherman on TV first talked about the tropical depression, then the tropical storm and finally about the full blown hurricane named Dolly off the coast of Mexico, rushing towards Texas.

Big Blue was standing by ready to meet Dolly if she made landfall anywhere in south Texas.



Big Blue sets up H- E-B parking lot in Weslaco Texas in response to hurricane Dolly.

Big Blue is a highly sophisticated state of the art, mobile, self-powered, go-anywhere, set-up anywhere, totally-self contained, command center used to providing instant communications among the State Operations Center, shelter sites and first responders in times of state emergencies.

Blue is manned by Texas State Guardsmen, Chief Master Sergeant James Short of the 436th Air Support Group

of the Texas State Guard; the NCOIC of the unit manning Blue stated that "the guardsmen had been training for just such an event."

The Texas State Guard has been doing intense training to be ready to provide Defense Support to Civilian Authorities (DSCA) in providing communications support, evacuation shelter management, Points of Distribution (POD), medical and chaplain assistance for when Mother Nature unleashes her wrath, in this case in the form of hurricane Dolly.

The Texas State Guard is the oldest of the three branches of the Texas Military Forces, with the other two being the Army and Air Guard and can trace its history to serving Texas before the Alamo. The State Guard is made up of 6



Texas State Guardsmen man the communications equipment in Big Blue, to support the Texas Military Forces helping with recovery in the Rio Grand Valley area.



Airmen of the 436th Air Support Group, 4th Air Wing of the Texas State Guard part of the Texas Military Forces, raise the antenna.

Army Regiments, 2 Air Wings, Medical Brigade and Maritime Regiment. The State Guard can only be deployed outside of Texas under the direct authority of the Governor.

Hurricane Dolly support is an example of the Texas Military Forces DSCA in form of manning evacuation shelters and PODs and Big Blue was there when Dolly arrived in Brownsville, Harlingen and the surrounding counties.

"Reliable communications is absolutely critical in times of emergencies and Blue and its team met the challenge," said Chief Short. ■

RECENT TRENDS IN OPERATION LONE STAR

By LTC Miguel Bedolla

The year 2008 has seen the tenth edition of the implementation of Operation Lone Star. It is part of the Civilian-Military Innovative Readiness Training Program, which falls under the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense – Reserve Affairs, and is authorized by the National Defense Authorization Act of 1993 which allows for joint civilian and military projects that meet needs not otherwise met, which have to provide the military services the opportunity for “hands-on” training while also providing a direct and lasting benefits to the communities where the training occurs.

Although initially modest in size and located only in the Lower Rio Grande region, Operation Lone Star has grown in duration and extension. It now lasts two weeks and it covers some of the many communities in the Lower and Mid-Rio Grande, from Brownsville to Laredo. According to Dr. Brian Smith, M.D., M.P.H., who is the Director of Region 11 of the Texas Department of State Health Services and , as such the civilian authority under which the military contingents serve, the amount of people treated during the two weeks of the operation, approximately 13,000, is equal to “...the amount a community health center will do in a year.” The total cost of the services provided during one year is about \$1,800,000. It must be added that all civilian agencies and volunteers that participate in the operation do so also under the authority of Dr. Smith.

The identity of the military contingents that serve in the operation has changed. For instance, the year 2002 saw more than 60 Reserve sailors and Marines participate in the operation; but the recent trend has been toward having the Texas Military Forces – Army National Guard, Air National Guard and Texas State Guard – be the military support of the operation. And, since the organization of the Medical Brigade of the Texas State Guard in the year 2003, this contingent has provided very significant proportion of the dentists, nurses and other uniformed health providers that participate in the operation.

Another recent trend has been the rotation of the command of the operation from the Army National Guard, to the Air National Guard to the Medical Brigade and back to the Army National Guard. In this manner not only are the soldiers and airmen of the Texas Military Forces given two weeks of readiness training that has a significant impact on the communities along the Rio Grande, but at any given time the Governor of the State of Texas can call on experienced commanders should

the need arise for more than one humanitarian operation at the same time.

