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 A KILLEEN DAILY HERALD PUBLICATION  2022 



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North Fort Hood BBQ, 2009

JMB Appaloosa Ranch, 2006



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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

The Great Place marks 80 years in Central Texas	Page 5
Letter from U.S. Rep. John Carter	Page 6
Letter from U.S. Rep. Roger Williams	Page 7
Letters from local mayors	Page 8
Commanders at Camp/Fort Hood	Page 10
People who created The Great Place	Page 10
Fort Hood's economic impact	Page 11
Famous faces who called Fort Hood home	Page 12
Central Texas before Camp Hood	Page 14
Remembering hometown hero Robert Gray	Page 15
Black Panther Battalion's place on post	Page 16
Vehicles of war through history	Page 18
A look at Fort Hood's oldest building	Page 22
USO Fort Hood supports soldiers throughout careers	Page 23
Museum seeks to bridge Killeen, Fort Hood communities	Page 24

Fort Hood Turns 80

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The Great Place marks 80 years in Central Texas

BY DAVID A. BRYANT AND JACOB BROOKS

KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

Fort Hood was born 80 years ago. The reason? World War II.

As Allied 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; 80 years later, the sprawling post, home to approximately 36,000 troops, is still here.

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 more than 55,000 people who use the post to live and work, Fort Hood supports nearly 400,000, including many retirees and area residents in Central Texas and 16 counties. Many of those people shop at Fort Hood stores, eat at restaurants on post or have their medical needs met at the state-of-the-art Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center.

The number of people impacted by Fort Hood in some way or form: countless.

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



HERALD FILE

Sgt. Nicholas Santin with the 3rd Cavalry Regiment exits cover to approach an objective during a live-fire exercise at Fort Hood in August 2019.

intact its reputation for a place of combat live-fire exercises and some of the best training grounds in the country.

Fort Hood's soldier population has ebbed and flowed with the nation's military needs of the era. During the early Camp Hood days, there were nearly 100,000 troops on the post, quickly moving through their training and then heading to the World War II battlefronts.

During and after the Cold War, about 50,000 troops were here. In recent years, amid Army downsizing, the troop numbers have shrunk, but Fort Hood has the ability to take on more at moment's notice.

With nearly 200,000 acres devoted to Army training area, Fort Hood is also home to:

- 78 small arms ranges
- 11 tank and Bradley ranges
- 10 urban training areas
- 2 airborne drop zones

- 2 underground training facilities
- 261 Abrams tanks
- 378 Bradley Fighting Vehicles
- 312 Strykers
- 179 aircraft

WEST FORT HOOD

In 1947, West Fort Hood was known as Killeen Base, and it, along with locations at Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico, and Fort Campbell, Kentucky, became an ideal spot to store the nation's nuclear arsenal.

Killeen Base became known as Site Baker, which was jointly run by the U.S. Air Force and the Atomic Energy Commission.

As nuclear weapons became smaller and more efficient, the need for Site Baker became less important. Additionally, improvements in missile guidance and power made it possible for the Soviet Union to attack the site, leading to weapons being stored closer to their bombers.

The site was decommissioned as a nuclear storage bunker in 1969.

On Oct. 1, 1951, Gray Air Force Base was officially established in what is now known as West Fort Hood. The base was transferred to the Army in 1963 and redesignated Robert Gray Army Airfield, according to a 2012 Herald report. It became an official part of Fort Hood in 1969.

NORTH FORT HOOD

In January 1943, an additional 16,000 acres in Bell County and 34,943 acres in Coryell County near Gatesville were purchased, according to mybaseguide.com. The site near Gatesville was known as the sub-camp and later as North Fort Hood. During the war years, North Fort Hood housed nearly 40,000 troops and 4,000 prisoners of war, and was the site for the southern branch of the

A salute to The Great Place on its 80th anniversary

As we celebrate the 80th anniversary of Fort Hood, it's a reminder that we, as a nation, are forever indebted to our servicemen and women. Freedom has a price and without the service and sacrifice of our soldiers, we would not be able to call this great nation home. I also want to pay my deepest respects to the military families who provide strength, support and stability to our soldiers. Military families have a tough job and continually sacrifice along with their service member for our nation's freedoms.

It has been one of the great honors of my lifetime to represent Fort Hood, our nation's service members and their families who make this community so special. "The Great Place" is not merely a place; it is a family working together as a team to achieve greatness. It is the soldiers' commitment and devotion that has



BRANDY CRUZ | FORT HOOD PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Riding Rio, Capt. Siddiq Hassan, commander of the 1st Cavalry Division's Horse Cavalry Detachment, and Spc. Andrew Valencia, riding Driftwood, jump over an obstacle during the detachment's demonstration outside their stables at Fort Hood on Aug. 19, 2021.

made Fort Hood a premier installation for the United States Army. The dedicated soldiers, the rich history and the constant improvement is

what drives Fort Hood's success. Every time I visit the base, I am reminded of the quality of the soldiers, facilities and training. I know The

Great Place has a bright future ahead and will continue to be a leader in our nation's Army.

Our soldiers and their families deserve the best resources we as a country can provide. I am committed to doing everything I can to ensure our service members have everything they need to succeed while they are serving our country and then continued support after they have been discharged.

I am humbled to have the opportunity to bring funding to Fort Hood to continually improve the base and I remain steadfast in that commitment to continue supporting our Fort Hood soldiers.

Congratulations to Fort Hood for reaching this monumental occasion. God bless our soldiers and the families that support them.

U.S. Rep. John Carter

Texas Congressional District 31



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Proud to celebrate Fort Hood's eight decades of service

It is my distinct honor to have represented Fort Hood for over 10 years in the United States Congress and join in recognizing its 80th anniversary.

Recognized as "The Great Place," Fort Hood has a rich history and is composed of exceptional patriots who selflessly and honorably serve this country. These men and women have directly contributed to the strength, readiness and vigor of our United States Army and have played a significant role in our national security. Whenever I am asked where the next generation of greatness and leaders will come from, I tell them they are at Fort Hood.

Acting as the largest active duty armored post, Fort Hood has answered the call to serve throughout our country's military history and has been a valuable training ground for soldiers and advanced weaponry. From the place to test World War II

tank destroyers to training soldiers for their deployments on a variety of military missions in Vietnam, the Middle East and Europe, Fort Hood has eight decades of extraordinary military accomplishments and legacy, something we can, and should always, be tremendously proud of.

The men and women who work and live on post are some of the bravest and most selfless people I have ever had the opportunity to meet. I am humbled to have the opportunity to fight on behalf of these brave soldiers and their families each and every day in Washington.

Congratulations to the Fort Hood community and leaders on reaching this significant milestone and am confident the base will continue being a great force and asset for the United States Army for years to come.

