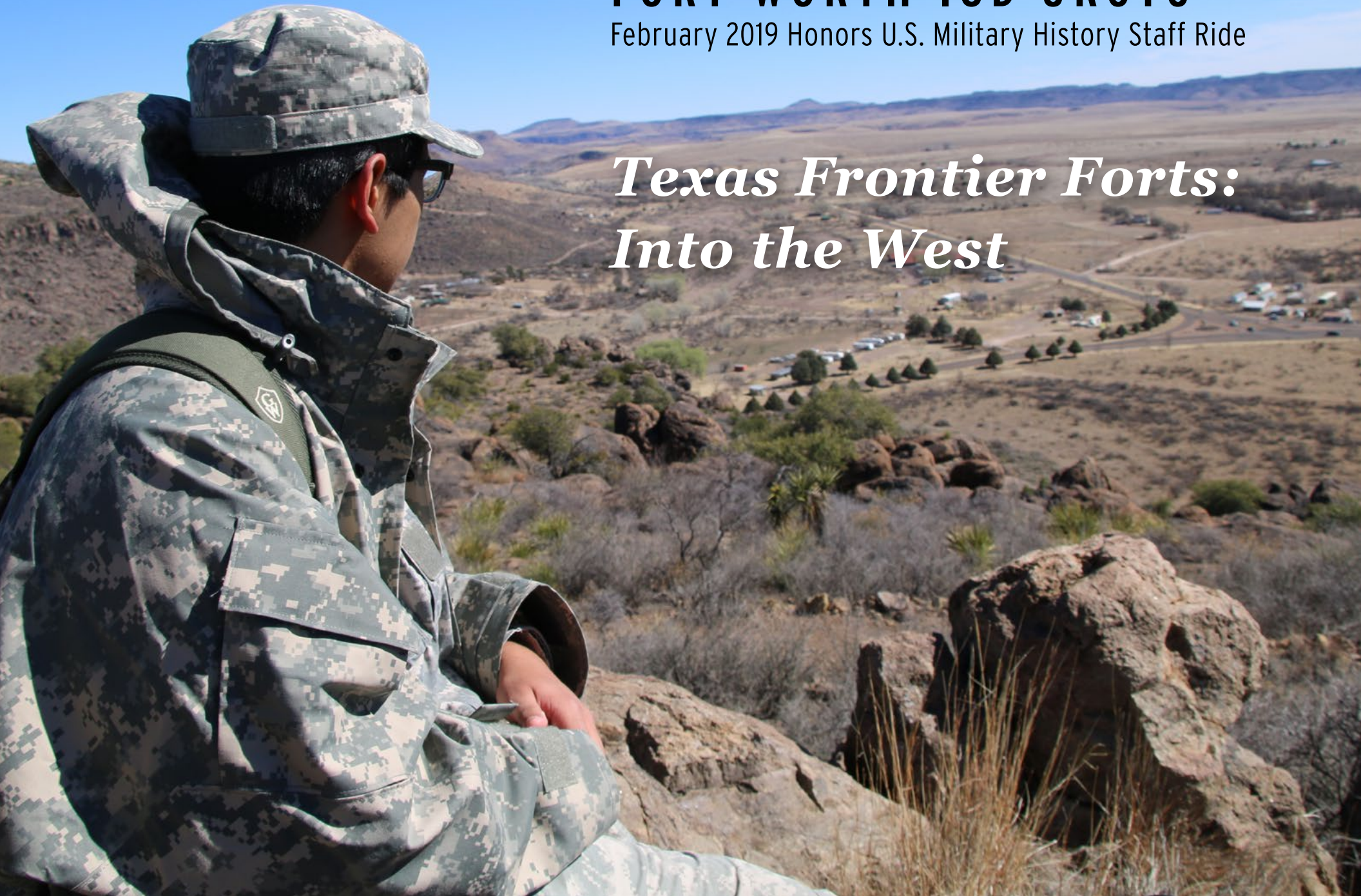


FORT WORTH ISD JROTC

February 2019 Honors U.S. Military History Staff Ride

Texas Frontier Forts: Into the West





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INTRODUCTION

Modern philosopher Nassim N. Taleb has written about asymmetries in life, in society, in history, in beliefs. Pertaining specifically to history, he has warned of the “narrative fallacy”—or the tendency to assemble unrelated events of the past into stories. Moreover, he points out the consequences of this imbalance.

These stories, however gratifying to create, both scripted and written versions are inherently misleading. They lead to a sense

of cohesion and certainty that is not real, that is not true. For example, that sweeping magnificent historical, critically acclaimed novel *Texas* written by James A. Michener is one example that comes to mind. Containing both fact and fiction, *Texas*, an epic novel, is well written and thoroughly entertaining. The media, excluding selected notable documentaries, create a false “virtual reality” by packaging the past into boxes neatly labeled by decades for nostalgic reliving or surrogate history. Sadly, many history textbooks can be categorized as entertaining, misleading and leaving many students and adults the personal challenge of seeking clarity and truth about our collective history as a people, as a state and as a nation. History, as memory, does not accurately tell the past. To tell the “story” of our collective history requires imagination and empathy; curiosity and respect. It requires research, critical thought from a social, political, economic, moral, and intellectual perspective.

The Staff Ride is a tool to develop an increased understanding of significant events in the appreciation and understanding of the unique heritage and lasting significance of the U.S. Military on American History. Emphases are on an experiential experience that is active and at the same time informal for the students. It is an exploratory visualization course in history; a project-based experience meeting multiple learning objectives. However, it also meets the needs of many students with other interests; capturing the balance between structured activity and unstructured social and exploration time; time, that is filled with sensory and practical learning while complementing and heightening classroom lessons.

Our U. S. Military History Experiential Staff Rides provide a myriad group of cadets the unique opportunity to research, to collaborate, to challenge, and to validate the narrative of U.S. Military History- the American story they have heard in numerous venues or read in a plethora of printed books during their secondary educational journey.

This staff ride afforded cadets an active engagement and a meaningful connection to Texas Frontier Fort history. It challenged cadets to reflect critically on the causes and consequences of westward expansion and the U.S. Military role in the process. Cadets were afforded the opportunity at both Fort Concho and Fort Davis to explore how environments, industries, geography, and culture of the frontier influenced the development of the southwestern United States. Cadets were provided a once in a lifetime opportunity to understand how history and local context influence critical constructs of race, gender, freedom, and opportunity.

In our mission of “Motivating Young People to be Better Citizens” and developing citizen-leaders of character and moral courage, we must all ensure our history is understood, value the challenge of leadership, understand culture and human nature, appreciate the diversity of the American experience, especially the legacy of the “Buffalo Soldier.” Our American story must be understood and told forthrightly as we face the **frontiers** of the future.

Come along with us as we visit the University of Texas McDonald’s Observatory. While studying Texas Frontier Forts and visiting

the McDonald Observatory, cadets and instructors gained an appreciation of the “Frontier “of the cosmos/universe. There are things much bigger than us, our self-centeredness. It is almost impossible to stare up at the stars in West Texas and not feel something. As cosmologist Neil deGrasse Tyson has explained, “the cosmos fills us with complicated emotions. On the one hand, we feel an infinitesimal smallness in comparison to the vast universe; on the other, a comforting connection to this larger whole... the Cosmos, our history.”

LTC RICHARD CROSSLEY JR. (RET.)

