

## **DoD, TCEQ, and EPA discuss air issues at Hood**

*by Christine Luciano*

*DPW Environmental Outreach Coordinator*

The Department of Defense Texas Air Workgroup (TAWG) hosted its semiannual session at Fort Hood, 30-31 January 2008. Regional environmental coordinators, Texas air program managers from the Army, Navy, Air Force, NASA Johnson Space Center, along with consultants, state and federal regulators came together to discuss glooming regulatory issues that may potentially impact them.

The regulatory agency for the state, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, and the Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6 gave presentations about the latest legislative environmental proposals that may lead to state rule making and impact Texas DoD installations. “Through direct contact with the TCEQ and EPA we are able to ask critical questions on environmental proposals that may lead to more stringent regulations to reduce the amount of emissions,” Dr. Thom Rennie, TAWG Chair, said.

Military bases have a variety of operations that release air emissions. Paint booths, motor pools, boilers, and off road vehicles are common sources of emissions. “Under the law, DoD bases are required to keep track of emissions, meet certain standards, and get permits to do their activities,” Dr. Rennie said. “If a base is over the permit limits, it suffers a potential violation and in extreme cases it could impact the mission of the facility. From the federal facilities situation, bases are always at the top as far as complying and maybe exceeding requirements of what is required by state and federal law.”

During the session, the TAWG toured Fort Hood’s Classification Unit, 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry of the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division’s motor pool, and the Digital Multi-Purpose Range Complex. “It is important to get the regulatory agencies to see the daily life of a Soldier out in the range and in the motor pool,” Dr. Rennie said.

Major Robert Magee described a typical day in the motor pool and how 1-12 IN meets mission requirements as well as comply with environmental regulations. “Here is a 70 ton tank with a 1500 horse power engine to move it at 45 mph across country. Inside it is 500 gallons of fuel, 17 gallons of hydraulic fluid, and 30 gallons of transmission oil,” Magee said. “This is a walking EPA disaster. But with the help of the Environmental Compliance Assessment Team, we train our Soldiers about the environmental regulations and how to be environmentally proactive.”

When these tanks and other off road vehicles travel over the numerous unpaved and dirt roads throughout the training corridors, they generate large clouds of particulate matter made up of soot and dust. In a Fort Hood project to reduce emissions, a dust suppressant chemical was applied to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile on a tank trail. The project will help determine the environmental and cost maintenance benefits. Fort Hood and other installations are also working with state and federal regulators to obtain approval to use a digital opacity camera system to measure stack emissions and fugitive dust. In another experimental project, a DS2 contract paint booth at Fort Hood’s Directorate of Logistics is using a carbon absorption bio-filter. The bio-filter has microorganisms that will eat up the VOCs as they come out of the paint booth.

From the regulatory standpoint air is number one. The top air emissions at Fort Hood are particulate matter from tank trails and unpaved roads and volatile organic compounds from paints, solvents, and fuel. The Fort Hood Air Program is reducing air emissions through several projects and is working with the TAWG to collaborate with other bases to find new technologies to improve air quality.

“Air is air. It does not matter if it is Army air, Air Force air, or Navy air, the emissions are the same. By getting the DoD bases together and cross service, the Air Program Managers can learn from each other,” Dr. Rennie said.