U.S. Rep. Roger Williams
Texas Congressional District 25



SPC. CHEYNE HANOSKI | ARMY

A Robotic Combat Vehicle-Medium (prototype) is put through its paces during a field test on a Fort Hood range. The 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment "Garryowen," 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, is the only unit in the Army to utilize the robotic vehicles during a ground-breaking test of the robots' capabilities, which will set the Army's standards of how robots are deployed in the future.

Happy 80th Birthday FORT HOOD



FROM



Thank you to all who have served and continue to serve!



Contact us about Veteran Benefits



Happy 80th Birthday Fort Hood!

On behalf of the City of Copperas Cove and our citizens, I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincerest celebratory wishes to Fort Hood on achieving 80 years of outstanding success!

Dating back as far as the official opening on Sept. 18, 1942, when “Camp Hood” was first occupied to test and train World War II tank destroyers, Fort Hood has remained the key component of the Greater Fort Hood Area and allowed for continued growth and sustainability within the region.

Fort Hood has always taken great pride in developing and training fine American soldiers, and the City of Copperas Cove stands at the ready as a proud partner and supporter to the west of “The Great Place.”

As we approach the 80th birthday, I encourage all communities to recognize and come together in appreciation and celebration of the many blessings brought to us by Fort Hood.

To the many men and women who have served at this post, either in the past or present day, I express my sincere gratitude and say Thank You for your dedicated service to our nation, state, region and local community.

May God continue to bless Fort Hood and the surrounding communities. Thank you.

Dan Yancey

Mayor of Copperas Cove



U.S. ARMY | STAFF SGT. DESMOND CASSELL

III Armored Corps Deputy Commander of Support Maj. Gen. Michael Keating cuts a ribbon May 13, officially opening Fort Hood's People First Center. Killeen Mayor Debbie Nash-King, right, and Capt. Rosa Meeks, the commandant for the III Corps and Fort Hood People First Center, left, were just a few of the many in attendance for this event. The People First Center is a combined training facility for units, which focuses on Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention, suicide prevention, domestic violence prevention, and substance abuse prevention.

Saluting 80 years of service in Central Texas

The City of Killeen is happy to salute and celebrate III Corps and Fort Hood's birthday right alongside this beautiful installation. This is 80 years of being the Army's premiere establishment to train and deploy heavy forces.

As America's only post that's capable of stationing and training two armored divisions, the soldiers of this installation have proven that they can withstand any forces that come their way, and are more powerful than all obstacles they may encounter.

Killeen will continue to be a model of support for soldiers and their families. The Fort Hood and Killeen community are one and will always be closely intertwined to build on as vibrant, family-oriented neighbors.

Killeen became home to “Camp Hood” in 1942, instantly quadrupling the city's population and Fort Hood has now grown to more than 340 square miles as the largest single-location employer in the state, let alone Killeen.

The influence of Fort Hood stretches across Texas with an economic

Celebrating a key community partner

On behalf of the City of Harker Heights, Happy 80th Birthday Fort Hood! You continue to be our key to the nation's defense, to the state's economy, and a great partner with those communities that surround “The Great Place.”

We cherish our relationship with our military installation, and we are proud of serving those retired and active duty service members in Harker Heights.

We wish you all the best as you celebrate this milestone and we look forward to serving with you for many years in the future.

Sincerely,

Spencer H. Smith

Mayor of Harker Heights

impact of \$35.4 billion and that's a lot to be proud of and celebrate on this birthday.

Looking at all that Fort Hood has accomplished in 80 years, it's no wonder that the largest, armored military installation in the nation is nicknamed “The Great Place.”

To the III Armored Corps, the Garrison, First U.S. Army Division West, 1st Medical Brigade, 3rd Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Security Force Assistance Brigade, 11th Corps Signal

Brigade, 13th Expeditionary Sustainment Command, 36th Engineer Brigade, 48th Chemical Brigade, 69th Air Defense Artillery Brigade, 89th Military Police Brigade, 504th Expeditionary Military Intelligence Brigade, we say Hooah!

And last but certainly not least, we also wish the 1st Cavalry Division a happy 101 years of service to our nation!

Debbie Nash-King

Mayor of Killeen





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Commanders of Camp/Fort Hood

Maj. Gen. A.D. Bruce, April 1942-April 1943
Maj. Gen. Orlando Ward, May 1943-March 1944
Brig. Gen. W.R. Nichols, March 1944-July 1944
Col. B.F. Delamater Jr., July 1944-April 1946
Maj. Gen. John L. Leonard, June 1946-July 1946
Maj. Gen. John M. Devine, July 1946-Oct. 1946
Maj. Gen. L.S. Hobbs, Oct. 1946-Aug. 1947
Maj. Gen. J.G. Christiansen, Sept. 1947-June 1949
Maj. Gen. Albert C. Smith, June 1949-Oct. 1950
Maj. Gen. W.B. Palmer, Nov. 1950-Dec. 1950
Maj. Gen. Bruce C. Clarke, Jan. 1951-April 1953
Maj. Gen. L.L. Doan, April 1953-July 1953
Maj. Gen. William S. Biddle, Oct. 1953-April 1954
Maj. Gen. Hobart S. Gay, April 1954-Oct. 1954
Maj. Gen. Thomas L. Harrold, Oct. 1954-June 1956
Maj. Gen. William N. Gillmore, June 1956-Aug. 1957
Maj. Gen. William S. Biddle, Aug. 1957-March 1959
Maj. Gen. Earle G. Wheeler, March 1959-March 1960
Maj. Gen. Edward G. Farrand, April 1960-June 1961
Maj. Gen. W.H.S. Wright, July 1961-March 1962
Lt. Gen. Thomas W. Dunn, April 1962-Oct. 1963
Maj. Gen. H.J. Jablonsky, Nov. 1963-Jan. 1964
Lt. Gen. Harvey H. Fisher, Jan. 1964-Feb. 1965
Lt. Gen. Ralph E. Haines, March 1965-April 1967
Lt. Gen. George R. Mather, June 1967-Sept. 1968
Lt. Gen. B.E. Powell, Sept. 1968-July 1971
Lt. Gen. G.P. Seneff Jr., July 1971-Sept. 1973
Lt. Gen. Allen M. Burdett Jr., Sept. 1973-March 1975
Lt. Gen. Robert M. Shoemaker, March 1975-Nov. 1977
Lt. Gen. Marvin D. Fuller, Nov. 1977-Jan. 1980
Lt. Gen. Richard E. Cavazos, Jan. 1980-Feb. 1982
Lt. Gen. Walter F. Ulmer Jr., Feb. 1982-June 1985
Lt. Gen. Crosbie E. Saint, June 1985-June 1988
Lt. Gen. Richard G. Graves, June 1988-June 1991
Lt. Gen. H.G. Taylor, June 1991-Oct. 1993
Lt. Gen. Paul E. Funk, Oct. 1993-Dec. 1995
Lt. Gen. Thomas A. Schwartz, Dec. 1995-Aug. 1998
Lt. Gen. Leon J. LaPorte, Aug. 1998-Aug. 2001
Lt. Gen. B.B. Bell, Aug. 2001-Nov. 2002
Lt. Gen. Thomas F. Metz, Feb. 2003-May 2006
Lt. Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, May 2006-July 2008
Lt. Gen. Rick Lynch, July 2008-Sept. 2009
Lt. Gen. Robert W. Cone, Sept. 2009-April 2011
Lt. Gen. Donald M. Campbell Jr., April 2011-Dec. 2012
Lt. Gen. Mark A. Milley, Dec. 2012-Aug. 2014
Lt. Gen. Sean MacFarland, Aug. 2014-March-2017
Lt. Gen. Paul E. Funk II, March 2017-June 2019
Lt. Gen. Robert "Pat" White, June 2019-Present