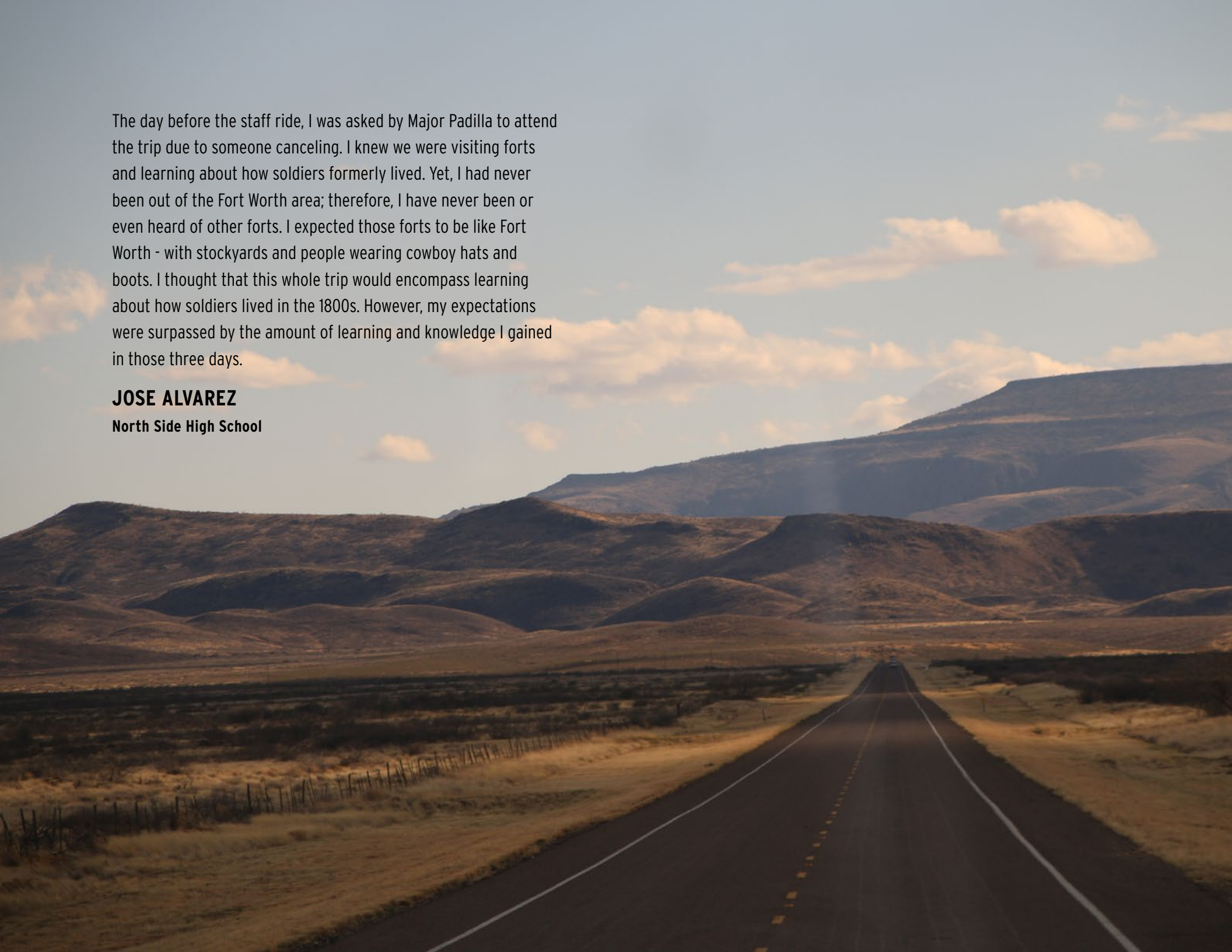
Director of FWISD JROTC Programs




The day before the staff ride, I was asked by Major Padilla to attend the trip due to someone canceling. I knew we were visiting forts and learning about how soldiers formerly lived. Yet, I had never been out of the Fort Worth area; therefore, I have never been or even heard of other forts. I expected those forts to be like Fort Worth - with stockyards and people wearing cowboy hats and boots. I thought that this whole trip would encompass learning about how soldiers lived in the 1800s. However, my expectations were surpassed by the amount of learning and knowledge I gained in those three days.

JOSE ALVAREZ

North Side High School





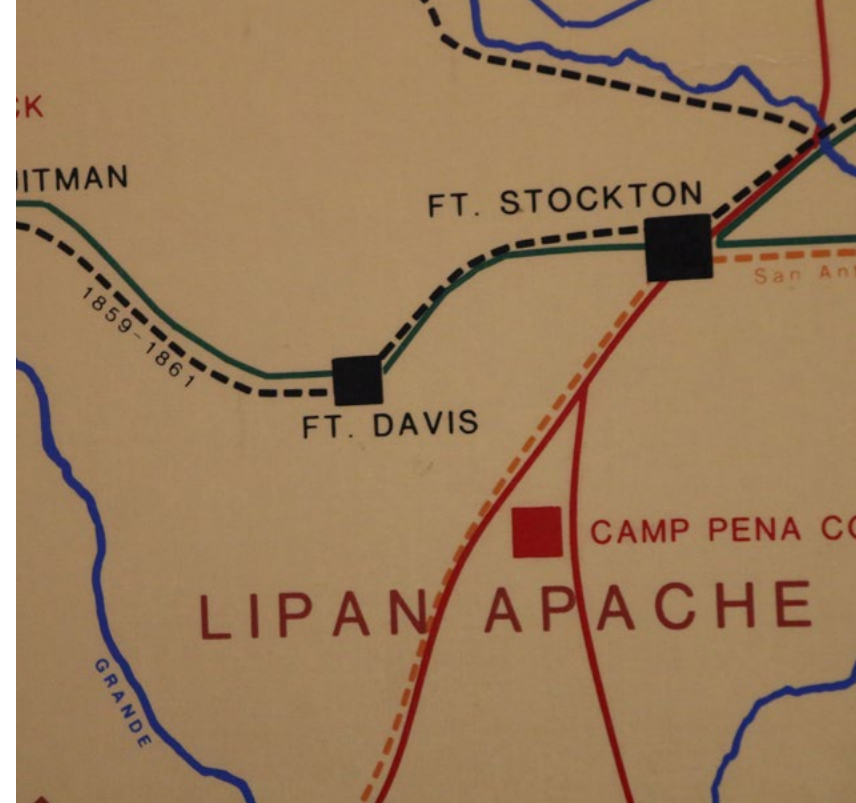


The staff ride was a one-of-a kind experience, not only because I was able to leave home for four days, but also because I got to see two of the most fascinating places here in Texas: Fort Concho and Fort Davis. The distance between the two stations had a purpose itself due to the fact that the soldiers stationed there had to protect the merchants and families moving into the “unsettled” land. This concept happened to be very ironic since the “unsettled” land was already settled by the Native Americans.

Along this trip we learned that Natives and Soldiers battled for land, which resulted in a multitude of battles. But who exactly were these valiant soldiers who risked their lives to protect the West? They were a mixed regiment of black and white soldiers, also nicknamed “Buffalo Soldiers.”

ISAAC RODRIGUEZ

Polytechnic High School



We arrived at Fort Concho and the first thing I expected to see there was a large population. We got out the bus and someone pointed out that the small buildings were the fort. We also saw a deserted area and a woman waiting for us with a 1800s dress on. She gave us a tour around the fort. Our first stop was in a small museum that housed actual uniforms soldiers wore. During wintertime, soldiers wore buffalo coats (that weighed 20 lbs.) with buffalo gloves. Over time sealskin was used to protect soldiers from the cold because it worked better than the buffalo skin.

JOSE ALVAREZ

North Side High School





I have been stationed at Fort Concho for the past two months with the United States Army Fourth Cavalry. I can say life is very different here in the West than it is back in the East. Since I have been stationed here life has not been easy. Whenever I have to travel or go out to patrol the area, I have to carefully use supplies that provide me sustenance for the day. I usually have one canteen of water, about two or three biscuits depending on how long I am gone, a bag of grain to feed my horse and finally tools, half a tent and a horse feed bag.

Every day I wake up, get dressed at call, go to clean the stable, feed the horses, and clean their hooves. Afterwards, I report to the mess hall to eat breakfast. When the bugle sounds in the afternoon all soldiers meet on the parade field. On the parade field, we practice our formations and marching. After practice, I go and do the work I am assigned for the day. Most of the time I have to map out unknown areas. I often run into the Natives, though I have been lucky enough to not cause many confrontations with them.