One final trend to be noted is the increasing complexity of the military side of the operation. Even as recently as 2004, the military commander of the operation led with a very small staff. The military commander of this year’s operation not only had a deputy commander, and a surgeon general, but also the usual general staff – personnel, intelligence, operations, logistics – but also such other staff as Public Affairs, Catholic and Protestant chaplains, Behavioral Health specialists and the full support of a Family Readiness Program. ■



Texas State Guard

“Texans Serving Texas”

The Texas State Guard (TXSG) is one of three branches of the Military Forces of the State of Texas, reporting to the Governor of Texas and the Adjutant General. The other two branches of are the Army and Air Guard. The TXSG consists of 6 Regiments, 2 Air Wings, Medical Brigade and Maritime Regiment.

TXSG has units throughout the State of Texas, providing Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA) by maintaining a highly trained military force offering the following services to state and local authorities in times of State Emergencies and homeland security throughout Texas;

- Civil Affairs - Shelter Management
- Medical Services (Doctors, Nurses and Paramedics)
- Volunteer Coordination
- Legal Support (Attorney’s and Paralegals)
- Communications / IT
- Chaplain Services
- No overseas deployment

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THE “THIRD BRANCH” CONTRIBUTES TO NEWLY ESTABLISHED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

By Lt. Col. Greg Perry

Being a member of the Texas Air Guard, we sometimes feel overshadowed by the sheer numbers of the Texas Army National Guard. So, I can only imagine the struggle it is for the Texas State Guard to be heard and find ways to contribute to the mission and capabilities of the Texas Military Forces. The Texas State Guard (TXSG) is one of three branches of the military forces that report to the Texas Adjutant General; they bring unique challenges and amazing attributes to the Texas Military Forces. The most glaring attribute is the truest spirit of volunteerism—except for rare circumstances like Operation Lone Star and being activated for disaster response operations like Hurricane Dolly, the members of the TXSG are pure volunteers. They give of their time, and yes even of their pocketbook, just to train, prepare and serve the citizens of the State of Texas.

Nowhere was this spirit of volunteerism more evident than the officer in charge of Behavioral Health Services at the Besteiro Middle School in Brownsville, Texas, this past week. Maj Richard Chaumier (TXSG) led the Behavioral Health Services that included Capt Allen Rush (TXSG), Capt Jeri Gates (TX-ARNG) and SSgt JoAnn Alonzo (TXARNG). Maj Chaumier boasted that he and his staff were rarely seen without “a smile on their faces”.

Some might question this abundance of good cheer while working long days in an improvised treatment facility away from home...it just might make you question the state of mind of the Behavioral Health staff. However, when you visit with them, you quickly learn that their smiles serve two purposes. First, it’s the sincere expression of satisfaction from helping people--both the citizens of south Texas and their fellow members of the Texas Military Forces. Capt Rush put it plain enough about Operation Lone Star when he said, “We love doin’ this!” Second, smiles are a small but effective form of preventative care—worker stress levels are lower if people are smiling or even cracking jokes. The same holds true for those receiving care: every smiling face from the first greeting at the edge of the parking lot to the last person in the check-out process made a difference in what could be a very daunting experience for children and adults alike. Maj Chaumier be-



Major Richard Chaumier, a Houston psychiatrist and member of the Texas State Guard, Houston/Gulf Coast Medical Brigade, completes a behavioral health case file before moving to the next person in need of counsel during Operation Lone Star.

lieved it was part of their mission to “roam the hallways wearing out shoe leather” just to play with kids or check up on the caregivers.

Behavioral Health staff did more than smile and play with the children. Maj Chaumier was quick to point out that Lone Star was not the place to begin treatment for those in the local populace suffering from life’s stresses or signs of depression. However, being co-located with the Chaplain staff and the local community resources functions was ideal for referring citizens to resources they might have otherwise never considered.