Compiled by David A. Bryant



The people who helped create Camp Hood

BY ROSE L. THAYER
HERALD CORRESPONDENT

While the federal government scouted potential locations for its new tank destroyer training grounds in 1941, communities vied for the economic benefits and pride in supporting the war effort.

The Killeen area's congressman, U.S. Rep. W.R. "Bob" Poage, fought to acquire this new training camp for his district, but largely remained neutral as to where exactly. His hometown Valley Mills, near Waco, was also in the running, according to the book "Historic Killeen: An Illustrated History" by Gerald Skidmore. However, the influential newspaperman and then-president of the Temple Chamber of Commerce Frank W. Mayborn, did not have to remain neutral. He worked closely with Poage to bring the camp to Killeen.

Mayborn, who owned the Temple Daily Telegram and later the Killeen Daily Herald until his death in 1987, was so dedicated to the war effort he even joined the Army at the age of 39 and was assigned to the newly formed Camp Hood.

His widow, Sue Mayborn, recalled this time in his life back when Fort Hood dedicated the east entrance of the post in Frank Mayborn's honor in 2013.

"He was unpacking in the barracks. He looked around, it was all kids surrounding him," Sue Mayborn said during remarks to a crowd of military and community leaders. "One young guy looked at Frank ... and said, 'Geez, pops, what's this war coming to?'"

Mayborn was honorably discharged in 1945 as a major and he returned to editing his newspaper.

Other locals mentioned in Skidmore's book as dedicated to bringing Camp Hood to town included Santa Fe Railroad officials, Will Sutton, the Killeen Chamber of Commerce and Killeen Mayor R.T. "Top" Polk.

The book, "Fort Hood, The First 50 Years," by Odie B. Faulk and Laura E. Faulk, also mentioned help from Santa Fe railroad officials, particularly Jim Reinhold, who was assigned to Washington, D.C., to keep track on plans for war plants. Reinhold, the book points out, shared information with Mayborn, which he got from Senate friends of Santa Fe.

But ultimately, the final say was left to Maj. Gen. A.D. Bruce, the post's first commander.

Camp Hood brought both economic gain and patriotism to an area where merchants were used to an agricultural economy, mainly cotton and wool. A bad year for cotton crops could mean a bad year financially for the regular merchants as well as the cotton traders. A military installation would be a more stable economy.

But for all those reaping in the rewards of the newfound economy, there were those who lost everything. More than 300 farm and ranch families had to give up their homes and land to make way for the installation. Many felt they were underpaid for their land, but most understood why it had to happen. As part of their displacement, many of these families retain cattle grazing leases on the military installation even today.

The story of one family matriarch, Irene Margaret Clements Elms, known as Aunt Rene, was chronicled in the book "Unforgettable Decade" produced by Killeen Project 1930s Inc. She was 91 years old and blind, and she lived with her daughter's family, the McClurg family, at Sugar Loaf.

Aunt Rene had come to the place as a bride of 20 and raised her six children there. When the government took the home place and Aunt Rene was told she had to move, she was quoted as saying: "Well, I have lived through the Civil War, the Spanish American War, and the World War and if it is necessary for this war that I have to move, I can do it."

Comptroller's report: Texas military bases decline in economic impact

BY JACK DOWLING
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

Fort Hood has experienced a decline in estimated economic impact, according to a biennial report from Texas Comptroller Glenn Hagar.

The report, which is conducted every two years by the Texas Military Preparedness Commission through the office of the comptroller, analyzes the economic impact of those living on base as well as contract workers and other direct affiliates, including active-duty soldiers and their spouses and dependents. The report was created through the Regional Economic Models Inc. based on numbers from 2021 and excludes commissary expenses, AAFES or travel.

This year, the report estimates a conservative \$28.9 billion in contributions to the local economy from Fort Hood, which is \$900 million or 3% less than the same report estimated

This year, the report estimates \$28.9 billion in contributions to the local economy from Fort Hood.

in 2019. Statewide, military installations are projected to have contributed approximately \$114 billion to the Texas economy, which is 7.7% less than they did in 2019.

The report also highlights several community projects and partnerships, including the Fort Hood Career Skills Program, Fort Hood Recycle Center and a 15-megawatt solar array. In addition, Fort Hood recently launched a lend-lease program to develop 500 homes, and renovate and maintain another 3,500 as an investment for military families. Fort Hood occupies 218,823 acres, according to the comptroller's office.

"Fort Hood has several intergovernmental support agreements with

local governments to enhance mission effectiveness, create efficiencies, and provide job creation and growth in the community," the report said.

With 160,933 direct and indirect employees, and 37,515 active-duty Army, Air Force and National Guard soldiers, Fort Hood manages to maintain an estimated \$16.97 billion GDP with approximately \$11.22 billion in disposable personal income.

STATEWIDE NUMBERS

While Fort Hood is a strong contender for highest impact, the title for most economically productive base goes to Joint Base San Antonio, which oversees Fort Sam Houston, Lackland Air Force Base and Ran-

dolph Air Force Base. It generated an estimated \$39.2 billion, 34.34% of the \$114 billion contributed statewide from military installations.

As of 2020, Texas remains the No. 1 state for defense contracting. According to the report, the bulk of defense spending in Texas equaled \$71.2 billion in defense contracting. Lockheed Martin was listed as the primary defense contractor at \$47.8 billion.

The Texas Commander's Council, a joint council of commanders from military bases around the state, offered several recommendations to better develop military interests.

One such recommendation asks cities to closely monitor urban development near military bases, as the increased prevalence of LED-based city lighting may negatively impact nighttime training. Similarly, the council noted that vertical structures and the advent of new technology may degrade training possibilities.

