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Brigadier General Michael B. Cates  
photos provided by Michael Cates

## One of Frisco's Finest

By Jackie Beynaerts

WHEN YOU THINK OF THE U.S. ARMY, animals are probably not one of the first things that come to mind. However, military and government animals, such as working dogs and dolphin, parade horses and research animals serve an important role in the military, and that is where Frisco native, Michael B. Cates comes in. Having a great interest in science and animals, Michael has made that and the Army his business. He was recently promoted from the 23<sup>rd</sup> chief of the U.S. Army Veterinary Corps to his new rank as Brigadier General.

His current position as Commanding General of the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine and as Chief, Veterinary Corps, keeps him busy. "A typical day involves decisions on assignments, resources, training and internal and

external communications. Since our personnel are dispersed to multiple sites in multiple countries, the challenges are complex. Fortunately for me, all of our military and civilian personnel have tremendous competence, professionalism and dedication to their jobs, serving the U.S. Department of Defense," stated Brig. General Cates.

The U.S. Army Corps, which was established in 1916, is in charge of caring for animals as well as monitoring soldier's public health and food safety. After being accepted into Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine, Michael received an Army Health Professions Scholarship, paying for his veterinary education. After graduation, Michael had to fulfill his obligation to serve three years in the Army. He ended up enjoying those years so much he continued to volunteer. It

has now been Michael's profession for over 24 years.

"Through the years, as a member of the Army Veterinary Corps, I have had a wide diversity of jobs, in many places. At Fort Bragg, North Carolina, I helped care for Army-owned horses and Military Working Dogs, as well as many pets, owned by the soldiers and their families there. In Hawaii, my job was to care for the Navy's marine mammals—dolphin, Beluga whales, and sea lions. That job was the most unique, and the most memorable of all. And, in New Jersey and New York City, I provided veterinary care to the military pets at several military installations," explained Michael. "Since then, in my assignments in Korea, Europe, Tennessee, and Texas, I have been in leadership positions that oversaw the veterinary support to the military in those locations."

Although Michael was actually born in McKinney, he has no problem calling Frisco his home.

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"Government animals, such as working dogs and dolphins, parade horses and research animals serve an important role in the military."

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"I can think of no better place to call my hometown than Frisco, Texas. The Frisco I knew, as a child and adolescent, had many advantages over the bigger towns and cities, in my opinion. There was a special closeness with family and friends in the community, which is difficult to duplicate with larger populations," Michael said. "Many of the adults I knew in Frisco, including my parents, were natives of Frisco



since Michael's childhood. Then the population was less than 2,000 people and the local high school had only 200 students. Even so, he still believes some things haven't changed.

"My parents were my main role-models, but there were many others, in the Frisco community, who provided positive influences in my life."

"There are still some longtime residents of Frisco- some are several generations of Frisco natives- who are deeply loved by one another and their community. Throughout my entire life, I have benefited from their generosity and support, and their friendships still mean the world to me," Michael acknowledged.

I really appreciate all of Frisco's support for our Army soldiers, civilians, and families, who are serving our nation at war in many diverse locations throughout the world."

*Jackie Beynaerts is a freelance writer living in Frisco.*

and graduates of Frisco High School, and many of my close friends attended only Frisco schools (Acker Elementary, Frisco Junior High School and Frisco High School). Many of the leaders of the community had long-time ties to the Frisco community and the families in the community. Many were military veterans, and almost everyone knew each other's names. My parents were my main role-models, but there were many others, in the Frisco community, who provided positive influences in my life and I am extremely grateful."

Md. where he lives with his wife, Linda, and their beloved pet Norwich terrier, Sugar Bear. Michael and Linda were only able to visit Frisco once a year while he was stationed in Europe. Now that he is back in the states he hopes to visit more often. And one day, after his army career is over, Michael suspects he and Linda will live in Texas again. Maybe Frisco? We will just have to wait and see!

**SMALL TOWN CHARM TO BOOM TOWN**

Frisco has had some vast changes

**TOP DOG, TOP OF HIS CLASS**

Michael left his mark on Frisco as well. During high school he was captain of the basketball team and president of the Future Farmers of America (FFA) chapter. He was also Frisco High School's 1975 valedictorian. In 1980 Michael graduated from Texas A&M University with a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree, and in 1987 he received a master of Public Health degree from the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston. Michael has become the first general officer from Frisco.

From dogs and orphaned raccoons to show animals for FFA, Michael has fond memories of the animals he had while living in Frisco. He is now based in Aberdeen Proving Ground,



**In Memorial**

In late May each year the United States observes Memorial Day, a day set aside to honor those Americans who have died in military service to their country. This year we remember Sgt. Michael Luke Boatright, 24, the first Frisco native to die while serving in Iraq. Sgt. Boatright was assigned to the 20th Engineer Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas and the recipient of the Frisco Chamber of Commerce 2004 Patriot Award. Boatright died in Baghdad, Iraq, when an improvised explosive device struck him. He died on December 4, 2004.