On post, I usually maintain my horse, Boomer, and its stable. In my spare time, I like to go out hunting or fishing with a few friends. Around these parts, we only have buffalo, deer, and other small animals to actually hunt. Near nightfall, I head to the mess hall for dinner, which consists of beans and a little bit of meat. After

dinner, I head to the barracks to get some rest. Since I am close to a heater, I have to make sure it continues to burn all night, due to the dropping temperatures throughout the night.

In the barracks, I have one little spot for my bed which consists of four planks of wood and cloth stuffed with hay to make the padding and the pillow. The bedding has to be changed out every 2 weeks. There is a little shelf with hooks where I can hang my clothes for the night and place my hats and helmets. At the foot of my bed, there is a trunk where I store the rest of my belongings and extra clothes. As an enlisted man, I do not get the luxury of having my own house like the officers. However, I am able to make due since they feed me, provide shelter and pay me 13 dollars a month.

Often, I do think of deserting from the Army, but I know I would not make it far since there are not many settlements heading back East. It has been a harsh two months, yet I am slowly growing accustomed to the conditions. I sometimes think of home and how life was before joining the Army. In spite of the hardships, I will make the best of these next couples of months and hope to return to the East soon.

Christopher Torres

South Hills High School

Established in 1854, Fort Davis was named for former U. S. Secretary of War Jefferson Davis. It was a part of the frontier fort system established by the United States Army to protect the U. S. mail system, white settlers crossing “Indian territory,” and to deter enslaved African Americans from escaping into Mexico seeking freedom.

DR. W. MARVIN DULANEY

Associate Professor of History Emeritus, UT Arlington





Fort Davis has an intriguing African-American history. After the Civil War, all four regiments of the “buffalo soldiers” (the 9th and 10th Cavalry and the 24th and 25th Infantry) served at the fort. In addition, the first African-American graduate of West Point, Henry O. Flipper, also served at the fort as quartermaster before his unfortunate court martial and dishonorable discharge from the United States Army.

DR. W. MARVIN DULANEY

Associate Professor of History Emeritus, UT Arlington

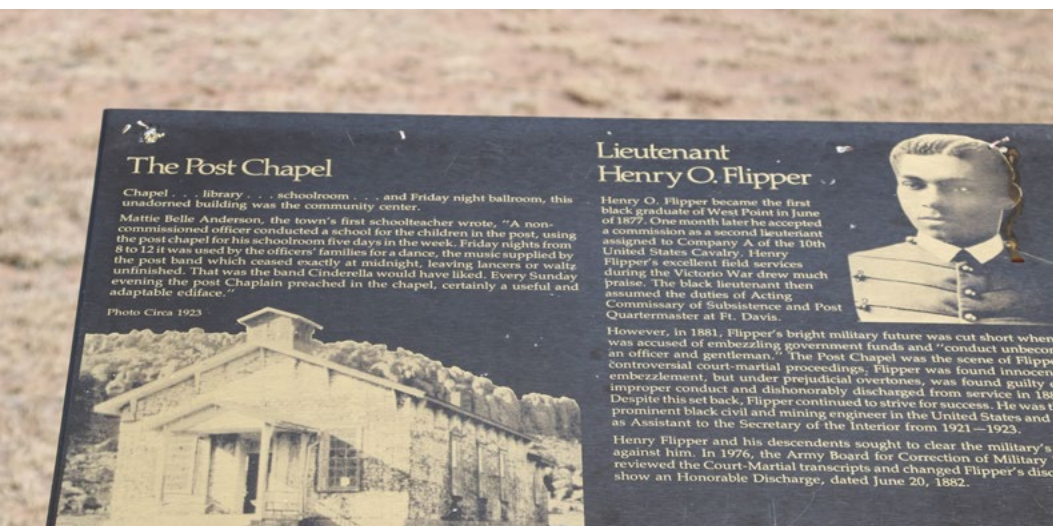


Segregation was a way of life during this era; therefore, Buffalo Soldiers lived in separate barracks. Buffalo Soldiers suffered hardships and inequality, yet still proved their worth and exceeded everyone's expectations. Buffalo Soldiers left a legacy.

JOSE ALVAREZ


North Side High School

Even with these challenges in place, Buffalo Soldiers had greater problems stemming from racism and discrimination. The setbacks did not keep the Buffalo soldiers morale low, they chose to rise above and prove to their white counterparts that they were better.



ISAAC RODRIGUEZ

Polytechnic High School

The background image shows a desert scene. In the foreground, a group of about seven people are walking across a dry, grassy field. To the right, there is a dilapidated brick building with a tall chimney. The background is a steep, rocky hillside covered with sparse, dry vegetation and scattered cacti. On the far left, a portion of a white structure with a staircase is visible.

The name “Buffalo Soldier” has a very controversial origin, because we do not know exactly why they were named that, but do know that the Natives were the ones that named them. There are many hypotheses about how the name “Buffalo Solider” was influenced, from the texture of the black soldier’s hair resembling the mane of a buffalo or it was how these soldiers had courage and determination, factors that reminded the Natives of a buffalo.

ISAAC RODRIGUEZ
Polytechnic High School

Nobody wants to settle out west. There is not much to do there, though the Davis Mountains are breathtaking... unlike anything I have ever seen. In 1866, I was stationed in New Orleans for training before I was sent to Fort Davis. A year later, I was a part of the regiment called to protect those traveling on the San Antonio-El Paso Road. I am a member of the 9th Cavalry, and here is a piece of my daily life as a Buffalo Soldier.

There is not much out here to do nor to pass time with but we manage to make it work somehow. However, once we were sent out to Fort Davis by General Smith, the members of the 9th Cavalry and I saw this as an opportunity to show everyone else that we were as great as the white soldiers. We even wanted to be better. As a black man, I have to “put up” with mistreatment, negligence, discrimination, and inequality on a daily basis. The things that a black soldier has to put up with are not things that the other soldiers experience. Nonetheless, I, along with other soldiers of color, must overcome the difficulties and prove that we are fighters and will not go down easily.

We make an average of \$13 a month since we cannot be ranked. I never ask for more or complain about my circumstances. I understand my mission and I am appreciative of what I am provided with. I am provided with meals, clothing, and monthly baths. We also get drinking water but not much of it; therefore we must ration it.

Members of the Cavalry Regiments are given a horse, which they care

for. These horses are special to the members because together we work to protect our people. Those selected to be in the Cavalry Regiment have to be between 5’6” and 5’10” tall and should not weigh more than 160 lbs. If you fail to meet these requirements you will be sent to the Infantry Regiments. Also, each member is required to have at least two top teeth and two bottom teeth that are on the same side of your mouth. You needed these teeth to rip the bag that contained black powder to load your rifles. I was lucky enough to meet the requirements to become a Cavalry Soldier. (Thank God for teeth.)

As I was saying earlier, our horses become a part of us. We have to take very good care of them. In fact, our horses are more valuable than we are. If one of us dies, we can simply be replaced. If a horse dies, the Army has to go through the trouble to find a horse of the perfect size and ship it to our location. We are not allowed to ride our horses for too long. We ride them for thirty minutes, walk with them for thirty minutes, and let them rest for another thirty. We have some masks we put on the horses’ muzzles so we can feed them and the food will not fall out. We put the food, such as hay or grain, inside the mask so the horses can eat at their will. We also cannot carry too much on the horse, as this will make it harder on the both of us when traveling. On our saddles, we carry items such as half a tent and our metal cup for coffee or soup. The reason why we get only half of a tent is that we require another soldier to complete the full tent. We stay in twos, and are never alone.

Apart from the Cavalry regiments, there are the Infantry Regiments. As I mentioned earlier, if you were too tall or weighed over 160 lbs., you would be sent to the Infantry Regiments. We called them the “Foot Soldiers” or “Beetle stompers” because they had no horses. We do not call them these names out of disrespect. A soldier is a soldier, a brother.