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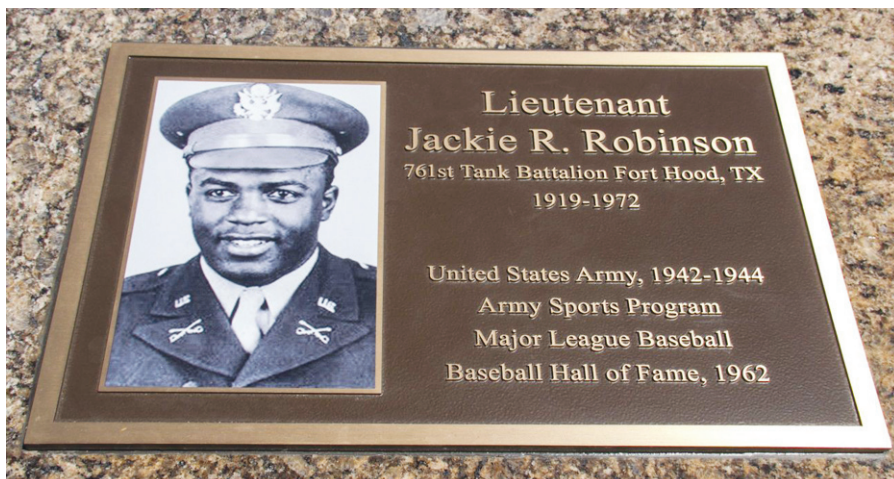
Many famous faces have called Fort Hood throughout its history

BY JULIE A. FERRARO
HERALD CORRESPONDENT

Since Camp Hood was established on Sept. 18, 1942, it can be safely estimated that millions of soldiers have marched on the post. Of those, a few were either famous before they were stationed at what became Fort Hood, or achieved fame after their departure.

Jackie Robinson, a second lieutenant when he arrived at Camp Hood, found himself the victim of ongoing discrimination against African Americans during the 1940s.

Robinson had been assigned to the 761st Tank Battalion. In early July 1944, an on-post incident reminded the pioneering baseball player that prejudice still existed. A letter Robinson wrote, archived in the Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, explained what happened. He had been at the “colored officers club” on post,



HERALD FILE

This plaque honors Jackie Robinson, who was assigned to the 761st Tank Battalion in 1944.

and took a shuttle bus to the central station. “I noticed one of the officer’s wife and sat down beside her.”

Though the woman had light skin, she was African American. The driver objected to Robinson’s choice of seat, and told him to move to the rear

of the bus. Robinson refused, and the driver threatened to make trouble for him. “Upon reaching the bus station, a white lady tells me that she is going to prefer charges against me.” When his own commanding officer refused to press for a court-martial, Robinson

was transferred to the 758th Tank Battalion, whose commander signed the papers.

Robinson was charged with insubordination, disturbing the peace, drunkenness, conduct unbecoming an officer, insulting a civilian woman, and refusing to obey the lawful orders of a superior officer; according to Jules Tygiel’s article, “The Court-Martial of Jackie Robinson.” Acquitted by a jury of eight whites and one African American, Robinson was transferred to Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky, and discharged from the Army in November 1944.

Another baseball player, Pedro Sierra, pitched a no-hitter while a member of the Fort Hood Tankers team in 1961. The event took place in front of baseball great Ted Williams, who was instrumental in Sierra being signed for the major leagues.

Cuban by birth, Sierra had played baseball in the Negro Leagues prior

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to being drafted into the Army. After his discharge, he pitched for the Minnesota Twins and then in the Provinciale League in Canada. In the 1993 sequel "Major League II", he appeared on the big screen as a coach for the White Sox.

The world of Mixed Martial Arts competitions brings together assorted fighters who train hard. Perhaps Jorge Rivera, known as El Conquistador, got some of that training while serving as a 19K armored cavalry scout with A Company, 1st Battalion, 70th Armor Regiment at Fort Polk, Louisiana. When that unit moved to Fort Hood in 1991, Rivera participated in the transfer. Ten years after his discharge, Rivera stepped into the ring, and has had a stellar UFC career.

Getting the most attention during his stay at Fort Hood: Elvis Presley. At age 22, Presley had been drafted into the Army in the 1950s, like thousands of others in that era. The Air Force and Navy had offered to make special arrangements if he enlisted



Elvis Presley is seen with his girlfriend, Anita Wood, at Fort Hood in July 1958.

HERALD FILE

in their service. Even the Army suggested he be part of "Special Forces" as an entertainer or recruiter. Presley refused celebrity treatment. He arrived at Fort Hood by bus on March

28, 1958, and his blossoming stardom brought out fans by the hundreds.

A news conference asked that Presley be given privacy during his training, but reporters even followed

him to the mess hall, continuing the questions while he ate a dinner of perch and french fries.

Assigned to Company A, 37th Armor Battalion, 2nd Armored Division, Presley completed his basic training by June 1958. After a brief break, he returned to finish his tank training, driving a light truck. He lived off-post during that period with his family in a rented home at 605 Oakhill Drive in Killeen.

Fans would flock to the house, according to reports in the Killeen Daily Herald. Sometimes, Presley would step out and sign autographs. Often, though, he snuck in through a back entrance to avoid the crush.

Presley departed Fort Hood much more quietly in September with his unit, headed for Germany.

Quiet may be the key word when it comes to being famous and being stationed at Fort Hood. The list of the famous might be far more extensive, but so many who have served don't mention their link to The Great Place.

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Remembering Central Texas in the days before Camp Hood

BY JULIE A. FERRARO
HERALD CORRESPONDENT

It's never easy to lose one's home. For hundreds of families populating over 20 Central Texas communities in the early 1940s, though, giving up their land was mostly seen as part of the effort to defeat Germany during World War II.

The federal government used eminent domain to seize the land, according to Sylvia Edwards' thesis, "Land Acquisition in Coryell County ... A Civilian Perspective." Edwards, currently graduate program coordinator for the School of Journalism at the University of Texas at Austin, added how the Second War Powers Act in 1942 made creating what was then known as "Camp Hood" possible.

Prior to the land becoming a training ground for tanks, cattle roamed and grazed. Ranchers whose families had occupied their homes for generations were abruptly left with nothing.

Settlers had come to the area in the 1830s, according to the Texas State Historical Association. More permanent settlements were not formed until the 1840s, once attacks by Native Americans subsided. Frequent droughts and an uncertain water supply caused the early settlers to deem the land worthless for anything but cattle and sheep. Eventually, the land was tamed so corn, wheat and cotton could be successfully grown.

The Civil War and its aftermath took a toll on land values. As the years passed, however, cattle and cotton helped restore the economy. Railroad lines constructed through the area improved communication, bringing an influx of immigrants.

