

# The Devil's River News

75¢

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Volume 118 • Issue 19

SONORA, TEXAS

Thursday, June 1, 2006

## Sonora IPC Teacher - Completes 3rd Combat Tour

By Ray Glasscock

First Lieutenant Allan Robbins is a combat veteran who teaches Integrated Physics and Chemistry at Sonora High School. He has also served 20 combined years in the Army and Army Reserve, with ten years in each service. While he teaches in Sonora, he spends one weekend each month training with the 277 Engineer Company based in San Antonio. Lieutenant Robbins served as an enlisted soldier for 15 years before receiving his commission. Lieutenant Robbins leads a platoon of combat engineers. His soldiers use bulldozers, loaders, scrapers, cranes, and numerous other heavy construction equipment in horizontal construction and Force Protection missions. Horizontal construction is the first step in the process of force protection. Force protection is the building of defensive barriers and obstacles to protect U.S. Forces from enemy fire.

Last December, 1Lt. Robbins was transferred from his unit in San Antonio as an Individual Mobilization Augmentee to fill a horizontal platoon leader position for active duty in Iraq. He deployed with A (Alpha) Company 983 Engineer (Combat). He was stationed at Camp Speicher near Tikrit, and Al Taqqaddum near Al Fallujah. His first mission was to construct a helo pad in upper northern Iraq for emergency medivac helicopters. Later, his company used their heavy equipment to clear rubble and remove bombed out buildings on a site and construct a super-police station occupied by U.S. and Iraqi forces in downtown Samarra. The site was two blocks from the golden mosque which was bombed earlier this year. Lieutenant Robbins' biggest mission was also his last mission, the complete construction of a small FOB (Forward Operations Base) near Al Qaim on the Syrian Border. They started with nothing but bare sand and pushed up the perimeter berm, laid all the concertina wire barriers, built the entry control points, and constructed the buildings on site. It was very fulfilling for Lieutenant Robbins to do such an extensive operation in such a "hot" area.

Lieutenant Robbins commanded a platoon of 42 enlisted personnel while he was in Iraq. During the year, he had seven soldiers injured with none killed. The most serious injuries were due to shrapnel from Improvised Explosive Device (IED) blasts. The gunner on top of one Humvee was almost killed when a piece of shrapnel just missed his jugular vein.

Lieutenant Robbins barely escaped injury when his Humvee ran over an IED. The bomber constructed a pressure plate road side bomb out of three 100mm Russian artillery shells. Insulation is removed from the wires that detonate the bomb and are placed be-



First Lieutenant Allan Robbins in Iraq

tween two steel plates. When the plates are pressed together by the weight of a vehicle, the circuit is completed and the shells explode. Luckily, this bomber did a poor job and only one shell exploded. The explosion blew the right front tire of Robbins' Humvee, and he and his men walked away unscathed.

I asked Lieutenant Robbins to try to explain what it was like leading his men into combat. Before each mission, there is an extensive briefing on all aspects of the mission including expected enemy actions. In each and every mission brief, the Rules of Engagement (ROE) are covered. Each soldier carries a copy of the ROE on each mission. The ROE covers when an American soldier can use deadly force. Since it is impossible to identify the enemy, the ROE spells it out. If they are shooting at you, they are the enemy. If they are not shooting, they are civilians. Under the ROE, if one sees an Iraqi carrying an AK-47, he is not an enemy unless he shoots at you. American soldiers can never trust any Iraqi at any time. As the officer in charge, he had the responsibility of analyzing the situation and determining the appropriate response based on his understanding of the ROE.

As the officer, Lieutenant Robbins had to look every soldier in the eye before going on a mission and ask him if he was ready. He had the responsibility of determining if a soldier had too much combat stress for a mission. Each soldier could vary from day to day. For

example, a "Dear John" letter from home could have a devastating effect on a soldier's morale.