Since we are located in between the Davis Mountains, it makes it harder to breathe due to the high altitude. Also, it gets very windy up here. This place was chosen by General Smith because it was a good spot: water sources, natural resources, and the perfect spot to protect travelers. I do not hate this place. Although I do see why not many people wish to move out here. It is very beautiful here. However, since we are in the middle of nowhere, our food has to come from places such as San Antonio. We do grow some vegetation here, but not much. Our typical food consist of bacon and beans or rice. A soldier needs a hearty meal to fight, and we are provided with that when at the fort. In combat, we often would not have much to eat.

The Buffalo Soldiers are not the only ones who live here. White officers live here and highly encourage their families to move in with them. Some of their wives would refuse to move here because it was such a risk. It was a long ride to the middle of nowhere for them. Additionally, if those officers died in combat, the family had two days to move out, or else they would get kicked out and sent back home. I felt badly for those families that suffered that loss

because they had nowhere to go. Consequently, for those officers who were still stationed at Fort Davis, they had it easier than us sometimes. They lived in houses with their families with actual furniture. They had mattresses to sleep on, meanwhile we had beds made of hay. We had to change out that hay at least every twelve days before it would go bad.

For fun, we would play checkers and cards. Sometimes, we were even lucky enough to have horse racing (without the thought of tiring our horses) because the natives would never attack us. As for clothing outside of the uniforms, we could not afford much with our \$13 a month. We would all share clothing such as a straw hat which we would wear it when we were in town. This place is rather calm and peaceful. And as long as I have my cup of coffee, I would not mind staying here longer.

As black soldiers, we consistently deal with racism and discrimination. Nevertheless, we will not and cannot let that maltreatment stop us from being outstanding men and soldiers. The Buffalo Soldier has the lowest desertion rates. The Buffalo Soldier has the least amount of Court Martials. The Buffalo Soldiers are actually good men. In combat, a brother does not stop fighting until his very last breath and will fight with all that he has. We are the Buffalo Soldiers.

Angela Ramirez

South Hills High School

Life as a soldier was not easy: uncomfortable living quarters, heavy fighting with the Natives and isolation. The temperatures in Fort Davis were extreme. During the winter months, the cold did not bother the soldiers as much due to the warmth from their wool uniforms. In the hot summer months, the blazing temperatures fried the soldiers because those same wool uniforms trapped heat and could not be removed for fear of punishment from being out of uniform while on-duty.

ISAAC RODRIGUEZ

Polytechnic High School

The soldiers slept on hay beds that they changed every two weeks to alleviate smell and bugs. Soldiers disposed of the bed hay by burning it. If they fed the hay to the horses, it would make the horses sick.

JOSE ALVAREZ

North Side High School

Soldiers stationed at Fort Davis were in their early 20's and paid \$13 dollars a month, which is equivalent to \$408 in today's economy. These men were heavily isolated, considering the next closest fort was 75 miles away while the closest town was within 2 miles (where soldiers would go on their days off to drink or waste time).

GERARDO GRANADOS

North Side High School





Being one of the few Buffalo Soldiers stationed here at Fort Davis, I experienced what it was like to live among a few men who were ostracized and treated differently and I would like to share this part of my life with you. Just like any other soldier stationed at these remote forts during the frontier days, we faced many hardships, overcame difficulties, and adapted our way of life. Honestly, being a Buffalo Soldier only meant we had it a lot harder than a regular soldier did.

There were about 400 men living among us, but some of them were lucky enough to have their family here with them. I say lucky enough because just like myself and many other men our spouses

did not agree with staying here and simply left, returning home to more pleasant living conditions. We were segregated into different regiments and lived in different barracks. Living here was very hard in each and every possible way you can think of. My brothers and I did not necessarily have it as good as others nor did we have the same rights and respect as the white soldier. However, that simply meant we had to work hard and in some cases harder and prove that we had the same ability (if not more) as the white soldier. We were known as the Buffalo Soldiers. Though we did not choose our name, we wore it proudly as it was given to us by the Native Americans because of our

curly black hair resembling the fur of buffalo and our courage coupled with a tenacity in fighting that reminded our native brothers of this sacred animal, the buffalo. For this reason, I accept and carry this name as a badge of honor.

Just like any other military fort, we were fairly isolated but we decided to stay at the fort. In order to sleep, we each had to go out and grab just enough hay in order to stuff our pillow and mattresses. However, we had to change it every two weeks because the hay would grow bacteria and bed bugs. At night, it would be cold, nevertheless, we would light a fire to keep us warm. Aside from the living conditions, it was hard to keep going at times

because it seemed that no matter what we did it was not enough for our commanding officers, yet deep down inside we knew that our hard work would pay off.

Apart from the struggles we had to overcome, it means so much to me that our story and experiences are shared with the world. People should learn what it was like living on the frontier as a colored soldier and how life at Fort Davis played a big role in history and had a big impact on the people there and for the families of those who lived among us.

Jenifer Rico

North Side High School





Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Breakfast gives you the energy you need to focus throughout the day; it helps you lose weight; and it helps you start your day off on the right foot. However, breakfast has shifted from its traditional components. A soldier's breakfast, back in the 1880s, consisted of beans, bacon, and bread. Whereas today, our breakfast has a plethora of options.

Our breakfast today includes choices like potatoes, eggs, French toast, sausage, and cereal. These kinds of food take much longer to cook. Eggs were not plentiful in the Fort Davis region nor era nor did soldiers have a way to store eggs in the harsh environment. Therefore, a soldier's breakfast was made of foods that were easily preserved in the dry and arid land of Fort Davis. Due to the poor rations available to Soldiers' one meal had to double as two. Today this is not a problem as our food could be considered more economical because it is mass-produced. Lastly, limiting certain food items to a particular time of day, which we do now, brings us a sort of sophistication that soldiers did not have the luxury to do at the time.

In retrospect, breakfast, has changed greatly from what it was in the 1880s. From three limiting items to a whole world of options. Our foods today appeal to our craving more so than serving a purpose.

SEBASTIAN BRIGHT

Young Men's Leadership Academy





Fort Davis, established in 1854, was one of the first forts settled in Western Texas. Confederates settled at Fort Davis from 1861 to 1862. However, in 1867, the 9th Cavalry (also known as the Buffalo Soldiers, a Black Regiment) also settled at Fort Davis.

One of the most important duties a cavalry soldier had was the care of his major piece of transportation and most prized possession, his horse. Officers made sure the horses were well-tended. Officers even worried more about their horses than they worried about their soldiers because horses were expensive and costly to maintain.

STEPHANIE FRAIRE

North Side High School



The men that were a part of the 9th Cavalry were African Americans who had no background or knowledge in horsemanship, but with time became trained horsemen, excellent riders, and an integral part of the society at Fort Davis.

Before horses were introduced, the army experimented by using camels as a means of transportation. Camels were known to retain more water and would not tire as fast, which allowed the soldiers to ride longer distances; an advantage needed in an area as large as the Western Frontier. Unfortunately, camels proved to be an unreliable animal with which to work. The soldiers found it hard to get the camels to do what they wanted them to do. They also tested mules, which proved to be more reliable, but they were mean and did not get along with the other animals. Finally in 1866, the army sent horses to the frontier to be used by the Cavalry Soldiers at Fort Davis.

Having horses soon became second nature to Cavalry Soldiers. The soldiers relied more on their horses than they did on each other. Soldiers had to rethink the way they transported things as well. Soldiers could no longer carry the items they used to with the slower and more methodical camels and mules. Soldiers were forced to streamline their operations that made them faster, able to hide from the enemy, and ultimately more deadly.

ORLANDO JUAREZ

South Hills High School

Cavalry Soldiers had to be between 5'4" and 5'9" in height, while also weighing less than 160 lbs. This was to ensure a horse would carry less than 300 lbs, otherwise, the horse would not be able to keep up with its daily missions. Cavalry soldiers carried with them a shortened carbine, saber, and a pistol (for battle). Yet, during long expeditions, the Cavalry would also carry a blanket, haversack, half a tent, canteen, food for the horse, an extra pair of boots, extra clothing, and personal items. These basic items were issued to every soldier during the 1850s. In order to get the most out of a march, riders would follow the 20-20-20 rule where they would ride a horse for 20 minutes, walk a horse for 20 minutes, and then rest the horse for 20 minutes. On average, the Cavalry would get between 15-20 miles in a day.

