

# Intense training prepares future agents for border protection



[Editor’s note: This story is the first part of the multi-part series “Protecting Our Homeland,” showing the life of U.S. Border Patrol Agents, trainees that begins with Issue #10 and concludes in Issue #12. Staff members took it upon themselves to interview, take photographs, and conduct research. The results of their combined efforts follow.]

by **SARA MARSHALL**  
Editor-in-Chief

In light of recent local and worldwide political events, Americans are growing increasingly concerned with protecting the nation’s borders from terrorists and illegal immigrants.

Every day, brave men and women come from all walks of life to attend the U.S. Border Patrol Academy at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center [FLETC] in Artesia, New Mexico. The training center was purchased by the Federal government in 1989, after the Artesia Christian College closed its doors.



A trainee pats down an ‘illegal immigrant’ role player during the trainee’s Spanish class.

Soon after, they created the Office of Artesia Operations, which is one of three FLETC residential training sites in the United States. The 3,620-acre site houses many facilities which allow the United States Border Patrol to conduct basic and advanced law enforcement training.

“The Border Patrol Mission

is to detect and prevent terrorists and terrorist’s weapons from entering the U.S., as well as preventing the illegal trafficking of people and contraband,” said Jennie A. Marquez, assistant chief patrol agent. “This mission is inherently dangerous, because the violators are taking a great risk in accomplishing their illicit goal, and, at times, violence is the result.”

Potential trainees go through months of waiting and extensive background checks before they are approved to go through several months of physical and mental agent training. Once through the academy, the trainees who are still there will graduate and receive their agent badges.

“The length and makeup of Border Patrol Academy training has varied quite a bit over the past 10 to 15 years, and continues to evolve as the law enforcement environment evolves,” said Paul Clayton, senior border patrol agent. “When I was at the academy in the early 2000s, it was roughly 20 consecutive weeks of training where all the basic disciplines were taught together.”

In Artesia, experienced instructors teach aspiring agents new skills such as Firearms, Pursuit Driving, Physical Fitness, Police and Border Patrol Operations,

Spanish, Law and other real-world techniques.

By teaching trainees in a controlled environment, instructors can ensure the next generation of agents will be better prepared for what lies ahead.

“Each instructor has their own twist when teaching,” Sergeant Major Frank Ayala said. “We have a wide range of instructors here, teaching many different techniques. An officer’s safety is our number one concern here.”

From their very first day at the academy, trainees are issued a fake sidearm to acclimate to the feeling of a weapon that will constantly be at their side. But they are not trained to ‘shoot first, ask questions later,’ as many may believe.

“The Border Patrol ensures that agents are properly trained to confront and diffuse these situations in a successful law enforcement conclusion, but sometimes, bad things

in defending our country and laid down their lives to protect the homeland.”

Like many agents before her, Marquez heard about the U.S. Border Patrol through

a career fair held at Michigan State University.

“I had never heard of the Border Patrol before then, and I met some wonderful recruiters who opened my

or understand what the Border Patrol’s mission is. This job isn’t for everyone. But if you love the outdoors and have a strong desire to work in law enforcement, this is a great career to pursue.”

Once trainees become U.S. Border Patrol agents, they have the possibility of being chosen for a variety of assignments, including patrolling international land borders and coastal waters to prevent the illegal trafficking of people, narcotics and contraband into the United States.

If a new agent is assigned to the border, he or she can expect to be responding to alarms in remote areas, detecting, preventing and apprehending undocumented aliens, smugglers of aliens and illegal narcotics at or near the land borders. Agents also could be assigned to work with the K-9 Unit, which uses canines to detect concealed humans and narcotics, Search and Rescue unit, and patrolling.

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Agents at the U.S. Border Patrol Academy conduct a ‘concrete experience,’ demonstrating the proper techniques to handle stressful situations an agent may encounter in the field.  
**PHOTOS BY TOVI OYERVIDEZ/PLAINSMAN PRESS**

happen,” Marquez said. “That is why we honor our fallen agents. They knew the danger

a career fair hosted by her college. She joined the U.S. Border Patrol 23 years ago at

eyes to a new career path,” Marquez said. “Many people, men and women, do not know

## Math, law enforcement student receives Burnside Scholar Award, scholarship

by **BRANDI ORTIZ**  
Associate Editor

The Burnside Scholar Award was recently given to a South Plains College student.

Rachel Sarkis, a sophomore Math and Law Enforcement Technology major from Lubbock, received a \$1,000 scholarship from the Texas Community College Teachers Association.

In 2002, the TCCTA established the Burnside Scholar Award, an award named after the first executive director, Charles Burnside. This award is presented to one deserving student at the college of the current TCCTA president. This year, it was Professor Wayne Langehennig who got to select the recipient.