I asked him, what he did to survive the daily stress of operating in a combat environment. This is Lieutenant Robbins' third combat tour, with two Desert Storm tours, and his prior experience was helpful in dealing with the stress of combat. He said that our Army is the best trained and equipped Army in the world. He and his men are trained to never quit and mission failure is not an option. He also feels that there is a certain "randomness" to combat. "I would feel better if the best trained and best prepared soldiers would not be hit and the ones who didn't prepare would. But that is not the way it is. I just trust in God and, if it is my day, then it is my day."

Lieutenant Robbins supports our involvement in Iraq and feels that it was honor for him to be allowed to serve his country and lead soldiers in combat. "We are taking the fight to the enemy. Since 9/11, no more American civilians have been killed. The mission of the American military is to protect the people at home, and we are accomplishing that mission."

**Thank you  
for your  
sacrifice!**

## County Commissioners Preliminarily Accept New County Subdivision

By Nancy Glasscock

Attorney Albert Elliott, representing a group of southern Louisiana businessmen, doing business as Valley Properties LLC, presented a plat of a proposed subdivision of the former Aldwell Ranch south of Sonora at a recent county commissioners meeting. The subdivision will be known as Valley Ranch subdivision. The owners are listed as living and doing business in Houma and New Orleans, Louisiana. Much of the property will be sold in 500 acre tracts. Commissioner Milton Cavaness questioned who would have the responsibility of the roads. Elliott responded that the owners are not requesting that the county maintain the roads. Judge Garner questioned the septic system requirements. Jesse Kerbow responded that Charles MacDonald, the county's contracted septic system inspector, had verbally given his approval. The commissioners voted unanimously to preliminarily

accept the subdivision plat based on the property owners not requiring county maintenance of roads. In other business, Carl Wengenroth, the EMS office manager, required a new computer since the one in the office has both floppy and CD drives that no longer work. Homeland Security requirements mandate the need for a working computer. The commissioners approved the purchase of a new computer.

Judge Garner asked Oscar Chavez, Roads and Bridges superintendent how the clean up at the County Park went after the Cinco de Mayo car show and dance. He stated it required "having to go back a couple times." He also stated the "adapters at the bandstand on the slab area were cutoff and are missing." There was also a discussion concerning how many people have keys to the facilities at the park area. Commissioner John Wade stated he felt "if people can't utilize the county facility properly

and leave it as they found it, perhaps they should forfeit all or part of their deposit and possibly not be allowed to rent the facilities again." People are cutting the locks with bolt cutters in order to gain entrance to the facilities when they are unable to find the county employees who have the keys. Both Cavaness and Wade discussed the possibility of purchasing locks with keys that cannot be duplicated. Judge Garner asked the commissioners if they would like her to establish a list of enforceable rules that will be distributed to any facility renters. The commissioners agreed that was a good idea. The rules will be presented at the next commissioners meeting for review and possible implementation. The next Sutton County Commissioners meeting will be at 9 AM on June 5th at the county annex.

## Relay - Raises Over \$82,000

Submitted

With 13 teams, more than 230 participants, over 70 survivors, and more than \$82,000 raised, the 10th Anniversary Sutton County Relay for Life was a huge success. Thanks to all of the support from the community of Sonora and as far away as California, this was the most successful event we have ever had.

Our trophy winners consisted of:

**The Super Trophy winner: Creek Swabbing and JMC Transports** with over 21,000 points earned for onsite and offsite fundraisers, luminaries sold, money raised, attending team captain meetings, winning best campsite, sponsored relay activities, and helping the committee set up and take down

the event.

**Most Laps Trophy: The Samaniego Family.** This long time team turned in more than 200 laps!

**Chuck Wagon: Church of the Good Shepherd.** Spiral Ham and home cooked side dishes made this team a real standout for the best meal at the event.

**Best Campsite: Creek Swabbing/JMC Transports.** With a tiki vending post and all volunteers dressed as "survivors" there was no way to look past this site as the best on the grounds.

**Most Spirited: City of Sonora.** Not only did this team walk laps on the track, but they also ran! I never passed this teams site with out seeing them smiling!

