

THE MUSTANG


Annual Training - June 2011

- o 449 Goes back to basics
- o HHC trains for the future
- o Aviation cooks win state competition
- o Signal unit supports AT



The Publication of the 36th Combat Aviation Brigade

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36th Combat Aviation Brigade

Col. Richard Adams
Commander

Command Sgt. Maj.
Anthony Simms
Brigade Sergeant Major

The Mustang is produced by the Public
Affairs Section, HHC, 36th Combat
Aviation Brigade

Sgt. 1st Class Daniel A. Griego,
Public Affairs Operations NCO

Pfc. Kelly A. Middleton,
Public Affairs Specialist

Sgt. Anita Castillo,
Contributing Photographer

Cover: Soldiers of the 449th Aviation Support Battalion practice their primary marksmanship skills at Camp Swift during their summer annual training June 13, 2011. (Photo by Army Pfc. Kelly Middleton)

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449th ASB goes back to the basics for AT

Story by Army Sgt. 1st Class Daniel A. Griego

The Army National Guard is Texas' military response for natural disasters, domestic incidents and humanitarian efforts. The members of this seasoned organization must always remain technically and tactically proficient to best serve the citizens of the state in times of crisis and need. To maintain this high level of reliability, they must regularly train and train hard. This year, they took their annual training to Camp Swift, where they refined and honed their warrior skills.

"We've got a lot of things going on," said Staff Sgt. Carlton Jacobs, a squad leader with the maintenance platoon of B Co. 449th Aviation Support Battalion. "We've got a 9-mil range, 203 [rifle] range, which we completed, the M16 [qualification range], [and] we've got HEAT training with the MRAP."

HEAT refers to Camp Swift's specialized HMMWV Egress Assistance Trainer, which simulates a vehicle roll-over for the driver and passengers. It's larger counterpart, the MRAP Egress Trainer, includes a Mine-Resistant, Ambush-Protected passenger vehicle with emphasis on teamwork and perimeter security following egress.

"We [also] have land navigation and the NCO of the Year/Soldier of the Year boards going on," Jacobs continued. "We've got a lot of warrior tasks and skill training going on."

The highlight of this year's field experience is the weapons qualification, the Army's standard to ensure its Soldiers

are prepared for combat engagements.

"[Camp Swift is] a lot better than [Fort] Jackson," said Pfc. Jared Hopkins, a mechanic with B Co 449th ASB. "I can see all the things out there, better sight pictures."

In addition to the standard warrior tasks like weapon familiarization and land navigation, this year's exercise presented the opportunity for the battalion to participate in concentrated and specialized annual training that prepares Soldiers for combat deployments.

"So far the most positive feedback I've gotten for the training from my Soldiers was the AWT lanes," said 1st Sgt. Carole Ramirez of A Co 449th ASB. "They really enjoyed that training."

The AWT lanes are annual warrior tasks that simulate combat environments and stress the Soldiers' battle capabilities.

"They had movement training, movement to contact, vehicle search, grenades [and] different simulations," said 1st Lt. Sonya Villareal, a platoon leader with A Co 449th ASB.

The movement drills placed small teams of four to eight troops in ground formations to practice clearing buildings and sweeping open areas. Simulated opposing forces would engage each party and challenge them to work as a team in suppressive fire coordination and securing the vicinity.

"Everything is a lot better than last year," said Hopkins.

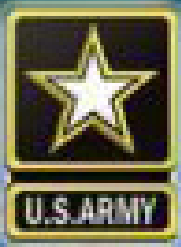
With renewed qualifications and confidence in their abilities, the Soldiers of the 449th Aviation Support Battalion stand ready to protect the citizens of Texas and face the challenges that lay ahead, both stateside and abroad.

"Every different task, they accomplish," said Villareal. "They're motivated; they stay motivated everyday."

Staff Sgt. Brian Stilley of Headquarters Support Company, 449th Aviation Support Battalion completes his weapons qualification at Camp Swift June 14, 2011.

Photo by Army Pfc. Kelly Middleton.