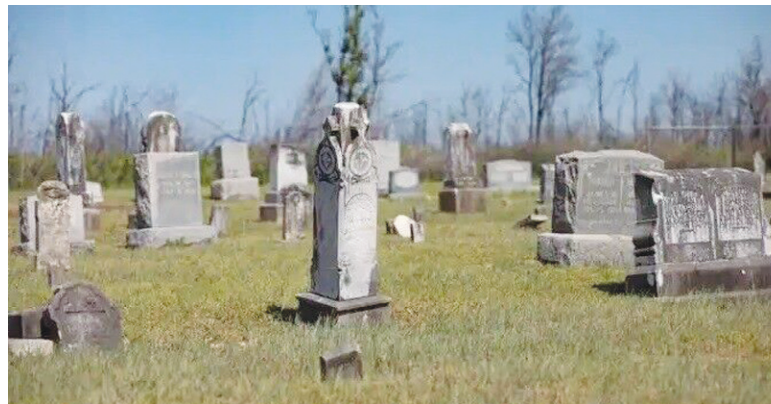
Into the 20th century, the area that became Camp Hood remained mostly agricultural. World War I saw the populace eagerly supporting the effort, with draft quotas exceeded and citizens groups formed to support rationing and maintain morale.

It must be presumed the residents never expected their property would be claimed for use as a military post.



HERALD FILE

People locate old family property in Coryell County during a historical marker dedication ceremony in 2009 at North Fort Hood. About 470 families were forced to abandon more than 20 Coryell County communities in 1942 to make way for a tank destroyer range at Camp Hood.



There are 20 legacy cemeteries in the training areas at Fort Hood. BLAIR DUPRE | FORT HOOD PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Author J. Aikens wrote in his book "History of Fort Hood and Local Area" how one witness recalled some families' reaction to being told of the land seizure. "They had been born upon that land; and their forefathers were buried there. They had labored to improve it and expected to pass it on to their sons and daughters."

Indeed, not only were families forced to move, but cemeteries were relocated. Some houses were actually transported to other sites.

Copperas Cove resident Les Ledger

was interviewed for a Herald article commemorating Fort Hood's 70th anniversary in 2012. His family moved to the area in 1854. "I remember my grandfather talking about moving off the land for Fort Hood," Ledger said. "Although it was a sad time, he always said 'If giving up our land saves one American boy's life, then it is worth it.'"

The ranchers' dilemma of what to do with their livestock was solved by U.S. Congressman W.R. "Bob" Poage. In "Fort Hood: The First Fifty Years,"

Odie and Laura Faulk credit Poage with ensuring the displaced ranchers retained grazing rights on Camp Hood property.

Former Copperas Cove mayor John Hull's family owned 600 acres that is now part of Fort Hood. "Back in the '30s and '40s, Cove was a big cattle shipping point," Hull said in a Herald article published Oct. 12, 2012.

Perhaps the last tangible vestige of Fort Hood's pre-history as a collection of small communities was Reynolds House, torn down in April 2015. Where most buildings were demolished or moved prior to Camp Hood's official establishment, the five-bedroom residence built in 1915 initially housed the post's commander. In the decades that followed, other general officers and senior noncommissioned officers lived there. Eventually the Red Cross occupied the space.

The most enduring evidence of the land's history remains: the sight of cattle meandering along remote Fort Hood roads, looking for a tasty meal.

Hometown hero of WWII remembered through airport, proclamations

BY ROSE L. THAYER
HERALD CORRESPONDENT

Just as Killeen was preparing for its new status as a military community, one of its own, Robert Manning Gray, shipped off to war and showcased extraordinary courage.

Born in Killeen on May 24, 1919, Gray joined the Army Air Corps at age 21 and learned to fly the B-25 aircraft. He was a skilled pilot who was chosen to fly in the famous Doolittle Raid over Tokyo on April 18, 1942. Though his plane crashed, he survived.

He served in the China-Burma-India Theater for another six months before being killed in action on Oct. 18, 1942. He was 23.

GROWING UP

“(Gray) graduated from Killeen High School in 1937, in what later became the Avenue D Elementary School and is now the home of some city government offices (City Hall),” said Mark Philliber, Gray’s nephew. “He played on the high school football team as a receiver. His nickname was ‘Bullet Bob’ because of his quickness.”

Philliber said from what he heard growing up, it sounded like Gray’s childhood was very happy. He was a bit of a prankster at school, but in a fun-loving way.

“He was very well liked and popular. One of our very good friends who was the same age as Bob and graduated with him, always remembered the time when some boys were making light of her and how Bob stepped in and quickly put an end to it,” he said.

Philliber’s mother, Marjorie Evelyn (Gray) Philliber, was Gray’s only sibling.

“Killeen was a small farming and railroad town prior to the war. The population was about 1,200 before Camp Hood was established in January 1942, everyone knew everyone and everything about each other,” Mark Philliber said. “In a town that small, that couldn’t help but be the case. Bob’s grandparents, going back to the late 1870s, I believe, lived in two adjacent farms on Cowhouse Creek near Elijah — on what is now Fort Hood — so all of the families in this area knew each other going a long way back.”

Gray’s first cousin, James Freddie “Fred” Page, remembers attending his cousin’s high school graduation.

“His life was going to school in Killeen, raising sheep and cattle for agricultural shows, milking the cows (and) chopping wood for the old cast iron stove to keep the house warm,” Page said. “He did



HERALD FILE

This statue honoring Robert Manning Gray is inside the Killeen Fort Hood Regional Airport.

have a Pinto pony that he named ‘Whisky Pete.’ He and best friend, ‘Screwdriver’ Arnold and others formed a band and played for dances, mainly south of Belton, in the area where the Czechs lived.”

Page’s daughter, Noralyn Ripps, added that Gray would later name his B-25 bomber after his horse.

“He attended Texas A&M but was later transferred to John Tarleton College in Stephenville,” Page recalled. “He became an officer in the ROTC at that school. The next thing I know, he was in Dallas at Love Field taking advanced flying lessons. This was in 1939 or 1940. The next thing I remember was that he was in Kelly Field in San Antonio (after joining the Army Air Corps).”

Mark Philliber said that before the raid, Gray was part of a bomber group stationed in Pendleton, Oregon, and then was in Tacoma, Washington, flying B-25s in anti-submarine patrols off the coast before transferring to Florida to begin training for the raid. When Gray was flying back to the West Coast after his training in Florida, he decided to make a little trip through Killeen, Page said.

“The boys had been encouraged to practice low-

level flight. Bob came down the old Nolanville Hill road that was being rebuilt, and was so low that I was told the construction crew jumped off their machines and headed into the bar ditch,” Page said.

“Bob then flew down Avenue D going west and flew over the high school building, and everyone there asked who that could be — and Mr. Peebles said it could be no one except ‘Bob Gray.’ The editor of the Killeen Herald, Pat Taylor, told me that he could see Bob grinning as he flew so low.”

Unable to land because of strong winds, Gray took off, wagged his wings and flew off. “He was trying to say goodbye to his parents and friends. This was the last time anyone saw him,” Page said.

LASTING LEGACY

Killeen’s 18th mayor, R.T. Polk, was the first Killeen mayor to proclaim April 18 — the anniversary of the Doolittle Raid — as Bob Gray Day in memory of the hometown hero.