When asked to provide an example of the value Behavioral Health brought to Lone Star, Capt Gates told us about a sole-provider mother with children referred to Behavioral Health by the medical screening staff. This mother was the eldest of her siblings whose father had died a few years back. This mother lacked what we all need—a support system. Capt Gates ex-

plained that the mother expressed relief just from her short visit—it gave her a rare opportunity to talk about her loss without the concern of burdening her younger siblings or children. Capt Gates was successful in referring this patient to local mental health resources and, hopefully, the positive experience at Lone Star will make her more likely to avail herself of those resources. Capt Gates explained that it is common for many of us to need reassurance that our reactions to stress and loss are “normal”.

Maj Chaumier said it was by chance that SSgt Alonzo brought her invaluable experience to his section. SSgt Alonzo was assigned to Behavioral Health as a translator, but she also brought years of experience from her civilian employment working in Child Protective Services. Maj Chaumier bragged about SSgt Alonzo’s interactions with both children and adults.

Colonel Marco Coppola (TXARNG) was happy to have Behavioral Health as an established section in his “Lone Star



Operation Lone Star believes in a healthy mind as well as a healthy body. Assisting in this endeavor is; L-R Army Captain Gates and Major Vo, Texas State Guard member Captain Rainey and Army Staff Sergeant Alonzo from the Behavioral Health office. (Photo by: MSgt. Michael Lachman)

Treatment Facility” and equally pleased on how seamlessly the TXSG and TX-ARNG members blended together. He told Maj Chaumier in his morning staff meeting that the TXSG was wel-

come back next year and the only thing he wanted to change was to ensure the TXSG was billeted at the same location as his TXARNG members. ■



Texas State Guard “Texans Serving Texas”

During State Emergencies and homeland security throughout Texas

TXSG Enlistment Requirements

- No overseas deployment
- Resident of Texas or enrolled student
- Age 18 to 60
- Reasonable Good Health
- Pass criminal background check
- Valid Texas Drivers License
- Prior Military Service not required

- Helpful skill sets: Law Enforcement, Legal, Rescue, Medical [Doctors Nurses, Paramedics], Civil Affairs,
- Chaplain, Communications and IT
- No educational requirement for enlistment
- Educational and age requirements exist for officer commissioning
- Federal Service retirement not affected
- Not deployable overseas

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OPERATION LONE STAR HAS LONG REACH

By SMSgt. Marcus W. Falleaf

I would like “Helping Humanity for 2008,” Alex.

The answer is, “Hundreds of people in the Rio Grande Valley receiving medical and dental treatment from Texas Military Forces, Czech Republic and civilian agencies.”

“What is Operation Lone Star!”

No, this is not Jeopardy. Yet, it could well become an attention getter of monumental proportions if “Operation Lone Star” gets any larger. With the 147th Reconnaissance Wing serving as the host unit, Hurricane Dolly making her presence felt simultaneously and the Czech Republic providing additional military personnel, one can only dream of what this Medical Innovative Readiness Training (MIRT) mission could become in the future.

In its 10th year, Operation Lone Star



From the MIRT site in Rio Grande City, Czech Army Medical Service members work hand-in-hand with host unit 147 Reconnaissance Wing.

has reached literally thousands of people. From the other side of the world and participating in the exercise, the Czech Republic has not only sent Public Information Officers, but doctors, anesthesiologists, hygiene epidemiologists and pharmacists. Working along-side their Texas counterparts lends one to foresee a very positive future.

In 1993, the National Guard State Partnership Program was established in response to the collapse of communism and the change in the world political-military situation. Each U.S. state and territory sought to develop a relationship with a democratic nation of Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia.