On the other hand, Infantry soldiers carried with them a carbine, half a tent, canteens, haversack, bayonet, ammunition, blanket, extra clothes, and an extra pair of boots. Unlike the Cavalry with the horses, the Infantry did not have to stop as much, which led to covering about 30 miles a day.

GERARDO GRANADOS

North Side High School









I am Private Zapata, a member of the 10th US Cavalry. Today, December 5, 1870, my unit moved to Fort Davis to protect the Western Frontier against the Native Americans. We, the Buffalo Soldiers, live in these wooden barracks with pillows and mattresses made out of hay that we change every two weeks because of bed bugs and other bacteria.

When I first joined the Army, I thought that everybody was equal here, but now I realize that I was wrong, so wrong. I joined the Army because of the payment (\$13 per month), the shelter (provided) and the food. I do not have to worry about what I eat each day. We get a healthy ration of beans, potatoes, rice and bread. Sometimes, if we are lucky, we will get meat like bacon, deer and buffalo that we season with the spices we grow.

Today, I woke up at 0530 and as I opened my foot locker (the box the Army issued for me to put all of my life into: my clothes, my hygiene items and my treasures) I saw a picture of my mom. My mom died because she got really sick. I did

not have money to take care of her. After remembering about my mom, I started to get ready and started talking to my fellow soldiers. After we all got ready, we put on our buffalo coats because it was freezing; then we went and had breakfast. We had toast and coffee today, which actually made me nostalgic because of all the times my mom cooked for me. (I miss her seasoning.) It was a cold night and I needed to relieve myself; therefore, I went outside and took the rope that led to the hole where soldiers defecate. We use the rope so that we do not get lost during the night in the snow. I had to be real fast because my extremities were getting stiff in the coldness.

Sometimes we had extra duties because we were the soldiers of color. On this day, it was snowing and there was a lot of snow outside the barracks. Guess who had to shovel the snow? The Buffalo soldiers did. Segregation became the norm, but something inside of me still believes our nation is not honoring those hallowed words "All men are created equal." I had no

voice to try to defend myself; I just had to prove myself and be the best soldier I could be.

After shoveling the snow, the commander sent a couple of troops to pull guard duty above the rocky hills above our fort and report any suspicious things we saw and to ensure we are prepared from any attacks from the Comanche or Apache (the most common and some of the most dangerous Native Americans) tribes. We watched for a couple of hours, but saw nothing. The Native Americans were skillful and knew much about the territory. They had a great advantage of being better fighters because they are expert horsemen and have great skills with their bow and arrows and were more familiar with the territory. Every time we went up the mountains I learned more and more about the territory, but it was hard and exhausting to keep going up and down the rocky hill. We also had to be mindful of everything we touched because there are poisonous plants and wildlife nearby. We had to be vigilant at all times and ready to fight.

Finally, after a long day it was time for us to go back to our barracks at Fort Davis. Snow still fell, nevertheless, we had to watch out to make sure we did not get any cold weather injuries such as frostbite and hypothermia. We got to hunt deer on our way back and we were glad that we got to devour meat that night. After we got to the barracks we made a fire and enjoyed a healthy meal. That night we all had beer and I enjoyed the conversations we had about our families. We also had to pay the laundresses (\$1 each month) to wash our clothes. After paying them, we went to sleep because the next day we had another exhausting day ahead of us.

I am glad students came to Fort Davis where I spent many years fighting as one of the heroes of the United States Army. I am also glad that we left a legacy of being the Buffalo Soldiers known as some of the strongest, most notable and awarded troops in the US Army.

Alexa Dominguez

North Side High School

The uniform was equally as important to the soldiers as it was part of their everyday garments. Cavalry and Infantry Soldiers had a few different parts of their uniform, which helped distinguish them. Infantry uniforms had two crossed rifles as the insignia, and for the cavalry the insignia had two crossed sabers instead of rifles.

Each uniform was made of wool and designed to keep the soldier warm during the cold yet for the summer seasons, soldiers became really hot and sweaty because this wool uniform was not well-suited for hot weather. The color of both uniforms (summer and winter) was a dark blue top with yellow in the sleeve (infantry rank) and light blue in the sleeve (cavalry). Both uniform bottoms were both light blue, yet, the infantry had a yellow line running through the side of the pants. The shoes were made of pure leather which was really bad for walking long distances and soldiers had riding boots. Uniforms included a cap.

Weapons were another important part of a soldier's life during this time. Some of the basic weapons soldiers used were guns, rifles, cannons and sabers. Their most common gun to use was the Colt Paterson revolver that would shoot up to six rounds. Nevertheless, the rifle was the most necessary piece of equipment as well as the main source of protection during a soldier's duties. Officers carried the saber during their missions as an alternate weapon but it was heavy, noisy and a weapon that was mostly unnecessary.

STEPHANIE FRAIRE

North Side High School



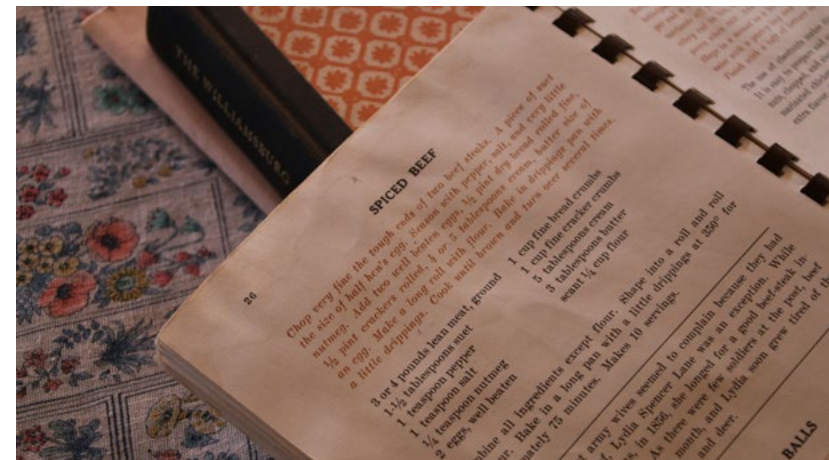




**I had cast my lot with a
soldier and where he was,
was home to me.**

MARTHA SUMMERHAYES

Army wife, 1866





Fort Davis was first established in a valley in-between two 200-foot- tall plateaus. Its water source was a stream stemming from an underground reservoir not even a mile away from camp. This provided the fort with a reliable source of water all year long. Additionally, game was plenty, so soldiers could hunt when supplies did not arrive on time.

This site was essential because it allowed the soldiers at the fort to protect the San Antonio-El Paso road, which led to California and its gold. Just as the number of prospectors traveled the road to California, so did the number of Native American raids. Therefore, it was the fort's purpose to protect the frontier and its pioneers from Apache attacks. However, because the small fort became victim to relentless Native American attacks, the first Fort Davis was not very effective in protecting the frontier.

When the fort was reestablished in 1867 after a 5-year hiatus, General Seawell moved the fort east from the canyon to the plains, though it was still surrounded by the plateaus. This new location allowed for the expansion of the fort and more buildings were built. While the new Fort Davis shared the same purpose as its

predecessor, it was much more effective in protecting the frontier because the new fort had so much more infantry and weapons, so the Native Americans did not dare attack the fort. Because of this, life at the fort was incredibly dull, until Col. Grierson's campaign against Victorio and the Apache Indians. After the victory and elimination of the Apache threat, the fort had outlived its purpose and was abandoned once again.

All in all, Fort Davis's location was determined by a number of factors: Protection from Native American attacks, water supply, food supply, and its purpose as a fort. Furthermore, the frontier fort was able to prosper thanks to its advantageous location and served as one of the most important and useful frontier forts in the United States at the time. Despite being over 2,000 years old, The Art of War's teachings still holds true today, as evident in the American frontier: terrain in war is vital.