According to Killeen’s public information office, Polk ordered that “flags will fly from every socket and flag pole in the community, and the day will be set aside permanently as the memorial to a brave heart that winged its way into the very vitals of enemy territory and destroyed the military objectives that were calculated to bring harm and destruction to our great country.”

Current Mayor Debbie Nash-King carried on this tradition, as have the mayors before her, proclaiming April 18, 2022, Bob Gray Day.

In the years since Gray’s death, the city has also named Sixth Street, formerly a main thoroughfare of downtown Killeen, after him.

“Most recently, when the city’s new joint-use airport was constructed on the east side of the airfield, we took the opportunity to honor Gray with a permanent statue, replica of his B-25, Whiskey Pete, and a historic display so that all those who passed through the airport could learn of the local hero,” said Hilary Shine, former city spokeswoman, in 2017.

The military refers to its side of the Killeen-Fort Hood Regional Airport as Robert Gray Army Airfield.

Gray is buried in Killeen City Cemetery. His relative Mark Manning still lives in the area and participates in the annual observance of Bob Gray Day.

“Because of Gray’s distinguished service and strong ties to Killeen, the community saw fit to continue his legacy,” Shine said.

David A. Bryant contributed to this report.

'Black Panther' battalion has historic place at Fort Hood

BY JULIE A. FERRARO
HERALD CORRESPONDENT



HERALD FILE

A memorial at Fort Hood honors the 761st Tank Battalion. Known as the Black Panthers, the African American unit played a key role in the Battle of the Bulge in World War II.

When the name “Black Panthers” is spoken, some might think of a group from the 1960s or a Marvel superhero.

Long before that, however; the 761st Tank Battalion bore the name. Their motto: “Come Out Fighting!”

The African American unit known as the Black Panthers fought in the Battle of the Bulge during World War II, and three other major campaigns. They faced other battles back on U.S. soil, though — even while stationed at Fort Hood.

Accounts differ in the number of soldiers assigned to the unit. Army historical records indicate the total was 713: six white and 30 African-American officers and 676 enlisted men.

Author Matt Helm, in an article posted on the website BlackPast.org, wrote, “The 761st consisted of 760 black men and white officers primarily operating the M-4 Sherman battle tank.”

An article in the Killeen Daily Herald on Aug. 20, 2006, stated the unit had 793 members. Joseph E. Wilson, in his article from “World War II Magazine” in January 1998, lists 36 officers and 593 enlisted men as the complement.

However many served, their dedication and courage cannot be denied. Being awarded 300 Purple Hearts, 70 Bronze Star Medals and 11 Silver Star Medals is tangible proof.

The 761st Tank Battalion was formed on March 15, 1942, and activated April 1, 1942, at Camp Claiborne, Louisiana. The soldiers received advanced training at Camp Hood from Sept. 15, 1943, switching from light to medium tanks. There they remained until August 1944.

During those months at Camp Hood, the soldiers of the 761st were advised not to leave the post. Con-

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cerns about racial prejudice remained very real.

The unit arrived in France by way of Omaha Beach on Oct. 10, 1944. Gen. George S. Patton, commander of the Third Army, hailed them, "I would never have asked for you if you weren't good. I don't care what color you are as long as you go up there and kill those Kraut (expletive). Everyone has their eyes on you and is expecting great things from you. Most of all, your race is looking forward to your success. Don't let them down and damn you, don't let me down!"

MAJOR IMPACT

In his book, "Brothers in Arms: The Epic Story of the 761st Tank Battalion, WWII's Forgotten Heroes," former NBA great Kareem Abdul-Jabbar wrote, "The 761st Tank Battalion was one of the most effective tank units to participate in hostilities during WWII. Their entry into the European theatre was marked by one crucial success after another."

That success could be attributed to the fact that — unlike other units, which spent an average of two weeks on the front lines — the 761st saw 183 straight days of action at the front.

Wilson wrote, "In a major battle at Tillet, Belgium, the 761st operated for two continuous days against German Panzer and infantry units, who

"In a major battle at Tillet, Belgium, the 761st operated for two continuous days against German Panzer and infantry units, who withdrew in the face of the Black Panthers' attack."

Joseph E. Wilson

withdrew in the face of the Black Panthers' attack." Adding more detail, "The operations of the 761st in the Bulge split the enemy lines at three points, preventing the resupply of German forces."

Statistically, Wilson included, "The unit inflicted 130,000 casualties on the German army and captured, destroyed or aided in the liberation of more than 30 towns, several concentration camps, four airfields," and other sites. The 761st also saw action in six European countries.

Though much of the praise and honors due the unit were delayed, in 1978, a Presidential Unit Citation was issued by President Jimmy Carter. The document read, "Throughout this period of combat, the courageous and professional actions of the members of the "Black Panther" battalion,

coupled with their indomitable fighting spirit and devotion to duty, reflect great credit on the 761st Tank Battalion, the United States Army, and this nation."

In 2005, a statue commemorating the 761st Tank Battalion was erected at Fort Hood. It is, appropriately, located on the street named for the unit. At III Corps, the VIP room includes the 761st unit insignia among its decorations.

Only one member of the original 761st Tank Battalion survives, to the knowledge of Ivan Harrison Jr., son of Lt. Col. Ivan Harrison Sr., the unit's second commanding officer.

A handful of soldiers who joined the unit later also survive, but the battalion's memory will live as long as history is told.



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Vehicles of war: Transportation changes during past 80 years

BY DAVID A. BRYANT
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

The vehicles used to carry soldiers around and to conduct combat missions have been through many changes over the years.

Soldiers training at Camp Hood 80 years ago could never have foreseen what the soldiers of 2022 would use to go to war:

The most common small personnel carrier of World War II was the Jeep. Today, the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle, which is replacing the High Mobility Multi-Wheel Vehicle — commonly pronounced as a “humvee” — carries small units around. The biggest difference? Jeeps had no armor.

The larger personnel carriers, however, would still be recognizable to the soldier of 1942. The biggest difference between the WWII “Deuce and a Half” 2.5-ton truck and today’s 5-ton Light Medium Tactical Vehicle is the size.

When it comes to heavily-armored vehicles, the tankers of World War II would probably have been green with envy of today’s tankers. The M4



HERALD FILE PHOTOS

THEN AND NOW: The World War II-era Army Jeep was replaced by the High Mobility Multi-Wheel Vehicle, known as the humvee. It’s now being phased out in favor of the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle (not pictured).

“Sherman” Medium Tank was small compared to today’s M1 Abrams. The Sherman’s 75 mm gun couldn’t pack quite the punch of the Abrams’ 120 mm main gun.

Alongside the tanks, another heavily-armored vehicle the soldiers of WWII would have been in

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VEHICLES

FROM PAGE 18

One of the most iconic is the Bradley Fighting Vehicle. The Bradley features a 25 mm M242 Bushmaster chain gun, an anti-tank missile launcher and a 7.62 mm M240 machine gun.