Texas became a partner with the Czech Republic, the rest is history. During week one of OLS, the four Public Information Officers from Europe observed the various processes of publicizing and conducting the operation. Talking to a person at each station of the MIRT, they were able to see what was being accomplished and were able to capture the story if necessary.

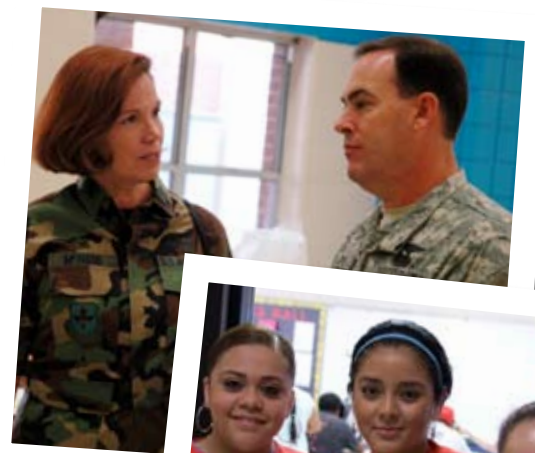
Week two of OLS changes from observation to application. Join-



Members of the Czech Army Medical Service that participate in Operation Lone Star 08. Back Row: L-R Cpt.Vlasimil Olejnik, Maj. Pavel Smira, Lt. Col. Pavel Naplava, CWO Michal Baran. Front Row: CWO Jana Mathonova, 1 Lt. Helena Bohutinska

ing the host unit in Rio Grande City are five medical members of the Czech Republic’s Army. “I like it here very much,” stated Second Lieutenant Martina Jilkova, a Czech pharmacist waiting for patients at the pharmacy door. A couple doors down, Captain Martin Zak, a general practitioner smiles comfortably as he questions a patient about his medical history.

Texas and the Czech Republic benefit mutually in exercises like Operation Lone Star. Past exchanges have included such training as Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear exercises and concerts by the Air Force Band. The National Guard Bureau of International Affairs establishment of this program shows amazing insight in opening doors to global education and diversity. Long live Operation Lone Star! ■



LOCAL HERO DURING OPERATION LONE STAR

By 2Lt Lisa Poppe

BROWNSVILLE, TX – A soldier saved the life of a 5-year-old boy by performing the Heimlich maneuver this past Tuesday, July 29 around 7:30 pm during Operation Lone Star.

Sgt Jene Harrell was enjoying his dinner at Luby's restaurant in Brownsville with nearly twenty other medical Guardsmen when he noticed a small child choking at a nearby table. "The boy had taken too big of a bite of his chopped steak," stated Harrell. "His mother began to slap him on the back (to help)".

Many people wouldn't know what to do in similar situations. Harrell did. After all, he has twenty-three years experience as a trauma nurse. Currently, he is assigned to the Texas Medical Command located on Hensley Field in Grand Prairie, Texas. From July 25 through August 9, he is working as the "Operation Lone Star" Non-Commissioned Officer in charge of traffic flow and security for the free medical clinic.

Operation Lone Star (OLS) is an inter-agency exercise consisting of the Department of State Health Services (DSHS),

Army and Air National Guard, and the Texas State Guard that takes place at various schools throughout the Rio Grande Valley. This is the ten-year anniversary of this particular exercise, which gains more attention each year of operation. The OLS mission is to strengthen community relations and interagency cooperation by providing free medical care to those in need. In 2007, over 13,000 patients were screened and treated.

Harrell accomplished his mission as well as going above and beyond the call of duty. Unfortunately, none of the Guardsmen asked for the boy's name. To this medical professional, this wasn't news worthy, it was merely in the line of duty. In appreciation for his heroic actions, Colonel Marco Coppola (TXARNG), Harrell's commander, presented him with a commander's coin (a long-standing military traditional for outstanding service). However, the greatest gift of appreciation was given by the boy's grandmother who cried tears of joy and thanked Harrell profusely for his gift of life. ■

DDS SUPERHEROES

By Lt. Col. Shaunte Y. Cooper

LAREDO, TX - One patient was overheard saying she felt so much better about herself since having her teeth fixed by Dr. Maureen E. Weber, Texas Medical Command dentist out of Camp Mabry, working as part of Operation Lone Star.