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The business card features a camouflage background with various military symbols and aircraft. At the top left is a blue shield with a white 'T'. Next to it is a black helicopter. In the center is a yellow circular seal with a blue shield and a white 'T'. To the right is a black helicopter. At the top right is a circular seal with a blue border and a white 'T'. The card is divided into two columns. The left column contains the name **ANGIE PHILLIS**, her title **FAMILY ASSISTANCE CENTER SPECIALIST**, her phone number **512-751-3974**, and her email **ANGIE.PHILLIS@NG.ARMY.MIL**. The right column contains the name **TARA GASPAR**, her title **FAMILY READINESS SUPPORT ASSISTANT**, her phone number **512-239-9424**, and her email **TARA.GASPAR@NG.ARMY.MIL**. At the bottom left is a blue helicopter, and at the bottom right is a black helicopter.

ANGIE PHILLIS	TARA GASPAR
FAMILY ASSISTANCE CENTER SPECIALIST	FAMILY READINESS SUPPORT ASSISTANT
512-751-3974	512-239-9424
ANGIE.PHILLIS@NG.ARMY.MIL	TARA.GASPAR@NG.ARMY.MIL

Brigade chaplain serves, mentors and leads

Story by Army Sgt. 1st Class Daniel A. Griego

Educator and civil rights leader Mary McLeod Bethune once said, “faith is the first factor in a life devoted to service. Without it, nothing is possible. With it, nothing is impossible.”

For chaplains serving in the United States Army, service and faith reinforce each other and guide the invaluable duty they perform as counselors and mentors. Army Maj. Francisco Stodola, chaplain for the 36th Combat Aviation Brigade, lives these two complementing roles every day he wears the uniform.

“This is one of the major jobs of every chaplain,” said Stodola, “to see that every Soldier’s needs are met. Every chaplain is expected to take care of all the troops under his care.”

This summer, Stodola supports the full spectrum of brigade operations by visiting various sites and training

events throughout the organization.

“The annual training for any guard member is typically two weeks,” he said. “But in this particular case my AT is being divided up into sections so that I can have exposure to numerous units who are preparing for deployment.”

As a chaplain, Stodola’s service means much more than providing religious services. At the brigade level, he frequently acts as special staff to the commander and a key trainer of annual briefings for all personnel, to include suicide prevention, redeployment and family life.

“There are Army duties,” said Stodola, “such as giving required briefings that the Soldiers are supposed to receive. This is for everyone’s benefit, irrespective of their religious preference.”

As an ordained Catholic priest, he serves as an official ambassador of his religion and faithfully represents the diocese endorsing him.

“One cannot be a military chaplain without that endorsement,” said Stodola. “In my particular case, it’s the Bishop of Laredo because that’s where I’m from, who has to sign me over to the military archdiocese located in Washington, D.C. They don’t direct the chaplain or assign him. Once he’s endorsed, it’s up to the Army to decide where it is you serve.”

One of the chaplain’s brigade parishioners, Spc. Robert A. Reynolds of B Co 449th, values the services and presence of the military’s religious advisors.

“Chaplain services are very helpful to Soldiers,” said Reynolds. “It fulfills that spiritual need that a lot of Soldiers have and it also builds unit cohesion because it’s one of those things that Soldiers can do together.”

Stodola will visit Camp Swift next month in support of Task Force 1-108th Air Helicopter Battalion’s pre-mobilization training and later in August for the 1-171 General Support Aviation Battalion.

“We constantly and on a daily basis pray for all of the troops,” said Stodola, “and particularly for those who are deployed that God will protect them and we always ask that he have mercy on the souls of those who have given their lives for our great nation.”

Army Maj. Chaplain Francisco Stodola, chaplain for the 36th Combat Aviation Brigade, prepares for Mass during annual training at the Austin-Bergstrom Airport National Guard Armory June 19, 2011. (Photo by Army Sgt. 1st Class Daniel A. Griego)



Aviation brigade trains for tomorrow's battlefield

Story by Army Sgt. 1st Class Daniel A. Griego and Pfc. Kelly Middleton

As the nature of contemporary warfare evolves and adapts, so too must the technology we use to maintain the advantage on the battlefield. Never before has global information moved so quickly and now, more than ever, combat zones place a premium on safe and efficient communication. When seconds count, the military needs to know it can rely on its training and its equipment.

