



Getting into some history behind Armed Forces Day

BY DAVID A. BRYANT
FORT HOOD HERALD

Saturday is Armed Forces Day, so some people may wonder why we have it. After all, the nation celebrates Memorial Day and Veterans Day, so why an Armed Forces day as well?

While Memorial Day honors the men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice for their nation, and Veterans Day honors all veterans, Armed Forces Day celebrates the men and women still wearing the uniform — whether on active duty, as a member of the Reserves or in the National Guard.

According to militarytimes.com, Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson announced the creation of an Armed Forces Day on Aug. 31, 1949, to replace separate Army, Navy and Air Force Days observed at the time. The single-day celebration stemmed from the unification of the Armed Forces under one department — the Department of Defense. Each of the military leagues and orders was asked to drop sponsorship of its specific service day in order to celebrate the newly announced holiday. The Army, Navy and Air Force leagues all adopted the newly formed day — the Marine Corps League, however, continued support for Marine Corps Day but still supports Armed Forces Day as well.

President Harry S. Truman “praised the work of the military services at home and across the seas” and said, “it is vital to the security of the nation and to the establishment of a desirable peace” during a speech announcing the day’s formation.

In an excerpt from the Presidential Proclamation of Feb. 27, 1950, Truman stated: “Armed Forces Day, Saturday, May 20, 1950, marks the first combined demonstration by America’s defense team of its progress, under the National Security Act, towards the goal of readiness for any eventuality. It is the first parade of preparedness by the unified forces of our land, sea, and air defense.”

The theme of the first Armed Forces Day was “Teamed for Defense.” It was chosen as a means of expressing the unification of all the military forces under a single department of the government. Although this was the theme for the day, there were several other purposes for holding Armed Forces Day, according to a militarytimes.com



Soldiers of the 82nd Airborne Division parachute from a C-141B Starlifter and stand in formation during Andrews Air Force Base, Md., Open House for Armed Forces Day 1986.

article. It was a type of “educational program for civilians,” one in which there would be an increased awareness of the Armed Forces. It was designed to expand public understanding of what

type of job is performed and the role of the military in civilian life. It was a day for the military to show “state-of-the-art” equipment to the civilian population they were protecting. And

it was a day to honor and acknowledge the people of the Armed Forces of the United States.

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We Support Our Troops for ARMED FORCES DAY



History of Fort Hood remembered during celebration of Armed Forces Day

BY JACOB BROOKS
FORT HOOD HERALD

On this Armed Forces Day, it is important to remember the impact Fort Hood and the soldiers stationed there have made on the nation since its first inception.

As American troops clashed with the armies of the Axis powers in the early years of World War II, U.S. military minds brainstormed on ways to counter the heavy tank battalions of Germany that were blitzkrieging through Europe and threatening to turn all humanity into Adolf Hitler's twisted vision.

Enter Fort Hood, or Camp Hood as it was known in those days. The Army post officially opened Sept. 18, 1942, as a tank destroyer training site; nearly 80 years later, the sprawling post, home to nearly 40,000 troops, is still here.

The importance of what Fort Hood means to the outlying towns and communities has not missed by many of those who attended events throughout the years on post.

"Without Fort Hood, we would not be here," said Ed Mullen, the former mayor of Harker Heights, during a 2012 Army birthday celebration. Like many others who live within a few miles of Fort Hood's gates, Mullen is former military. He said the post represents the "finest part of the Army" and continues to bring tremendous growth to the area.

Growth — both inside and outside post limits — has been a major factor in Fort Hood's years, former III Corps and post commander Lt. Gen. Donald Campbell Jr. said.

Commanders before him had the challenge of dealing with that growth, and the growth didn't stop when the post was built or transitioned in the 1950s into a two-division post — nearly unheard of in the Army.



Soldiers with the 3rd Cavalry Regiment conduct live-fire exercises with Stryker vehicles at Fort Hood on Tuesday, Nov. 21, 2017.

FILE PHOTO

Units came and went: the 1st Armored Division, 2nd Armored Division, 4th Infantry Division. Many, like the 1st Cavalry Division, which played a key role in Vietnam and Iraq, are still here. But the post, and its "Great Place" reputation for top-notch field training, never wavered.

The growth is still here, too. While the number of military personnel, their families and civilian contractors account for nearly 65,000 people who use the post to live and work, Fort Hood impacts almost 480,000, including many retirees and area residents in Central Texas, according to an April 2019 fact

sheet put out by Fort Hood Garrison Command.

"We're embedded in these communities," said Campbell.

He said Fort Hood has played a "pivotal" role in the Army's history, from training tank destroyer units to fight the Germans, on in to Vietnam, Desert Storm, Iraq and Afghanistan.

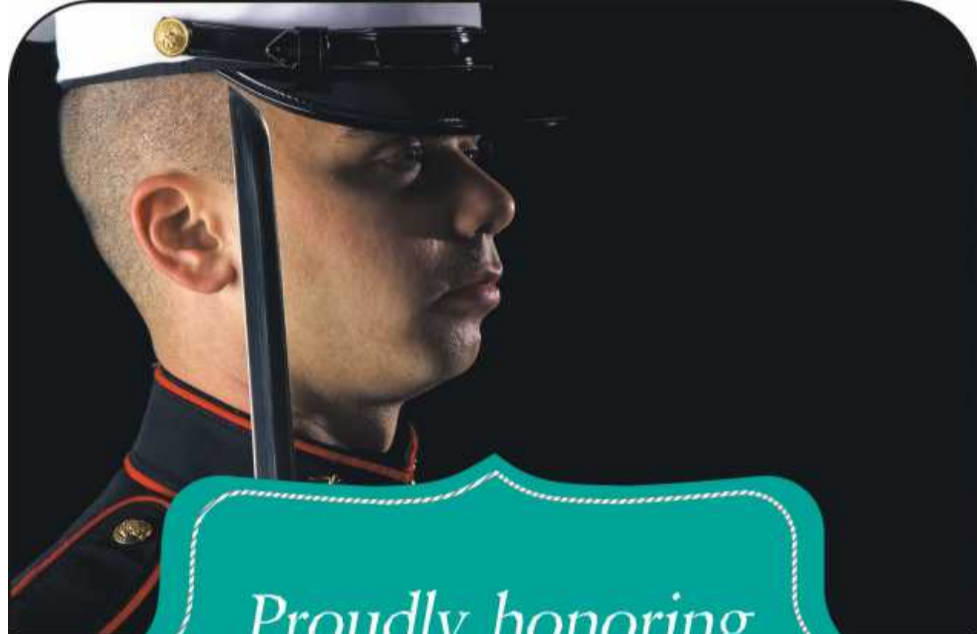
Further, the post has been an Army leader in developing methods to deal with improvised explosive devices, paved the way for new Army-wide medical review boards and embraced the Army mentality of focusing on

soldiers' families that came about in the 1980s — all that, while keeping intact its reputation for a place of combat live-fire exercises and some of the best training grounds in the country.

It's "awe-inspiring" to think about the great leaders and other generals that have come before him, Campbell said.

What's next for the 200,000-acre post? Campbell does not expect Fort Hood to get smaller in the years ahead.

"I see Fort Hood with a tremendously bright future," said Campbell. "In fact, Fort Hood could absorb more troops in the future."



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