"I feel like a million dollars," said Laura Perez, a resident of Laredo who had two teeth extracted during OLS.

"They (my teeth) have been bothering me for a long time," continued Perez. She laughed and said, "Estoy alegre que se fuerron" which translates to "I am glad they (the teeth) are gone."

Operation Lone Star is an annual operation that provides free medical and dental care to needing residents of the Rio Grande Valley.



LTC Maureen Weber a dentist with the Texas Medical Command in Grand Prairie, Texas, gives a shot to numb a patients mouth prior to a tooth extraction during Operation LoneStar in Laredo, Texas, August 5, 2008.(USAF Photo by MSgt M Lachman)

The big question... How could an operation like this make someone feel better about themselves?

"The OLS dentists are mild-mannered dental health professionals, but the much needed work they perform make them true superheroes," said Colonel Joel Henness, the OLS Joint Military Task Force Commander. "The work they do transforms lives, or better yet transforms smiles."

This is the 10th year of participating in OLS for LTC Weber who is a Regional Dentist, covering 3 regions, for the Texas Department of Health and Human Services out of Tyler.

"OLS is a great training tool and allows us (the military) to partner with different agencies using mobile equipment," said LTC Weber.

"The best thing about the operation for me is seeing the satisfaction on a patient's face."

LTC Weber was assisted by Specialist Valentina Lizcano, a dental technician assigned to the Texas Medical Command who has worked during OLS for 8 years.

"I enjoy helping people," said SPC Lizcano who is also a 5-6 grade science teacher with the Aldine Independent School District.

Dental services are limited during OLS operations and the number of patients requiring services outnumber the available appointments. This dynamic duo worked extremely hard to see as many patients as possible without compromising the quality of care.

"We provide individualized care to each patient who walks through the door," said LTC Weber. She continued, "This operation is all the patients."

THE RESULTS ARE IN ...WEDNESDAY AFTER HOURS... A SUCCESS

By SMSgt. Marcus W. Falleaf

LAREDO, TX (August 6, 2008) - Extending the end of day time from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Wednesday, increased the patient numbers by 165 at the Laredo site for Operation Lone Star.

"This really helps," said Cindy Benavides, a nurse in the United Independent School District for the past 16 years.



LTC Maureen Weber, a dentist and **SPC Valentina Lizcano**, a dental technician, both assigned to the Texas Medical Command providing dental care to a patient during Operation Lone Star 2008.

"We get valuable training, as well as, additional experience working in a joint agency environment during OLS each year," said SPC Lizcano. "But, to me patient care is our primary goal," SPC Lizcano said while nodding her head in the affirmative.

"A procedure which may take me 30 minutes to complete; many times makes a world of difference to the patient," said LTC Weber. She continued with "It feels so good to see how appreciative the people receiving the dental service are."

This dental team may not actually be faster than a speeding bullet, more powerful than a locomotive or able to leap tall buildings in a single bound; but when it comes to dentistry, some would say, they are the "superheroes" of their craft. ■

"Parents who can't afford physicals for their children really use this opportunity," Benavides said through a blood curdling scream heard from a distance coming from the vaccination room.

Suddenly another nurse came through the door stating, "Wow, I'm done, 25 minutes past 7 p.m." ■

OPERATION LONE STAR IN HEBBRONVILLE FOR THE FIRST TIME

By Laura R. Iglesias, Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)

HEBBRONVILLE, TX - (August 5, 2008) - Melissa Davis, a tenured Department of Social and Health Services employee, has provided services to the agency for over 10 years under the epidemiology response program.