KEVIN GUERRA

Young Men's Leadership Academy



While visiting Fort Davis I always kept in the back of my mind the geography of the land. I wondered why the U.S. Army built the fort there and how it provided a strategic advantage. Viewing the land myself, 5,000 feet above sea level, I could see the importance of a fort there. Experiencing the land myself, feeling the wind and seeing the rock formations was truly a beautiful experience. Remembering the words of 2nd Lieutenant Zenas R. Bliss, "The Post was the most beautifully situated of any that I have ever seen. It was in a narrow canyon with perpendicular sides, the walls of which were about 200 feet in height." I could see what he meant.

The history of this location started long before the fort was established. Native American tribes, mostly Comanche, used the area because they knew how rich and fertile the earth was. They would hold meetings to exchange potential hunting positions, weather and technologies. Two Army scouts Lieutenants Whiting and Smith were on an expedition trip from San Antonio to El Paso and came upon one of these meetings. They feared the native population would become too strong in the area and wrote in their journal about the importance of placing a fort in the area. They were afraid that before western expansion could happen the population would need protection.

When the expeditioners finally made their way to El Paso, they notified the army of their findings. In September 1856, General Smith, along with Lieutenant Seawall and the 8th Regiment made their way to the canyon and settled down. The first fort was of poor quality, which mainly consisted of wooden barracks with thatched

roofing and not much else. The housing was so bad that the cold would sweep in and take hold of soldiers in its windy arms and chill them to the bone. Snow would blow in and settle under the beds of soldiers, which would not melt for weeks. Soon, however, they converted these barracks into kitchens and a "chow" hall and built more suitable stone buildings for the soldiers. They were constructed with stones from a quarry they excavated a few miles from the post and with limestone they unearthed from another area. When the cavalry would go on patrols they would pack up gear that was only necessary, as the terrain would not allow anything else. The terrain was very mountainous, with many stones jutting out like pillars of teeth. There were hills beyond hills beyond hills according to the notes written by a soldier stationed at the post. With this in mind, Native Americans were a very real threat. One of the Natives tactics were to slowly scale a hill and once on top, would fire down on the troops below with bows and arrows. The Cavalry would pursue but by then the raiding party would be long gone.

Even though the surrounding mountains put the soldiers at a strategic disadvantage the mountains could prove to be beneficial as well. The wind whipping through the passes would channel down to the fort and help with ventilation. The wind cooled the soldiers in their barracks during the hot summer months and carried the smell far away. It also could give away the native scouting parties as they peered down on the fort from the mountain tops.



Fort Davis was chosen for the strategic advantage it provided for western expansion. It neutralized the threat of the native population and served as a way-point for the long trek from San Antonio to El Paso. Its location in an area of significance for the native population was unfortunate and led to the loss of many lives. Its plentiful water supply, forests and fertile soil made the area a hotly contested battlefield. Consequently, looking back at the rich history of the area the native population left many paintings on cottonwood trees where they would hold their meetings. Although the Natives may not populate the area anymore, their mark on the land will remain forever.

BRETT LOPEZ

South Hills High School







Fort Davis is situated in a wide open area with little vegetation, surrounded by hills in a desert-like environment. Though it seems that a desert-like environment with little vegetation and wide open space may not be advantageous for a fort, Fort Davis's proves this theory wrong. Fort Davis' wide open space makes hiding from and sneaking up on it nearly impossible. Anyone attempting a surprise or sneak attack on Fort Davis would have little to no success which makes its location optimal.

Fort Davis is located on top of a hill, 6,000 feet above sea level. Due to this height, summer heat is never a major issue for the people stationed here. From a military standpoint, having the high ground causes the enemy to increase their efforts to ascend the hill in order to attack the fort. Given the time period (1800s), climbing up the hills without technology would have been an ordeal. Additionally, having the high ground meant you can give the area surveillance and spot the enemy before they can make any moves for attack.

To be sure, Fort Davis was an incredible fort, built brilliantly and strategically, and brought into existence by the men and women who wanted to ensure the security in the great state of Texas. Geography and location help determine success.

GONZALO VERDIN

Polytechnic High School



My experience at Fort Davis was very different one from any experience I have had in Fort Worth. I enjoyed tasting the food while staying near Fort Davis. The meals I ate there differed from what I normally ate at home but they were also different from the normal diet that the soldiers had in the 1800s. The soldiers had to hunt, fish and dive for their food, while most people just go and buy their food from a store today.

The lifestyle at Fort Davis was very different from today. They did not have running water and would have to draw it from a well. They also did not have air conditioning. Their beds were made of straw and their bedding was very rough. Additionally, their clothes seemed very uncomfortable to wear. In all, it seemed like a very tough and rough existence.

Another rough aspect of life on the frontier were the shoes that they had were not made to fit their feet. There was not a left foot or a right foot and they were very uncomfortable. According to the guide, the soldier's feet would hurt and needed constant attention. The distance the soldiers would have to walk to get water meant they could only bathe once a month. I felt bad for them because it reminded me of some of the homeless people I had seen.

EUGENE THOMAS

South Hills High School





At the McDonald Observatory, we learned about the sun, stars and telescope that allow us to see outer space. While on our way to this observatory, I saw a big white dome on the top of the mountain. I turned to my friend and asked her what it was, but we were both confused. At the McDonald Observatory, we got off the bus and went through the exhibit before going into the theater. There, the tour guide informed us about the structure of the sunspots, solar flares, and different stars. After that, we drove up the mountain where I spotted the white domes. We went inside, up the stairs, and then the tour guide taught us about the uses and operation of the large telescope inside. The Observatory was important because it involved science, math and technology, which we did not talk about much during the fort exploits. The McDonald Observatory gave us a break from history and writing allowing us to delve into the cosmos.

MALENA NARVAEZ

North Side High School









PRUDE RANCH

ANDREW PRUDE PURCHASED THREE SECTIONS OF LAND HERE IN 1897 FROM J. F. TAYLOR, AND ESTABLISHED THE A. G. PRUDE RANCH. SOON HE MOVED HIS WIFE ORA TO A SMALL LOG HOUSE ON THEIR PROPERTY ON LIMPIA CREEK. IN 1900 HE COMPLETED A WOODEN FRAME HOUSE FOR THEIR FAMILY, AND IN 1902 HE ADDED 1257 ACRES TO THE RANCH. IN 1911 A LARGE 2-STORY RANCH HOUSE WAS BUILT OF ADOBE BRICKS CAST IN A NEARBY STOCK TANK, AND WAS CALLED THE "BIG HOUSE." BY 1920 ANDREW PRUDE HAD EXPANDED HIS RANCH TO 40 SECTIONS OF LAND.

IN 1921 THE PRUDES STARTED A GUEST RANCH TO SHARE THE BEAUTY OF THE LAND AND COOL SUMMER MONTHS WITH CITY DWELLERS. EARLY GUESTS ARRIVED ON THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD. WHEN A SEVERE DROUGHT AND THE DEPRESSION OF THE 1930s FORCED ANDREW PRUDE TO SELL HIS CATTLE AND MOST OF HIS LAND, THE PRUDES DECIDED TO OPERATE THE GUEST RANCH FULL TIME. SOON A NEW HIGHWAY WAS BUILT, AND GUESTS TRAVELED HERE FROM MANY LOCALES. NEW GUEST HOUSES WERE BUILT, AND A COACHING SCHOOL AND RODEO WERE ADDED, FOLLOWED BY SUMMER CAMPS FOR BOYS AND GIRLS, AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS. THE FACILITIES HAVE EXPANDED OVER THE YEARS TO ACCOMMODATE A WIDE VARIETY OF ACTIVITIES. PRUDE RANCH CONTINUES TO BE A POPULAR TOURIST DESTINATION.