For the 36th Combat Aviation Brigade, this means two weeks of intense, invaluable training to adopt the latest means of information distribution, the Command Post of the Future. From June 11 through 25, the Texas Army National Guard's premier aviation outfit engaged their annual training at the Austin Bergstrom International Airport armory, exclusively to rehearse, perfect and conduct full-scale exercises of the new technology.

From General Dynamics, the architects of the system, the CPOF is "an executive-level decision support system providing situational awareness and collaborative tools to support decision-making."

Simply put, the CPOF facilitates communication at all levels of command, streamlining movements, accountability and resource allocation for today's warfighters.

"It's a collaborative tool that all commanders can reach out to each other over the internet or the network," said Gale Bourdette Product manager of command post systems and integrations, "and do the planning and process of execution of the mission so they don't have to leave their command post like in the old days."

This training on CPOF, and the setting up of the Trailer Mounted Support System that houses the equipment, has many practical uses for the National Guard.

"We will use this overseas," said Spec. Bryan K. Hardi Jr., an intel analyst with HHC, 36th CAB. "We can use it during hurricane missions also, but we'll definitely use it overseas."

Using the CPOF would have proved impossible without the infrastructure provided by the TMSS. The housing system, designed by the Drash company, includes rapidly deployable tactical operations centers capable of providing dynamic command, control and communications on the battlefield. These tent systems require substantial training and official certifications to ensure the Soldiers follow proper safety and assembly standards.

"It takes a minimum of eight men to set it up," said Spec. Christopher Woods, a plans specialist with HHC, 36th CAB. "I was one of the eight-man crew setting that up, the TMSS medium-sized tents."

After establishing the TMSS, Soldiers engaged daily practices on setting up the computers and other necessary components of the CPOF. For ten days they rehearsed the procedures, improving their efficiency and teamwork each time. The training culminated in a five-day practical training exercise where the Soldiers put what they learned to work.

"We're going to put units on there," said Woods, "[and] to my understanding its going to be missions that have been taken place in the past and how we would react."

"I think most people are pretty enthusiastic about it," said Sgt. Gregory S. Reinhart, an intel analyst with HHC, 36th CAB. "Its been a slow and tedious process getting to that point of being validated in every one of the steps at the end of each day and getting to that end state but its been enlightening."

Battlefield coordination remains a timeless component of warfare, going all the way back to wooded shelters with rudimentary maps taped to dirt walls. CPOF ingeniously takes the best practices of more than two hundred years of American conflicts and updates them into a real-time matrix of maps, telecommunications and tactics.

"When I came into the marines in the 1980's," said Reinhart, "we had literally boards with a map and then we



Army Staff Sgt. Frank Padilla (left), Spc. Zachary Baggs and Sgt. 1st Class Heather Rosales, all of HHC, 36th Combat Aviation Brigade, review their Command Post of the Future (CPoF) screens during annual training conducted June 2011 at the Austin-Bergstrom Airport National Guard Armory. Photo by Army Sgt. 1st Class Daniel A. Griego.



Aviation Brigade, continued.

put acetate over them and we changed overlays by hand depending on what the commander wanted to see. CPOF allows you to do that on the computer and you can manipulate it so that you can get the overlays in just a click of a button and its there.”

At the end of the day, CPOF supports the mission, fulfills the commander’s intent and will ultimately save lives. For the Soldiers of the 36th Combat Aviation Brigade, it represents a welcomed advancement for their stateside and overseas mission.

“Everyone wants to learn how to use these systems to better enhance the tactical requirement out there,” said Bourdette. “That’s the big thing right there and that’s why we’re out here.”

Left: Army Sgt. Anita Castillo conducts service checks on the generators that keep the CPOF running. During annual training, the brigade conducted 24-hour operations, requiring constant operability of the shelter equipment and generators.

Below: Army Spc. Chris Griffin (left) and Sgt. Jeff Bragg of HHC, 36th Combat Aviation Brigade, review their Command Post of the Future (CPoF) screens during annual training conducted June 2011 at the Austin-Bergstrom Airport National Guard Armory. Photo by Army Sgt. 1st Class Daniel A. Griego



Aviation cooks take top honors at competition

Story by Army Sgt. 1st Class Daniel A. Griego



"It's a chance for us to show off our skills," said Spc. Lee Salazar, a cook and field sanitation specialist with E Co, 2-149th General Support Aviation Battalion. "What we train, what we do throughout the years to show how we progress."