With her bright smile and great enthusiasm, Melissa is providing support to Operation Lone Star as the Operation Chief. Although this is her fourth time to work in support of OLS this is the first time for operations in the city of Hebbbronville.

During OLS Melissa is responsible for ensuring medical services are running smoothly. She starts her work day by having a briefing with her staff at 7:30 a.m. During the briefing she and the staff review events from the previous

day and plan for operations for the remainder of the day.

“The school and the military have been great to work with,” said Melissa. She continued, “It was great how the school, and local community assisted by providing volunteers to support the OLS operations.”

The Medical Readiness Innovative Training site set up in Hebbbronville was a test location to validate the need in this area for the services provided by OLS. To date this site saw a total of 553 patients and provided approximately 1487 services to these patients.

Melissa concluded by saying, “Operations in Hebbbronville went very well. I hope we are able to add dental services at this location next year.” ■



Melissa Davis, a tenure Department of Social and Health Services employee, served as the Chief of Operations at the Hebbbronville Medical Innovative Readiness Training site for Operation Lone Star. This was the first year of operations for OLS in this city.

THE HUEVO IS DEAD, LONG LIVE THE HUEVO! THE LIGHTER SIDE OF OPERATION LONE STAR

By LTC Miguel Bedolla

At the briefing all of the soldiers who participated in Operation Lone Star 2007 went through, a cultural specialist explained how some people in isolated parts of the Lower Rio Grande still believe in the “Evil Eye.” This is a condition which is brought about when someone sees someone else with an evil intention. It is healed when an egg – huevo in Spanish - is moved throughout the surface of the person’s body and then cracked in front of the person to reveal the eye responsible for the evil.

It seems that to this date no one has shown up at any of the Medical Innovative Readiness Treatment sites of the operation complaining of the effects of the Evil Eye. However, someone who was undoubtedly a creative soldier came up with a great idea. It was called The Military Order of the Huevo. To be inducted into the order a soldier had to be responsible for an act which revealed such a lack of intelligence the people around him or her thought he or she

might be suffering from the effects of the Evil Eye.

Soon the ceremony of induction into the Order of the Huevo became a regular event, scheduled at the end of the day, after accounts of acts that showed lapses of intelligence to different degrees had been swapped. By then, the consensus had been reached about the single-one most egregious act that was really a manifestation of such malady. One such act occurred during a brief-

ing when an officer, referred to the commanders of the Joint Task Force as “you guys...” while he was addressing them. All inductees have also been responsible for similar blunders.

At the induction ceremony all of those present stood at attention as called for by one of the commanding sergeants. Then someone read the citation that warranted the induction. At the end of the reading everybody raised their left arm shoulder high and with the

thumb and index finger made a gesture as if holding an egg. At that moment the officer presenting the award yelled “hooo-eeeh-voh” and then everybody said huevo!

At the beginning of Operation Lone Star 2008, there was a serious attempt to award the “Military Order of the Huevo” everyday as in 2007. But the real life conditions under which this year’s operation was implemented – right after Hurricane Dolly – and the tempo at

which the operations occurred made it impossible. It was then that the creative genius who invented the award said “I guess there are some good things that are meant to happen only once” and devoted himself to his duties.

Thus, it was that, the Order of the Huevo came and went, and... The Huevo is dead. Long live the Huevo!!!! ■

LOGISTICS REALLY MAKE IT HAPPEN

By Lt. Col. Shaunte Y. Cooper

LAREDO, TX – “If everything is going good, no one cares about logistics,” said Major Vincent Gradney, Operation Lonestar J4 Plans and Policies (Logistics) Officer. “We really hear it (criticism) when supplies don’t get here, members can’t get from one place to another, or if there aren’t enough places to sleep or food to eat.”

“Most people do not know very much about what it takes to do our job, but they surely notice when it is not done correctly,” said Maj. Gradney.