As for the “King of Battle,” the Redlegs in 1942 managed to ride around in a 105mm Howitzer Motor Carriage M7, which was adopted in 1941 because more power was needed to defeat modern armor of the time. Today, artillerymen have the latest version of the M109 Paladin, which carries a 155 mm Howitzer with an effective firing range of more than 18 miles.

IN FLIGHT

While helicopters weren’t in full military use until the Korean War, the units of Fort Hood had no problem adopting them into their inventory. The Bell H-13 Sioux helicopter was acquired by the Army in 1946 and was used for various tasks from wire-laying to medical evacuations. Today, the UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter does many of the same missions — only with a lot more room and a much greater flying distance.



HERALD FILE PHOTOS

THEN AND NOW: The Sherman medium tank is out gunned by today’s M1 Abrams 120 mm main gun.



THEN AND NOW: Bell H-13 Sioux helicopter flown in the Korean War was replaced by larger UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters.

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Still standing: A look at the oldest building on post

BY JASON DOUGLAS
HERALD CORRESPONDENT

As Fort Hood turns 80 this year, so too does the oldest building on the Army post: the Old Post Chapel. It was built of wood and was rapidly assembled to meet soldiers' spiritual needs during the mobilization of more than 12 million people during the onset of World War II.

Sgt. Maj. John Proctor, who served as the III Corps chaplain sergeant major from June 2015 to June 2017, said in 2017 the chapel was built with a standard blueprint of the time with an expected life span of five to 10 years.

"The fact that it's still there ... is a testament to what people thought was temporary in 1942," Proctor said. "In the 1950s, military chapels began being constructed of brick."

Proctor said the functional design of the chapel was standardized during the war, meaning almost all atonement chapels looked like the Old Post Chapel from 1942 to at least the late 1950s, and had the option of hosting Jewish Sabbath services, Roman Catholic masses and Protestant services.

"They had to have a facility that could flex back and forth between



HERALD FILE

The Old Post Chapel built in 1942, is one of the oldest buildings still standing at Fort Hood.

these three major traditions to accommodate the three primary faiths which would have been these big three in 1942," Proctor said. "If you go in there the altar can be pushed into the wall and the cabinets above the altar open, which is where the Jewish rabbi would put the tablets and scrolls of the Jewish scriptures."

Proctor also said the chapels were created with perfect acoustics.

"You could speak from the pulpit and the members of the church could

hear you speaking perfectly because the church didn't use microphones in 1942," Proctor said.

The chapel had fallen into disrepair and was being used primarily for weddings until Proctor arrived in 2015. He, along with three soldiers and numerous requests for work repairs, finally brought the chapel back to life and began holding a special service there until July 30 when the ceremony was conducted for the last time.

"The last religious active service at old chapel was the traditional Latin mass," Proctor said. "This is the form that the Catholic Church used for the last 1,400 years until approximately 1965; the oldest facility on Fort Hood was housing the oldest Christian service in the world."

Proctor said the service is no longer offered at the chapel because the Catholic chaplain reached mandatory retirement age and the other Catholic chaplains on the Army post don't know the ceremony.

The building next to the Old Post Chapel used by the USO was also built in 1942 as part of the same complex for use with the chapel.

"The USO building that's next door used to be the post chaplain's office," Proctor said. "Those three buildings all used to be owned by the post chaplain."

There are 16 total religious support facilities and at least 11 chapels on Fort Hood.

Proctor said that while the religious observation will no longer be held there for the time being, it is still actively being used for marriages. He hopes one day the Old Post Chapel will be named a historical landmark because it won't be able to be used for much other than a museum.

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USO Fort Hood supports soldiers from beginning to end of careers

BY DAVID A. BRYANT
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

Like Fort Hood, the creation of the USO also comes from World War II. Tasked in 1941 to provide morale and recreation services to military personnel, the organization continues to do so today — though it may look a bit different than what President Franklin D. Roosevelt could have ever imagined.

In August 2001, the USO Fort Hood opened in the Rivers Building, as one of the nonprofit's early expansions beyond airport lounges and overseas locations and onto garrison military installations.

Today, the USO operates its main center out of Building 121 on 761st Tank Battalion Avenue with additional locations at a former World War II-era barracks building near III Corps Headquarters, a North Fort Hood location, and a Pathfinder site where transitioning service members and their spouses can get support moving into the civilian workforce.

"We are in a brand-new building and we offer so many amenities," said Benjamin Griffin, USO Fort Hood Center Operations Programs manager, in February 2021 during the USO's 80th anniversary. "We have pool tables, a place to play video games, an internet cafe with 30 computers so service members and their families can print whatever they need and a lovely movie theater that



HERALD FILE

In 2021, the USO celebrated 80 years of serving the military and their families.

seats 30.

"We even have a state-of-the-art kitchen where we're able to prepare food and serve lunch."

According to uso.org, just prior to the onset of America's involvement in World War II, President Roosevelt sought to unite several service associations into one organization to lift the morale of our military and nourish support on the home front. Those entities consisted of the Salvation Army, Young Men's Christian Association, Young Women's Christian Association, National Catholic Community Services, National Travelers

Aid Association and the National Jewish Welfare Board. They were united to become the United Service Organizations, or the USO.

"I'd like to think we've provided a little bit of comfort along the way," said Griffin, who grew up in a military family who enjoyed the services provided by the USO. "We help out soldiers and their families the best we can — where would soldiers and their families be without the USO? I would like to think the USO does a lot of good out there. We're there at the airports, when they're coming home from deployments ... we're

there to hand them a cup of coffee or just brighten up their day in any way we can while they're serving in the military.

"I would never like to think of what they would have to do without the USO."

COVID-19 changed the way the USO provides its services in some ways, but the volunteers strive to maintain as much "normalcy" as possible, Griffin said.

"At USO Fort Hood, we've been able to create some pop-up lunch events and drive-thru events, like the one going on right now," he said. "Normally, this would be an indoor event where everyone could come in and interact. But with social distancing, we've had to operate a bit differently."

Griffin said a lot more attention is paid to sanitizing the area and USO Fort Hood ensures all volunteers have the proper face masks and gloves to interact with the troops — all while maintaining a positive attitude for those they serve.

"Since the pandemic, we've not really stopped," he said. "We support the mission out at North Fort Hood with goods and services, providing lunches up there, providing entertainment virtually ... It's changed a lot for the service members and their families, but we still offer the same, great customer service, with a smile, that has been offered since the 80 years of our conception."

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New museum seeks to bridge Killeen, Fort Hood communities

BY JACK DOWLING
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

The National Mounted Warfare Foundation is attempting to attract residents from all across the 50 states.

According to a spokesman for the foundation, Clarence Enochs, the National Mounted Warrior Museum aims to be a national landmark that will tell the story of the men and women who have served at Fort Hood and in mounted warfare — from horses to modern battle tanks. The museum, located outside Fort Hood's main gate near the visitor's center, also aims to be a landmark to attract tourism to Killeen and Fort Hood, connecting the area in a way that has not been seen before.