“I wanted to find someone who academically is doing very well,” says Langehennig, president of the TCCTA and a Spanish professor at the Reese Center campus at SPC. “Someone who has a hard work ethic, and who truly paints a picture of who we are as a community college.”

After asking around for recommendations on which student should receive the award, it was Sarkis’ name which would be brought up from fellow colleagues.

“Rachel has been such

a trustworthy, hardworking, and exceptional person and math tutor for the past two years,” says Alan Worley, chairperson of Math and Engineering Department at SPC. “I couldn’t think of someone more deserving than she.”

Sarkis says her talent is math, but her passion is law enforcement. She is

said Sarkis. “Since then, it has been more of a calling.”

Sarkis says she hopes to complete her associate’s degree in Law Enforcement Technology and become a certified peace officer. She also plans to complete her math requirements to transfer and complete her bachelor’s degree in mathematics.

“Mathematics takes a



Dr. Lance Scott, Wayne Langehennig, Rachel Sarkis and Alan Worley in front of the Law Enforcement Building on March 8.  
**BRANDI ORTIZ/PLAINSMAN PRESS**

actively involved in the Law Enforcement Club, currently serving as vice president. She has recently been nominated to serve as president for the fall semester.

“My interest in law enforcement began when I took classes at Frenship High,”

lot time and energy to do the homework, but the law enforcement academy is just the same,” Sarkis said. “Balancing the two is tough, but doable.”

Dr. Lance Scott, associate professor of law enforcement and technology

and the chairperson of the Professional Services and Energy Department, says that Sarkis could go far with her career in law.

“I see Rachel, in the long run, as an investigator,” says Scott. “Possibly with the FBI, but definitely not just your typical street cop.”

Though the overall goal for Sarkis is to become a detective, if she plans to work federally or for the state, which requires a bachelor’s degree, she can use her mathematics degree to fill that requirement. But, Sarkis plans to stay local by applying to work at the Lubbock Police Department and working her way up.

“Short term, I want to kick in doors and get bad guys,” said Sarkis. “But if something was to ever go awry then, with my mathematics degree, I can have a wider range of opportunities than I would have if I majored in criminal justice.”

Sarkis says that she could not have followed her dreams without her professors.

“[SPC] has amazing professors,” says Sarkis. “They are very encouraging and helpful when it comes to figuring out what is the right thing to do.”

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# Southwest Showcase



## National Ranching Heritage Center breathes new life into Old West

by **STACY JOHNSON**  
Editorial Assistant

A tumbleweed blows across the sun-drenched hills past the legendary Four Sixes Ranch barn. Scenes reminiscent of the Old West transport visitors back in time.

Located in Lubbock, Texas on the northern corner of the Texas Tech University campus, the National Ranching Heritage Center is a free museum comprised of three sections: Proctor Historical Park, DeVitt-Mallet Museum and J.J. Gibson Memorial Park.

The center serves to preserve the rich cultural history of the American ranching industry, and to educate the public about the way of life of early ranchers and settlers on the frontier.

Proctor Historical Park leads guests on a chronological trip through the robust history of ranching. The sprawling 1.5-mile outdoor exhibit is currently home to 49 structures dating from the 1780s to the 1950s.

Perhaps the most distinguishing and impressive aspect of the park is the fact that the structures are not reproductions. All except for one are authentic structures, transported from their original sites to the Ranching Heritage Center.

The simpler structures were moved in their entirety, while those that were more complicated or challenging were dismantled at their original locations, transported in pieces, and then re-assembled on the park grounds.

The stone structures, for example, were impossible to transport without disassembly. Dr. Robert Tidwell, curator of historical collections, offers some insight into the painstaking methods used to recreate the historic architectural structures.

“The disassembly process actually took days and days and days, because we were carefully cataloging and recording the position and location of each stone,” Tidwell explains.

Detailed drawings are made of the original structure before

ensure the historical accuracy of the park, the structures have been placed meticulously, with attention to even the smallest



the project begins. Individual pieces must each be carefully photographed, assigned a code number, and documented according to their relative location to the other pieces.

A disassembly plan is created for the process and then followed in reverse order

details. Architectural elements are aligned to the same cardinal directions that they faced at their original sites.

“We have one structure, Las Escarbas, which is a large, two-story stone structure,” Tidwell says. “And in its original building site, it was built partway into the side of a low

Despite the fact that most of the attractions are not native to the city, the park has Lubbock literally at its core. The hills along the grounds are composed of debris from the devastating tornado that tore through downtown Lubbock in 1970.