Operation Lonestar is a humanitarian mission as well as a training mission, which brings free medical care to residents of the Rio Grande Valley. It takes approximately 300 members of the Texas Military Forces that consist of the Air, Army and Texas State Guard. Each person needs a place to sleep, food to eat, transportation and the resources to do his or her job while participating in the OLS mission.

“It is the role of my J4/Logistics team to make sure all of these requirements are met,” said Maj. Gradney.



Logistic Team members in constant motion from start to finish. L-R LTC Danielski, SMSgt. Arsenault, SSgt. Edwards, SSgt. Johnson, Senior Airman Bagwell, SMSgt. Malone, TSgt. Grigsby and Maj. Gradney. (Photo by: SMSgt Marcus Falleaf)

Although Operation Lonestar only lasts about two weeks, preparation started far in advance. Detailed planning for this year’s OLS began “about a year ago; however, I became the lead J4 in June 2008,” Gradney said.

“It is my job to anticipate, program and plan for needs, all while working in a joint service or what is commonly referred to as a purple environment, continued Gradney.”

Being a Logistics Officer at the 147th Reconnaissance Wing in Houston provides Maj. Gradney the perfect foundation to run the J4 team for OLS.

However, planning even a year prior can’t account for the unexpected. The logistics job this year was a great challenge. During the first week of operations, as the OLS team members arrived in town, Hurricane Dolly made her presence known.

It was not just the inclement weather, flooding or power outages that made Dolly memorable for the Logistics Team. The fact every hotel within 50 miles had the dreaded NO VACANCY sign displayed in bright letters, lingered in the minds of this team.

In spite of the no vacancy obstacle, Senior Airman Patrick Bagwell, 147th Services Flight and the J4 team were able to work out all of the week one lodging issues.

After working through the hurricane situations and moving on to the second week of operations, the Logistics Team was again faced with the wrath of Mother Nature. Several OLS members were sent to the Houston area in support of Tropical Storm Edouard. This left several contracted hotel rooms vacant and many issues to resolve with hotel management.

The 10 person Logistics Team managed a budget of approximately 275K of which 190K was for medical operations alone. This team was responsible for supplying and re-supplying all of the Medical Innovative Readiness Team sites on a daily basis.

“The MIRT sites were required to provide daily inventory reports at 10 a.m., 2 p.m., and 4 p.m.” said Major Gradney.

“Senior Master Sergeant Kenneth R. Arsenault, Technical Sergeant Archie Grigsby, 147th Medical Group; along with Colonel Linn J. Danielski, pharmacy staff officer for the Alamo Medical Group in San Antonio, were responsible for analyzing the reports and delivering the necessary supplies to the MIRT sites.”

It was determined the operating budget for OLS had to be monitored; therefore, a 2 person adjunct finance team was utilized in the J4 area



Senior Airman Patrick Bagwell shows how the logistic nightmare can be recurring when engaged in scheduling motel rooms for Operation Lone Star in the aftermath of Hurricane Dolly. (Photo by: Lt. Col. Shaunte Y. Cooper)

“The OLS Logistics Team motto should be ‘Semper Gumby’ - always flexible because they are able to adjust to any situation,” said Senior Master Sergeant Pricilla A. Malone, the J4 non-commissioned officer in charge from the 147th Services Flight. This flexibility allowed innovative solutions for a wide array of people issues.

It might be stated the key to success is hard work, organization or even discipline. But, according to Maj. Gradney, “The true key to our success is my very capable team; these guys really bring it all together.” ■

147 RW HOST OLS 10TH ANNIVERSARY

By SMSgt. Marcus W. Falleaf

How good can a bus ride from Houston to Rio Grande City, TX really be in the middle of the Dog Days of Summer and in the aftermath of Hurricane Dolly? Well, try asking the 147th Reconnaissance Wing Medical Group who was the host unit for Operation Lone Star 2008 and who did just that.