(1996)

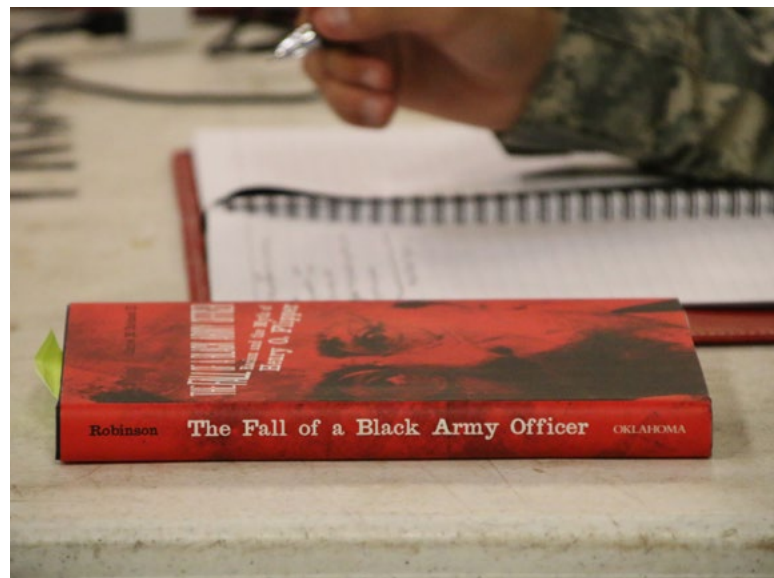
On Friday night, cadets from South Hills, North Side, Polytechnic, and Young Men's Leadership Academy briefed through overview: the Texas Frontier Forts, Fort Davis 1854-1861, and Fort Davis 1862 to present. After our presentation, I then asked, "Are there any questions?" The adults in the room barraged us with questions. The questions sparked an enlightening conversation about Sam Houston's vote to "not secede from the union" while believing in his right to own slaves. The most interesting part about the cadet briefings was when the adults said they learned things from us, the cadets. This made me feel appreciated and gave me a sense that I was making a difference.

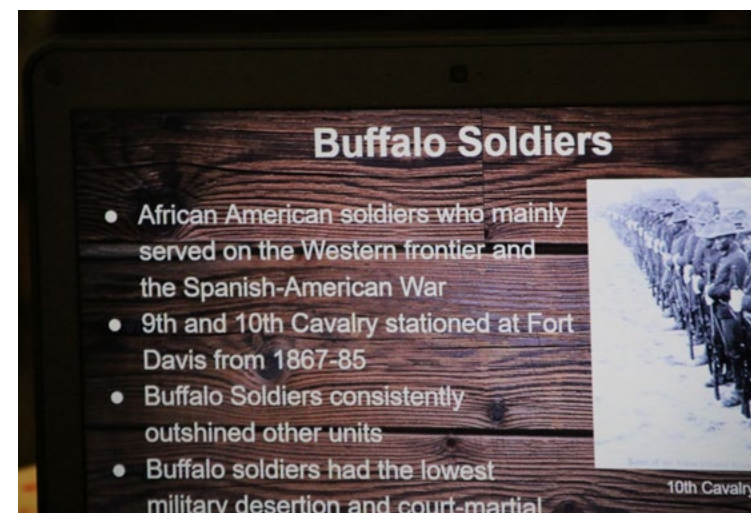
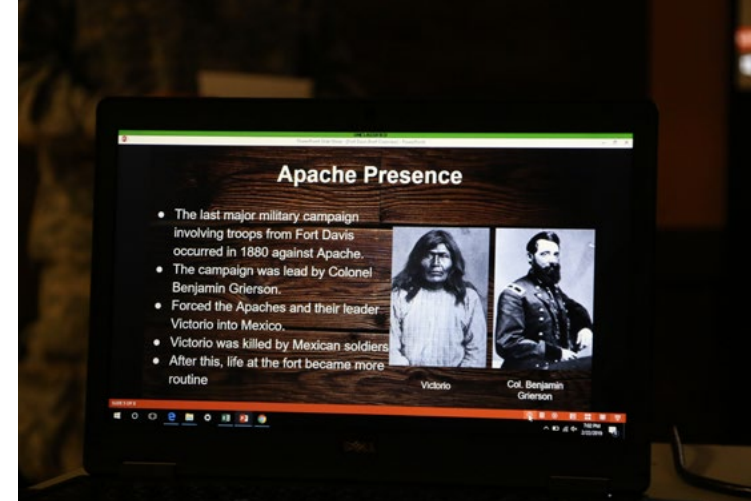
On Saturday around 6pm, the UTA students came up with several jigsaw activities for the cadets to do. Christa's station was about the timeline of Henry O. Flipper's life; Will's was about the geography of Texas; Kevin's was about the perspective of an Officer's wife whose viewpoint about Buffalo soldiers changed over

the course of a year; and then Billy's was about the importance of keeping or changing the name of Fort Davis. Billy's station, which was my favorite, was about how factors such as: legacy, historical trauma, namesake, reconciliation, and memorials contribute to the name of a certain place. For example, Fort Davis was named after Jefferson Davis. Davis was the leader of the Confederacy, which meant he did not want to be a part of the United States and that he was a slave owner. Until this day, there are people that cause controversy over changing the name of places that involve the Confederacy because of the negative view that point in history represents paired with more recent events that have occurred. All of the UTA students had different viewpoints and perspectives for us to consider as we learned about Fort Davis, Buffalo Soldiers, and history of Texas.

MALENA NARVAEZ

North Side High School





If we really want to change the education system in the United States, I believe the way we learned on our Staff Ride is a great formula on how to make that change. We utilized all types of different learning styles and collaborated with different people: Park Rangers, students from other schools, college students, Ph.D. candidates, and college professors as well as our teachers and we all learned from one another and from our experiences. I am first-hand proof that this method works and should be used in other schools to facilitate and improve learning.

MALENA NARVAEZ

North Side High School

The time I spent on this trip helped me understand the life of a Texas soldier in the 1800s and what he experienced on a daily basis, but most importantly it showed me that there is more to history than what we are taught in school. There are giant pieces of information missing from the books that I have read in our history or social studies classes, which this Staff Ride enabled me to learn. As a result, more discussions and instruction on the impact people of color have made to the history of Texas and this nation need to occur.

GERARDO GRANADOS

North Side High School



The FWISD JROTC Staff Ride to Fort Davis was an exciting opportunity allowing UTA graduate students an opportunity to not only learn alongside the student cadets but also helped the cadets gain additional insight regarding various topics at Fort Davis. The interactive and collaborative design of the program proved fascinating and set the foundation to pursue additional research on one of Fort Davis's more colorful historic characters - Lt. Henry Ossian Flipper. Initially, upon being selected to attend this ride, I was unsure of my exact role and what I could offer the cadets. Once we arrived at Fort Davis, I found the cadets eager to learn about the individual topics my colleagues and I were assigned to interactively teach.

The tour of the fort and the general history helped lay the groundwork for the assignments with which we were tasked. The format of our presentation/teaching modules - specifically the time - did not seem to be enough to fully convey the material. The cadets truly stepped up and were fully engaged in each module, however, there was not enough time to field questions or adequately elaborate on the ones that some cadets posed. Nonetheless, I would eagerly volunteer to participate in future Staff Rides as it was a wonderful opportunity to witness the growth displayed by the cadets by the end of the weekend.

My topic involved the life of Henry Ossian Flipper, the first black graduate of West Point, whose military career ended by way of court martial at Fort Davis. Flipper's legacy from the time of his West Point graduation, his various deeds in the forts of the

borderlands, his subsequent dishonorable discharge from the Army, and his existence after the military are all facets and items that warrant more attention (again, time constraints of our modules prevented this). With the constraint of time, however, I chose to focus on significant dates in Flipper's life. The cadets were challenged with putting the tasks in chronological order by year and were given brief explanations to the importance of each date. Each group was actively involved and impressive in their level of participation and desire while learning as much as possible.