The chance was the annual Phillip A. Connelly Awards Program. The end state was the exemplary culinary experts of E Co., 2-149th GSAB earning "Best in State" at Camp Bowie in Brownwood, Texas, May 17-18, 2011.

The event, now in its 43rd year, promotes Army food service through incentives, competition and media attention, while recognizing and honoring outstanding performance and management.

"The standard was to set up a field kitchen unit," said Salazar. "We went above and beyond because we actually set up a perimeter wall. We had guard stations on all four corners of the field, we camouflaged all the stations including the water buffalo and the fuel point. We were treating it like a combat area."

Their hard work and dedication paid off as the strict and seasoned judges announced the winners on the last day of the competition. As the state victors, E Co now moves on to the regional com-

petition, where a new set of judges will compare their same performance scores against the scores of neighboring states.

"If we win regional," said Salazar, "we get a chance to participate in the [Department of the Army competition], against regular army cooks."

The International Food Service Executives Association supports the event by providing the awards, civilian evaluators for all services, food safety training and the conference hosting the awards ceremony.

The stressful event measured not only the Soldiers' culinary talents, but also their execution of field sanitation, water purification and quality testing. "It was pretty intense," said Salazar. "We had only two days to set up the whole site. We didn't have a week to setup; we literally had hours."

As the team prepares for their next phase of training, they go with the support and confidence of their battalion and their brigade. Trained and accomplished, E Co, 2-149th GSAB measures up not only as skilled cooks, but also as capable Soldiers.





Signal unit supports aviation battalion, state

Story by Army Pfc. Kelly Middleton

Every mission has multiple components working together to complete the task at hand, each element playing a vital role to support the end-state. C Co., 449th Aviation Support Battalion enhances its parent organization as one such component, providing invaluable services to the mission. They supply their battalion with complete telecommunications capabilities built upon the most up-to-date technology in the military.

Applying this skill set to National Guard training requirements, the elite team of the Texas Interoperable Communications Package supported the 449th ASB for the brigade-level annual training, held June 2011 at Camp Swift in Bastrop, Texas.

“Our real mission is to provide communications any way possible,” said 2nd Lt. Zachary Moore, OIC for the TICP Trailer 6141, a modern communications shelter within C Co 449th. “We’re supporting the full battalion of 449 ASB with communications so they can do their annual training. We’ve given out the FM hand-helds here; they’re using the phones, the wi-fi [and] the internet. In a civilian situation or disaster, they’d be using the same things.”

The TICP, while supporting 449th ASB, participated in the traditional Army drills and classes at Camp Swift to maintain their warrior skills.

“We like to stay busy, so once we’re up, we have shifts,” said Moore. “We try to keep two people on shift and if there’s more people at our site, we’ll send them out for training. There’re ruck marches going on and HEAT training.”

HEAT refers to Camp Swift’s specialized HMMWV Egress Assistance Trainer, which simulates a vehicle rollover for the driver and passengers.

Although the TICP personnel supported the Camp Swift AT with signal capabilities, their primary mission focuses on immediate response to any natural disaster within their area of coverage.

“We’re really a hurricane-bound team,” said Moore. “We do missions like this every once in a while but the real reason for the TICP is for Hurricane emergencies. They call us up if there’s an emergency and within 24 hours we should be en route to the emergency site.”

The signal-qualified Soldiers have extensively trained on their equipment, always preparing for real-world exercises in which they can fully employ their facility.

“We are looking forward to it,” said Staff Sgt. Zachary Hamilton, team chief for TICP, about the opportunity to support the state directly. “The equipment is excellent and we really want to get out there and try it out.”

When C Co. is unable to report for a natural disaster, there are other teams ready to support the mission in their stead.

“There’s about six or seven teams,” said Hamilton. “So at any given time, they’re never going to be using all six.”

Training at Camp Swift has prepared TICP to respond to natural disasters while working with the military. The real test will be the civilian sector.

“In a real-world event, we’d have to rely on the civilian agencies and this isn’t a test of the civilian agencies,” said Hamilton. “We know we can get fuel and food from the military but when we get out with civilians are we going to have the same access, and that’s the real test.”