“We’ve had an awesome time,” said Master Sergeant Wanda Lutz, an aerospace medical technician for the unit. Pulling away to the side of the patient she was attending, MSgt. Lutz revealed a young lady who just had a tooth extracted, with gauze showing from her mouth, nodded her head “yes” in agreement.



MSgt. Wanda Lutz and a dental patient from the Rio Grande Valley are in agreement as to the need of Operation Lone Star.

Working in conjunction with so many civilian agencies, OLS has created a bond between the Texas Military Forces and the volunteers from the Valley. Miriam Martinez, a specialist in Hypertension and Diabetes, who was conducting an Intraocular Pressure test, has been volunteering since OLS started in Rio Grande City. “I can’t even remember how long I have been doing this,” said Martinez. We use these numbers in Diabetes and Retinopathy research we do for the University of Texas, Houston.

THE NUMBERS AND THE SMILES TELL THE STORY

By Lt. Col. Shaunte Y. Cooper

LAREDO, TX (August 5, 2008) – The City of Laredo has been planning for Operation Lone Star since January and this preparation paid off. Although turn out has not been as high as the previous year, probably because of Hurricane Dolly, a lot of people came out to receive the services offered.

The Medical Innovative Readiness Training site set up in Laredo, services the most patients during the two weeks Operation Lone Star is in the Rio Grande Valley. In just 3 days, of the 5 day operation, there were 2,027 patients receiving a total of 4,399 services.

“Numbers tell this success story, as do the happy smiles of young children and their parents,” said Waldo Lopez, City of Laredo Division Chief for Disease Control and Epidemiology Division.

For 10 years, Operation Lone Star has been providing free medical and dental service and this is the second year the City of Laredo Health Department has participated in the program.

“OLS is an opportunity for the Laredo Health Department to partner with the Texas Military Forces, local universities, the Laredo School Districts, Methodist Healthcare Ministries and Mercy Ministries along with many other contributors, said Gloria Pena, Incident Commander for the Laredo MIRT site. Gloria is employed as the Chief of Patient Care Services for the City of Laredo Health Department.”

“Partnering with so many agencies and having so many people volunteer to assist is amazing to watch,” said Gloria. “This partnering makes OLS operations seamless,” continued Gloria.

In this, the 10th anniversary of Operation Lone Star, there is still multiple reasons for its continuance. The people who receive the treatment and the training of TMF for emergency actions are big, but the bonds created and that continue between the people of Texas are by far the most important. Semper Fi. ■



Chief of Patient Care Services Gloria Pena, City of Laredo Health Department Chief Waldo Lopez, Health Inspector Veronica Ugalde manage Incident Command Operations during Operation Lone Star in Laredo, Texas, August 7, 2008. (USAF Photo by Lt. Col. Shaunte Cooper)

“OLS is an opportunity to provide medical and dental services to many residents who are uninsured or who have insurance but are underinsured,” said Waldo.

“Laredo residents experienced a small outbreak of Shigellosis, commonly known as food poisoning,” accounts Waldo. He continued, “There were 6-7 new cases a day from April to June.”

The Laredo Public Health Department is using OLS to provide education. According to Waldo, “OLS is one of the tools we (Laredo Health Department) decided to use to educate residence about how to prevent shigellosis, as well as, other illnesses.” ■

Operation Lone Star

PROVIDING MEDICAL CARE TO LOW-INCOME FAMILIES IN SOUTH TEXAS

The Texas Military forces along with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission and other agencies set up seven medical sites across six South Texas Counties for two weeks each year. Known as Operation Lone Star, this exercise provides medical and dental care to more than 13,000 South Texas residents.

In order to provide these services and expand the number of free health clinics, we need volunteers from the medical community.

We are looking for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians who would like to volunteer to serve in Operation Lone Star. Please contact us if you are interested in this opportunity.

For more information about serving in Operation Lone Star, please call

COL Linn J Danielski
210.490.3171