Most of the work at the museum right now involves getting the inside displays ready for next year's opening.

"We are thrilled to have completed



Phase I construction on the museum and anticipate opening our doors to visitors in the summer of 2023 once the exhibits are installed. The U.S. Army has generously allowed us to build the museum on 17 acres near Fort Hood's main gate, allowing easy access for visitors and military members," according to the museum's website.

As part of the National Mounted Warrior Museum, the two museums on post, the 1st Cavalry Division Museum and the 3rd Cavalry Regiment Museum, will move into the new museum building.

Retired Lt. Gen. Paul Funk, the president and CEO of National Mounted Warfare Foundation, said previously that the museum would

be receiving some exhibits from the 1st Cavalry Division and 3rd Cavalry Regiment museums.

"We still have to get the exhibits put together, and the Army is working on that," Funk said last year. "The exhibits should be ready by late 2022 or early 2023."

TOURISM

Officials expect the museum to bring in hundreds of thousands of visitors per year, most of whom live outside the area, according to National Mounted Warfare Foundation, the fundraising arm of the museum.

"Estimates suggest 265,000 people will visit the Museum in the first year, with 74% of the visitors projected to come from outside the Killeen-Temple" metro area, according to the museum's website.

Projections varied wildly, but Enochs recently provided the Killeen City Council with a rough estimate

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PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL MOUNTED WARRIOR MUSEUM FACEBOOK PAGE

Crews are busy preparing displays at the National Mounted Warrior Museum. The new facility is set to open in summer 2023, showcasing the stories of the men and women who have served at Fort Hood and in mounted warfare — from horses to modern battle tanks.

of anywhere from \$9.4 million to \$54 million in regional economic impact, annually. In addition, the American Alliance of Museums indicates that museum-goers spend a minimum of \$25 per visit within the community, while the Office of the Texas Governor's Economic Development and Tourism Office estimates travelers staying in hotels and other lodging spend an average of \$144 per person, per day.

Museum officials said they began holding events in the building in recent months as they ramped up fundraising and advertising efforts; a grand opening is planned for summer 2023.

In 2020, the \$38 million project broke ground at Fort Hood after being in planning for 10 years; the phase one rotunda was completed in late 2021.

The new museum is expected to grow in size in subsequent phases, officials said. Since it sits outside Fort Hood's security fence, visitors will not have to go through a Fort Hood gate to get to it — an important point to make visits easier for tourists.

MARKETING

The foundation will continue its annual request for approval of a reimbursable \$80,000 in hotel occupancy tax funding from the city of Killeen.



The city provides those funds as part of a "community partnership." With the funds, the city pledges to allow the foundation to request reimbursement of up to and no more than \$80,000 in hotel funds, so long as they are used to promote the project.

So far, the foundation has used a portion of these funds to facilitate its advertising efforts in the form of billboards across the United States and in airports. According to Enochs, Killeen is mentioned on each of the billboards which have been displayed in Georgia, Alabama, Washington, D.C., and other tourist destinations.

For more information on the museum, visit history.army.mil/museums/NMWM or call 254-287-3626.

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GREAT PLACE

FROM PAGE 5

U.S. Disciplinary Barracks.

The area is now used primarily by First Army Division West to train and certify reserve component forces for deployment.

According to the unit's website, www.first.army.mil/divwest, Division West supports pre-mobilization training for reserve component forces in accordance with the Army Force Generation model; assesses and reports pre-mobilization readiness for reserve component forces; conducts mobilization and demobilization operations; conducts counter-improvised explosive device, counter insurgency and escalation of force training; provides command and control over assigned and mobilized forces; and provides operational force protection.

CARL R. DARNALL ARMY MEDICAL CENTER

In June 2016, Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center officially opened a new, state-of-the-art hospital on Fort Hood. Darnall originally opened its doors on Fort Hood in 1965, according to the medical center's history. The need for a larger facility became apparent when more than 2,200 wounded soldiers evacuated from Iraq and



COURTESY PHOTO

A tank crew with Diablo Troop, 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, fires a round while training at a Fort Hood range in June 2022.

Afghanistan passed through the hospital since 2003. The new facility officially opened for patient care on April 3, 2016, and is 60 percent larger than the old building.

The \$561 million hospital has six floors and 947,000 square feet of space. The building is roughly 60 percent larger than the old hospital and also offers a pharmacy twice the size of the old building. The emergency department at the old building had 26 beds for patients, while the new building has 58 beds and an additional six available for triage.

Rooms are single-patient rooms

three times bigger than the old hospital, are nicely furnished with spaces for a family member and windows to the outside in every room. There are 128 surgical beds and bassinets (staffed), 2,453 staff members and employees (907 civilians, 609 military, 950 contractors, 95 volunteers). The hospital serves 160,300 active-duty soldiers, retirees and their families, which includes approximately 10 percent of active-duty Army forces.

Darnall treats military retirees and beneficiaries from a multi-county area. It is the only hospital in the Killeen area capable of treating trauma patients, including civilians, with wounds similar to those found in a combat zone.

VANESSA GUILLEN

The 2020 murder of Spc. Vanessa Guillen by another soldier prompted a lot of changes on Fort Hood. After her body was found, Congress formed the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee and tasked them with looking into the command climate and culture on the post, and the committee's findings prompted some new initiatives on Fort Hood that are now being implemented across the Department of Defense.

One of the more notable initiatives is the People First Center. The center revolves around preventing harmful behaviors before they happen. Experts in the fields of family

advocacy, sexual harassment and assault prevention, equal opportunity, resiliency, substance abuse, suicide and spiritual readiness are all housed at the center, with training focused on immersion for both soldiers and leaders.

In April 2021, the post named one of the entry gates after Guillen. The gate is located at the junction of Fort Hood Street and Rancier Avenue and leads to the 3rd Cavalry Regiment area on post, the unit Guillen was stationed with at the time of her death. The gate was named after her to serve as a reminder to soldiers of the impact she created in so many different aspects of military service because of her untimely death.

NAME CHANGE

A Naming Commission was created as part of the highly politicized National Defense Authorization Act of 2021, which requires all military installations or buildings named after a Confederate soldier be changed. The commission is required to report to Congress by Oct. 1, 2022, with official suggestions for what the new names should be.

Fort Hood is named after Confederate Gen. John Bell Hood. The new name suggested for the post is Fort Cavazos, after retired four-star general and former III Corps and Fort Hood commander Richard E. Cavazos.



U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO BY MASTER SGT. TOBY VALADIE

Medical personnel along with air crew members offload a simulated casualty to the Forward Resuscitation Surgical Team from a LUH-72 Lakota helicopter, Detachment 1, D Company, 2-151st Aviation Regiment, Louisiana Army National Guard, during the June 2022 Joint Emergency Medicine Exercise at Fort Hood.



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