**Most Money Raised: Dominion Exploration and Produc-**

tion. It was no surprise to see that this team did it again! Alone, they raised more than \$29,000 for the American Cancer Society.

**The First National Bank and Church of the Good Shepherd** were also recognized as our two 10 year teams.

Thanks to all of our other teams for helping us raise money and awareness for the American Cancer Society. See you all next year! Thanks to All: Village Market, Duke Energy Sonora/Ozona Asset, First Baptist Church of Sonora, Keep Sonora Beautiful, Days Inn/Comfort Inn/Steakhouse, St. John's Episcopal Church.



Delyse Jeager and Manual Tobias assist scouts before Relay National Anthem.

Pictured below - Sonora Veterans attend the Memorial Day Ceremony on the court house lawn. Left to Right, Ken Babcock - WWII, Jerry Bois - Vietnam, Sam Perez - WWII, Joe Brown - Korea, Les Bell - Vietnam, Mallie Turner - WWII, Tommy Arnwine - Vietnam, Dwain Parsons - Vietnam, Bill Stewart - WWII, Norm Rousselot - Korea, Bob Mooney - WWII, Don Surridge - WWII.



## Sutton County Jail Break

By Ray Glasscock

At 11:20 a.m., Monday, May 29, 2006, Jimmy Callahan, a 29 year old Mississippian, escaped the Sutton County Jail by prying off a hasp of the locking system on the recreation area door, walked across the courthouse lawn, waved at Mary Ann Kay, and stole Ed Mayfield's truck.

Callahan was able to steal the truck by breaking a window and finding the keys under the floor mat. Mr. Callahan was originally arrested for stealing a pickup out of Bud Whitehead's barn.

Another inmate contacted the jailer and informed him of the escape. Sheriff Joe Fincher immediately organized a manhunt since he was unaware of the fact that Callahan had stolen Mayfield's truck. The manhunt lasted until 2:00 a.m. Tuesday morning when officers were notified of the theft of the truck. The information on the stolen vehicle was entered into the TCIC/NCIC (Texas Crime Information Center/ National Crime Information Center) computer.

The Lake Charles Louisiana Police Department had already arrested Callahan at 8:30 p.m. Monday night after receiving a call about an altercation with a civilian. Then Callahan attempted to again flee from the police. Once they saw the stolen vehicle on the computer, they immediately notified The Sonora Sheriff Office. Sheriff Fincher has had the hasp securely welded. The Sheriff's office has hired a tracking dog, and the dog is currently being trained.







## AUDIE MURPHY: WAR HERO AND MOVIE STAR

By Tumbleweed Smith



Audie Murphy was born in 1924 at Kingston in Hunt County. He was one of twelve children in a poor family. He perfected his aim by shooting squirrels and other game for family meals.

"I know of two times the family was so poor they lived in a boxcar with no running water and no electricity," says Adrien Witkofsky, Executive Director of the Audie Murphy American Cotton Museum in Greenville.

She says when World War Two broke out, Audie tried to join the Marines, but they turned him down. "I think in not so many words they told him to come back when he grew up. He was only five feet seven inches and weighed just 130 pounds, but he wanted to serve his country. The Army gave him that chance."

He took part in the campaigns for Sicily and Italy and was in the first wave of the invasion of southern France. Audie Murphy's heroic efforts made him the most decorated soldier in World War Two. In addition to the Medal of Honor, he earned every combat decoration the Army offered.

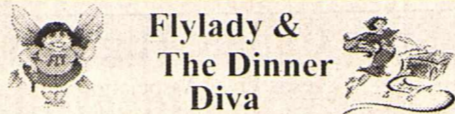
"He save many, many lives. He was overseas about three years and was wounded several times. Some of those wounds he carried with him the rest of his life. Some of them caused him severe discomfort."