The battalion signal company, as one element of the complete organization, keeps the rest of 449th ASB connected. Without TICP capabilities, the mission would falter and the outfit would suffer an incalculable loss. The team’s contribution to the workflow remains an invaluable service that enables and promotes complete success for everyone.

“When a natural disaster takes out the civilian infrastructure,” said Hamilton, “it will be units like the TICP team that provide stability for the government agencies to better support the victims of the incident.”



Army Spc. Guadalupe Carreon, a communications specialist with C Co, 449th Aviation Support Battalion, prepares ethernet cable for installation during the summer annual training at Camp Swift in Bastrop, Texas June 15, 2011. Photo by Army Sgt. 1st Class Daniel A. Griego.

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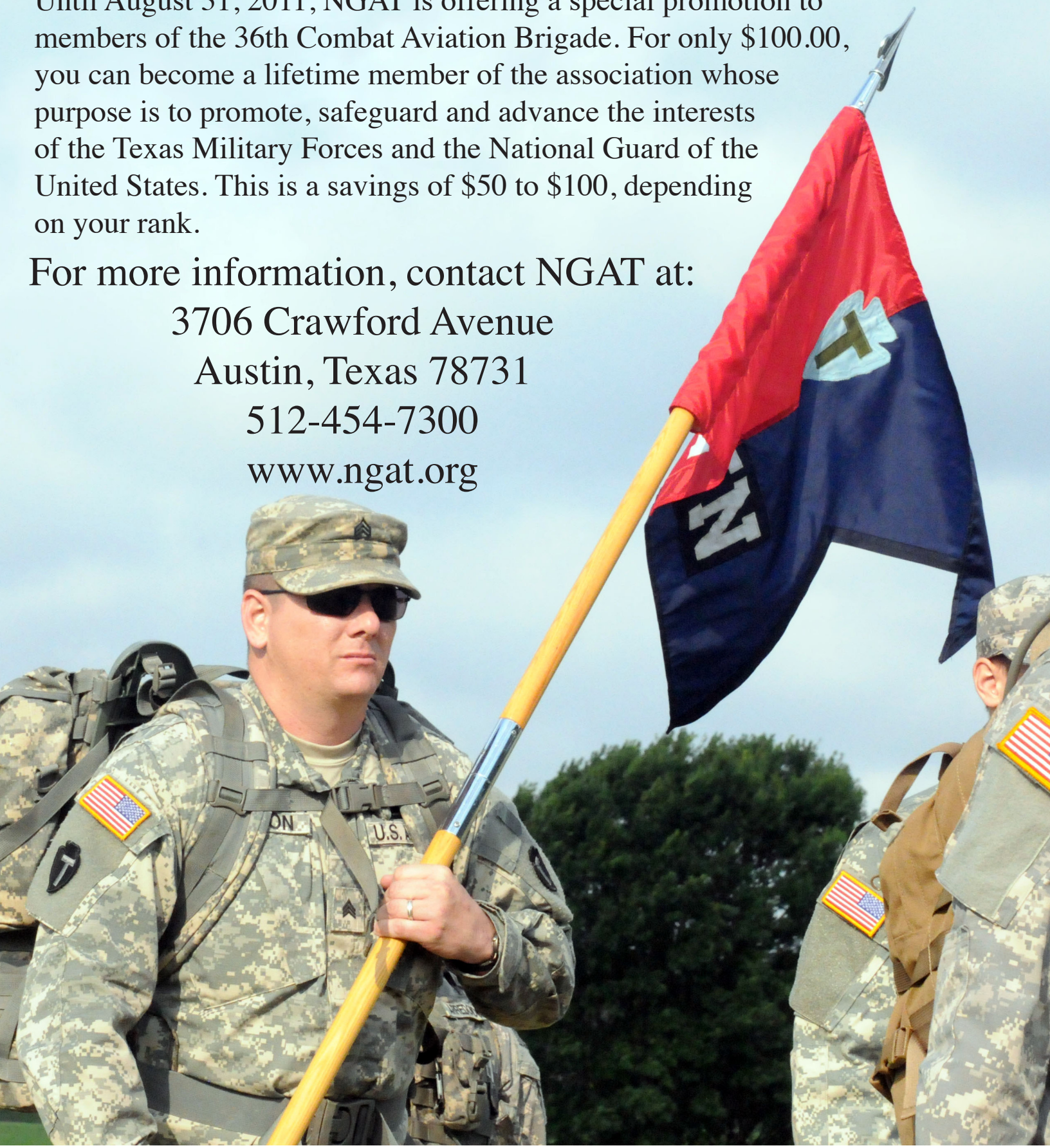
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Ceremony welcomes new leaders into NCO Corps

Story by Army Pfc. Kelly Middleton

Contemporary novelist Jerry McClain once said, “the best example of leadership is leadership by example.” For noncommissioned officers leading today’s Army, leadership is about more than guidance and direction, it means setting a standard of excellence and living that standard every day.