Overall, the experience was nothing short of amazing. Not only did I learn from the rangers and volunteers at Fort Davis, I also learned a great deal from the cadets. They reminded me of the ways in which history - particularly living history - is exciting and always there to be discovered and shared. The cadets carried themselves maturely and were fully engaged throughout the learning process. As a result of my experience at Fort Davis through the Staff Ride project, I am taking what I learned and writing a full paper about the life of Lt. Henry Ossian Flipper for presentation at the annual ASALH conference this fall in South Carolina. Without the help of the cadet and his excitement for learning about Lt. Flipper, my curiosity would not have been peaked and I would not have considered adding this research to my body of graduate studies.

KRISTA M. BUCK

Graduate Teaching Assistant

Witnessing the living history of Fort Davis National Historic Site with this dynamic group of JROTC students, JROTC instructors, National Park Service interpreters, and my UTA colleagues has been a matchless learning experience for me. We shared tangible encounters with the past, from standing in the barracks of the Buffalo Soldiers, to wearing wool cavalry uniforms as we groomed a horse for patrol, to rehearsing the teamwork required to fire a canon (or, as the rangers would correctly say, a 3-inch ordinance rifle). Through many reflective discussions, I discovered how these experiences impacted individuals within this diverse group – a powerful reminder of the many ways people construct meaning.

As an artist and professor, I asked to be involved in this project because I saw it as a unique opportunity to do something challenging and potentially transformative for both my teaching and my research. Much of my creative work addresses complexities of American culture that are rooted in conflicting beliefs and power disparities, but I find most discussions of these issues – racism, sexism, homophobia, displacement, white supremacy, and nationalism – are flatly dismissive of opposing views. As an instructor, I teach undergraduate students from many backgrounds and strive to make my classes inclusive, equitable, and rewarding, but I have rarely worked with a group that was universally focused on the learning endeavor. This experience in Fort Davis brought all these aspects together: participating in pointed group discussions with respectfully voiced divergent views, learning more ways to engage people in the learning process, and seeing the synergy that results from a group of students and teachers who are all-in. I feel

indebted to the JROTC students and instructors, the NPS staff, the Kutztown University facilitators, and my UTA colleagues for making this a transformative experience.

BILLI LONDON-GRAY

Adjunct Assistant Professor, 2D Design and Drawing

Department of Art and Art History, University of Texas at Arlington

This was a rare opportunity to collaborate with the public and those that preserve historic sites and walk away from the experience with insights on how we can better engage with young scholars. We discovered how living history can have a meaningful impact on JROTC students in a way the classroom cannot replicate. I came away from this trip with new tools to incorporate in the college classroom that I could not have envisioned without the interactions we had at Fort Davis.

KEVIN MOSKOWITZ

PhD student, University of Texas at Arlington





During the weekend of February 22-24, I had the unique opportunity to accompany the FWISD JROTC to historic Fort Davis in West Texas. As a retired college professor, I relished this opportunity to work with and to teach young people who have an interest in history--especially military history. While we were at Fort Davis we learned about the history of the fort and its management, its role in the frontier wars of the 19th century, the presence of the "Buffalo Soldiers" at the site, and about Henry O. Flipper, the first African American to graduate from West Point. Four of my students from UT Arlington also participated in this site visit and they had the opportunity to work with the students in the FWISD JROTC and to present them information about various aspects of the fort's history. I think that my students benefited from the experience just as much as the students from the FWISD JROTC.

Throughout my career as an educator I have always welcomed the opportunity to accompany students on field trips to historic sites and conferences. I think that having students and teachers to see each other outside of the classroom and to have informal discussions about history and life in general is very rewarding for all parties concerned. The Fort Davis trip did not disappoint me. I had the opportunity to meet and learn from young people who are committed to their education, who are very bright, who are very impressive in their demeanor, and who are dedicated to serving our country. Mission accomplished!

DR. W. MARVIN DULANEY

Associate Professor of History Emeritus, UT Arlington

Experiencing different learning methods were key factors in helping me acquire the material more in-depth. We learned: visually, verbally, kinesthetically, socially and logically. For example, while we were at Fort Davis, the Texas Rangers let us do hands-on activities and deepened our understanding of how differently the soldiers lived. One of the Texas Rangers let cadets put on the uniforms used by cavalry soldiers and we learned to saddle horses as well. We spent three hours at Fort Concho and most of the learning was audio and visual. The tour guide gave us insight about the uniforms, bunks and buildings. At Prude Ranch, our dwelling, we did most of our social learning. We would all gather and talk about everything we has just experienced. This learning style was the one that helped me the most because it clarified most of the information we acquired.

MALENA NARVAEZ

North Side High School

For example, there were women in these forts, laundresses that would do chores for the soldiers, such as cleaning their clothes and taking care of the soldiers clothing. Sometimes a laundress would earn more money than a regular soldier. An average soldier made \$13 a month and the laundresses were capable of making \$19 dollars a month. Their job was very difficult because the uniforms were made completely of wool. These women had to work hard to earn their money. Preserving parks and forts help us appreciate learning history as well as the effort the employees and volunteers put in to ensure the cleanliness of their own site as well as the maintenance and upkeep of the artifacts.

JUAN IBARRA

Polytechnic High School





The staff ride to Fort Concho and Fort Davis brought history to life. Instead of students just reading about places, people and events, they were able to walk in those places and learn about life during that time. Students were able to see and touch the items on display and imagine living back then. Students learned about their history and how those events still have an impact on life today. They learned the history they experience in a normal history class is only part of the story.

They learned about the life of a Buffalo Soldier and they learned why those men decided to pursue that life. They learned about the hardships, disappointments, harassment, abuse and successes those men endured and achieved in pursuit of the American dream.

JOHN S. MURPHY, LTC, USA (RETIRED)

Senior Army Instructor, JROTC, Young Men's Leadership Academy





Reflecting: From an adult's perspective, we were asked to share our experiences before, during or after the Frontier Forts, Staff Ride 2019. I must say that initially, I was a bit resistant to the idea of sharing my thoughts being concerned that the gathered information from each adult would somewhat overshadow the statement of our Cadets. However, I feel quite honored to share the essence of my personal experience.

As an honorable retired First Sergeant of the United States Army, it was truly amazing seeing and experiencing the origins of my very existence as a Soldier and an African American. With this Staff Ride I felt as though I have walked the grounds of our forefathers. The honor, the courage, the selfless service, and the raw ambition that the Buffalo Soldiers displayed, incredibly cut to the core of my very existence. Just like them, I fought for my life, the life of strangers, my band of brothers, my place in history, my family name, my wife, my kids and above all my beliefs. As I stood on the very soil that they did, I thanked them all for their sacrifices.

1SG TERRENCE CAMPBELL (RET.)

FWISD JROTC Operations and Training Manager

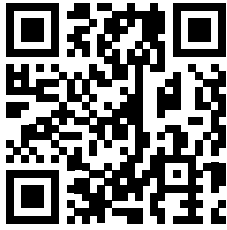


The JROTC, University and National Park collaborative “teach-in” experience challenges each group to contribute to each partner’s learning experience. The FWISD JROTC always shows up looking sharp, lessons prepared, and ready to engage with the collaborative learning experience. After our weekend together at Fort Davis National Park, cadets remarked that the experience was beneficial because they had the opportunity to 1) learn from another cadet’s point of view, 2) engage with in-depth content with national park rangers, 3) work side by side with the JROTC staff, and 4) interact with interesting topics in small groups with university students. One cadet remarked, “Collaborating with the park rangers and university students has opened my mind to new knowledge as well as different ways to learn history”. In spirit with the African Proverb, “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together,” the FWISD JROTC, along with the Kutztown University Frederick Douglass Institute and the National Park Service, has created a model of engagement and practice that will be duplicated by many groups to come. I always look forward to working with the FWISD JROTC because we always leave the experience learning something new about United States history, each other and ourselves.

MARIA SANELLI

**Director, Frederick Douglass Institute
Kutztown University of Pennsylvania**





FWISD.ORG/STAFFRIDE



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