When he got out of the Army, Audie went to Hollywood. "He was in forty-four films, a lot of them westerns. He wrote a book, TO HELL AND BACK, which was turned into a movie, and he played himself. From doing some research, I found out he was not the first choice for the role. After interviewing several more applicants, the casting people agreed he should play himself. The movie told about his exploits in combat, losing his best friend and getting wounded."

Audie attended school to the 5th grade in the community of Celeste, but didn't get much more formal education. That didn't keep him from accomplishing a lot. He wrote poetry and country songs. He's in the Texas Country Music Hall of Fame. Roy Clark, Teresa Brewer and many well-known people sang his songs.

Audie Murphy died at the age of forty-six when a plane taking him on a business trip crashed into a Virginia mountain.

The Audie Murphy Museum honors Veterans with a special ceremony the middle of June every year. This year it takes place on June 16 and 17. The museum has a life-size statue of Audie in front of the museum. He is in full battle dress carrying a German weapon. Adrien says he ran out of bullets and had to use a German gun he picked up in the heat of battle.



## Stop and Smell The Roses

By The FlyLady, Marla Cilley

All around us there are things we miss because we are running around and do not take the time to stop and smell the roses.

We live in such a frantic paced world! The world is not frantic; we are! We are the ones who choose to run around at the fast pace. Do we think we are ever going to make up for lost time? The world keeps turning at the same speed. We all have the same twenty-four hours in a day and it is how we choose to use those hours that causes us to be so busy that we don't take time for the simple things in life like smelling the roses.

You are so busy that you don't even notice the roses along your path; much less think about smelling them. We are oblivious to the things going on around us because our mind is reacting to yet another mess we have gotten ourselves into because we don't know how to stop procrastinating.

We have two speeds; full out pedal to the metal or slamming on the breaks! Have you ever ridden with someone who drives like this? Just the thought of this makes me sick! Why do we treat ourselves like this with jack-rabbit starts and stops? We deserve better!

The stops don't happen often; they only occur after you have crashed and burned. We don't know how to take it slow and steady. All we know is if we will just keep going as fast as we can we can accomplish all we have to in one day. We can stop living like this.

You are not more effective under stress. That is a lie we tell ourselves because we do not know how to stop unless we are forced to. I think we have to look at the reasons we are rushing around for us to be able to stop and rest. Procrastination is vicious monster that causes us to peddle faster and faster. We put off doing something till it is screaming at us.

You know how it is; you put off filling your car up with gas and now you are in a hurry to pick up your child at school and you just had to do one more thing before you walked out the door. That is perfectionism and procrastination giving you the one two punch! No wonder you don't have time to stop and smell the roses you are too busy putting out fires!

Do you hear these words come out of your mouth many

times a day; I don't have time, I'm late? This is an important clue for you! Next time those words soil your lips; I want you to think about why you are in this pickle! I promise you it is because you put off doing something or you allowed your perfectionism to take over.

You don't have to live this way another day! You have a choice and if you choose the do it now principle, you may find that there are enough hours in a day and you do have time to stop and smell the roses!

Life is filled with choices and you get to make them. Do it now or procrastinate; you pick! Which one allows you the opportunity to stop and smell the roses?

## Representative from Congressman Conaway in Sonora

By Kel Thomas

JoAnne Powell, Regional Director for the office of 11th District of Texas Congressman Mike Conaway was in Sonora Thursday, May 25, 2006 to meet with constituents and to hear concerns that affect residents of Sonora and Sutton County.

The 11th District, which Congressman Conaway represents, is vast in scope and in diversity. The district stretches more than 400 miles from the Pecos River to Marble Falls and is the home to over 650,000 residents. Congressman Conaway is in his first term and is unopposed in the upcoming November general election.

Mrs. Powell stressed an important contribution the Congressman's Office makes to the residents of the 11th District. It is the nomination of young men and women to the various service academies: West Point, the Air Force Academy, the Naval Academy, the Coast Guard Academy, and the Merchant Marine Academy. Young people with a desire to enter a service academy are encouraged to seek information on the qualifications as early as possible in their high school careers. Information is obtained through Congressman Conaway's office, or through the high school counselor's office.