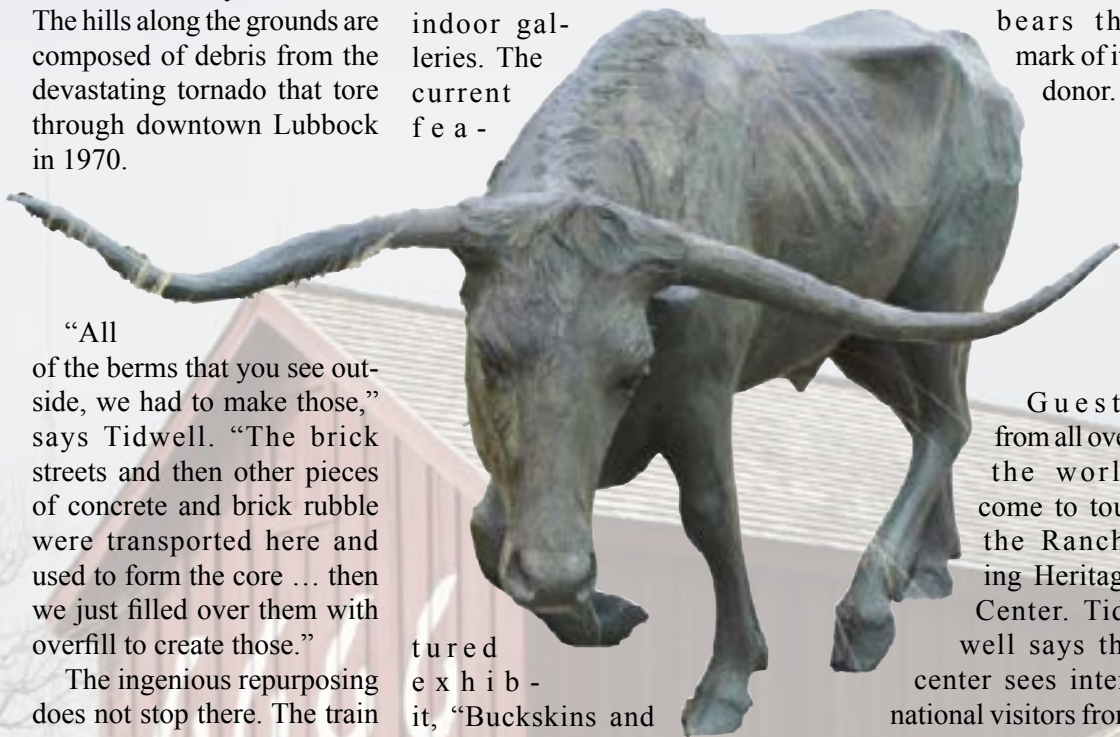
“All of the berms that you see outside, we had to make those,” says Tidwell. “The brick streets and then other pieces of concrete and brick rubble were transported here and used to form the core ... then we just filled over them with overfill to create those.”

The ingenious repurposing does not stop there. The train tracks near the Baldwin Locomotive feature originally ran parallel to the Brownfield Highway in Lubbock before the construction of the Marsha Sharp Freeway.

the park in the shade without the need to walk.

The DeVitt-Mallet Museum consists of seven indoor galleries. The current

tures of longhorn steers representing the Texas trail drive era. Each expressive, life-size steer is branded and bears the mark of its donor.



Guests from all over the world come to tour the Ranching Heritage Center. Tidwell says the center sees international visitors from nearly every locale.

“You go through our visitor logs over the decades, and you will see people from every continent on earth except for Antarctica,” he says.



While examples of some of the earliest technology are housed within the structures, the Ranching Heritage Center is not behind the times. In ad-

change frequently. “As we do our exhibit planning, we like to stagger exhibits so that there’s something new every three to six months

According to Tidwell, the center serves an important purpose.

“We think it’s a special place,” he says. “There really



hill. So we did the same thing here. It’s built partway into the side of a low hill.”

The landscaping in the immediate surrounding area is recreated to the fullest extent that the local climate will allow.

The interiors of the buildings reflect what life was like for settlers in the early days of ranching. As if frozen in time, cast iron cooking pots sit on stone

hearths. Oil lamps hang from doorways and sit atop bedside tables. Pieces accurate to the period have been lovingly selected from local antique shops by volunteers and carefully arranged to create an authentic atmosphere.

dition to the educational signs that tell the stories behind the park’s attractions, the center offers guests a smartphone app to guide them through the park, along with multimedia details and descriptions of what they can find there.

During the warm months, guided trolley tours begin each Thursday at 10 a.m., allowing visitors to sit back and enjoy

or so,” Tidwell says. “We want to keep something fresh, and interesting, and new on a fairly regular basis.”

Upcoming exhibits include the topics of handguns and cattle rustling.

A ranching museum would not be complete without cattle. J.J. Gibson Memorial Park, located at the center’s entrance, is home to 19 bronze sculp-

aren’t that many museums like ours out there. We also preserve a very important part of the state’s history, and also this region’s history. What would the Southwest be without ranching?”

**PHOTOS BY STACY JOHNSON/ PLAINSMAN PRESS**

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