The 449th Aviation Support Battalion recognized two such leaders with an NCO induction ceremony at Camp Swift in Bastrop, Texas, June 17, 2011. During the observance, the newly promoted Soldiers, Sgt. Dustin E. Turner and Sgt. Walter Oduk, both of B Co, joined the ranks of a time-honored corps of leaders.

“We are gathered here to honor these new NCO’s,” said Staff Sgt. Carlton Jacobs, battalion master of ceremonies, “as well as honor the memory of those men and women of the NCO corps who have served with pride and distinction.”



Sgt. Maj. Robert W. Hartzog brushes wine against Sgt. Erik Turner’s uniform during the 449th ASB NCO induction ceremony. (Photo by Army Sgt. 1st Class Daniel A. Griego)

“Live the Army Values every day and do the right thing,” said Hartzog. “Soldiers want to know they can trust you and they can, as long as you do the right thing and what’s legal at all times.”

Now leaders, the new sergeants look toward their future in the military. Their experiences and the guidance from their mentors will develop them into the senior leaders of tomorrow.

“We have big shoes to fill,” said Oduk, “and hopefully one day someone will say Sgt. Oduk filled them well. He did his duties to the best of his abilities.”



Sgt. Maj. Robert W. Hartzog speaks during the 449th ASB NCO induction ceremony. (Photo by Army Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Griego)

Throughout the event, the Soldiers learned about the history and tradition of becoming an NCO. During the Civil War, Soldiers would swear to fight and die for each other after cutting their own hands, establishing blood oaths of brotherhood. Today, this act lives on in tradition to demonstrate the intent to fight for each other.

“We continue this right of passage symbolically with red wine,” said Jacobs.

The new NCOs brushed the red wine against their rank and pressed a thumbprint next to their name on their induction certificate.

Both sergeants demonstrated excitement and reverence for the positions they recently earned.

“[I] hope,” said Turner, “that I can do as well as my NCO’s have done.”

Throughout the ceremony, the guest speaker, Sgt. Maj. Robert W. Hartzog, the 449th ASB sergeant major, discussed the values of being an NCO, referencing the NCO creed and his own personal experiences as a leader.



Army Sgts. Dustin Erik Turner (left) and Walter Oduk present their NCO creed certificates following their NCO induction ceremony held at Camp Swift June 17, 2011. (Photos by Army Pfc. Kelly A. Middleton)

Know your organization!

A Soldier's guide to the 36th Combat Aviation Brigade

36th Combat Aviation Brigade

1-149 ARB

HHC
B Co
C Co
D Co
E Co

2-149 GSAB

HHC
B Co
C Co
D Co
E Co
F Co

449th ASB

HSC
A Co
B Co
C Co

TF 1-108th AHB

HHC Det
B Det
C Co
D Det
E Det

Individual Units:

HHC, 36th CAB

F/1-171st AVN

B/1-114 S&S

Subordinate Organization:

Location(s)

Mission:

Aircraft:

1-149 Attack Reconnaissance Battalion

Houston

Attack and Recon

Apache

2-149 General Support Aviation Battalion

Grand Prairie
San Antonio

Support

Chinook
Black Hawk

449th Aviation Support Battalion

San Antonio
Temple

Maintenance

TF 1-108th Aviation Helicopter Battalion

Austin

Air Assault

Black Hawk

Headquarters/Headquarters Company

Austin

Command and
Control

F/1-171st Aviation

San Antonio

MEDEVAC

Black Hawk

B/1-114 Security and Surveillance

Austin

Reconnaissance

Lakota

Mustangs lead the way!



Photo by Army Sgt. Anita Castillo