Also available through Mr. Conaway's office are: liaison services with the various federal agencies, letters of congratulations, community outreach, information on legislation, responses to legislation and issues, and many other services through the congressional offices.

A representative from the Congressman's office has plans to be in Sonora approximately once every three months to hear thoughts, concerns and comments of the constituency in our local area.

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### Mother Nature's End-of-Month Specials

*StarGazer - By Paul Derrick*

Mother Nature is offering some attractive end-of-month specials you won't want to miss. These early evening delights involve stars, planets and the Moon low in the west as darkness falls.

The evening of May 30, a thin crescent Moon will be 6 moonwidths to the right of Mars, and to the Moon's right will be Gemini's brightest stars, Pollux and Castor. The planet, Moon and stars will be about evenly spaced in a straight line with reddish Mars nearly the same brightness as the stars.

The next evening the Moon will be within 4 moonwidths above the Beehive star cluster with Saturn less than 2 moonwidths below the cluster. Saturn looks like a bright, creamy colored star.

Unless being viewed under dark, moonless skies, the Beehive is easy to miss. To naked eyes it appears as a faint, moon-sized fuzball. In binoculars dozens of individual stars are visible, looking like the swarm of bees for which it is named.

From our perspective all these objects seem close together, but appearances are deceiving. The Moon, at a mere 240,000 miles away, is next door. Mars' distance from Earth varies depending upon where the two planets are in their orbits. It can be as near as 34 million miles and as far as 250 million miles; now it's 200 million miles away. Its differing distances account for its varying brightness. When nearest it outshines all the stars; now, nearly at its faintest, there are 30 brighter stars. Saturn at 900 million miles is nearly 5 more distant than Mars and a whopping 3,700 times further than the Moon.

But these solar system objects are virtually in our back yard compared to the Beehive star cluster. Expressed in miles, its distance is beyond reasonable comprehension: 3 quadrillion miles--a number larger even than our national debt.

That's why astronomers use light years for measuring distances beyond the solar system. A light year is the distance light travels in a year, which moving at 186,000 miles per second, is 5.9 trillion miles. That puts the Beehive at 515 light years away, a much more manageable number.

When viewing the Beehive cluster it's easy to forget that each of the "bees" is, in fact, a star like our Sun, although much younger ones. Our Sun is 5 billion years old while the stars of the Beehive cluster were formed recently, in cosmic terms--only 400 million years ago.

While you're out, don't overlook Jupiter, the brightest object high in the southeast.

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## F.Y.I.

**June 1st, 2nd and 3rd**  
Sonora All Stars Baseball Tournament, Sutton County Baseball Field complex


**Saturday, June 3:** West Texas Championship Cook-Off, Sutton County Park

**Vernon West Memorial Team Roping** at Sutton County Arena, Friday, June 2nd and Saturday, June 3rd. For more information contact Ryan West - 325-277-2156.


**4-H Playday Summer Series**  
The summer playdays will be held at the Sutton County Arena on June 6, 20, 27, and July 11 and 18. Entries will be taken from 5:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Each playday will start at 6:00 p.m. Age divisions will be novice (9-12 years), junior (13-15 years), and senior (16-18 years) as of June 6. Boys and girls will ride together in each age division unless the number of entries warrants splitting them. Events are barrels, poles, and goat tying. There is a one time fee of \$35 per participant. Current coggins will be required on all horses. Please have your coggins results in hand when you enter. For more information, call the Extension Office at 387-3101.

**Al-Anon Meetings** - 7:00 p.m. Tuesdays - L.M. Hudspeth (old part) cafeteria.

**Co-Ed Softball Tournament** for Jessica Zapata, June 17th, 2006 at the Sonora County Park. \$125 per team. 1st and 2nd place T-shirts will be awarded. Signup deadline is June 14, 2006. For more information, contact David Noriega at 325-387-6129 or Brandy at 325-884-3626 / 325-450-0211.



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