

# *Above the Clouds*

**FORT WORTH ISD JROTC**

Honors U.S. Military History

**2015 CHICKAMAUGA AND CHATTANOOGA STAFF RIDE**

# INTRODUCTION

We are a nation born of war. Americans are fascinated by the Civil War and our military parks and battlefields. It has been said that it's easier to write history than to define it; consequently, historians are challenged with integrating various perspectives of battles with the wider social and political context of war, especially the great campaigns of the Civil War. Furthermore, because man's life is intertwined with his environment, historians must take into account the impact of geography, climate, natural resources, the invention of labor-saving devices, the revolution in transportation, communication, agriculture, physics, and chemistry to accurately write and tell the truth.

The Fort Worth ISD JROTC Department Honors U.S. Military History Course's 2015 Staff Ride to Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park was a powerful educational tool that conveyed the historical, social, intellectual, economic, and political perspectives. In general, its primary purpose was to further the educational understanding and induce critical thinking in the cadets who participated. As you turn the pages, notice the appreciation in the faces and comments of the students walking hallowed ground, touching artifacts, and

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gaining new insights into the patriots who fought in the battles of Chickamauga and Chattanooga.

More than 100,000 soldiers fought at Chickamauga and Chattanooga. Each one of these men represented the hopes and dreams of the nations they endeavored to establish or preserve. In the fall of 1863, Union and Confederate forces fought for control of Chattanooga, a key rail center known as the "Gateway to the Deep South." The Confederates had been victorious at nearby Chickamauga in September. However, intense fighting in Chattanooga that November provided Union troops victory and control of the city. After the battle, a Confederate soldier ominously wrote, "This... is the death-knell of the Confederacy."

**LTC RICHARD CROSSLEY JR. (RET.)**

**Director of FWISD JROTC**





The very basic core of a  
man's *living spirit* is his  
**passion for adventure.**

**CHRISTOPHER McCANDLESS**

*American hiker and traveler*

On April 22, 2015, I had the opportunity to depart on a trip with the Fort Worth ISD JROTC to explore and educate myself more about one of the most famous battlegrounds of the Civil War, "The Battle of Chickamauga and Chattanooga," located in the Northwest part of Georgia and Tennessee.

## **NORMA ALEGRIA**

**North Side High School**

When the trip started, I was nervous and scared because it was my first time going outside of Texas without any family members. The bus ride was fun and I hardly slept in the fourteen hour ride, focusing a lot of time on editing and reviewing the final details of my school's Powerpoint presentation. My wingmen and I were assigned to research the significance of General Rosecrans being replaced by General Grant in Chattanooga.

## **LUIS DIAZ**

**Western Hills High School**





For Chattanoogaans,  
the story of their city  
is told in the view of  
**Moccasin Bend** and the  
*sweep* and *turn* of the  
majestic Tennessee River.







One of my favorite activities on the trip was climbing up Lookout Mountain, where the “Battle Above the Clouds” took place. We had a great view overlooking the Chattanooga Valley of Tennessee. Stepping on the grounds of those battlefields was a remarkable experience.

**NORMA ALEGRIA**  
North Side High School









After Chattanooga was firmly in Union hands, this was the place where thousands of Union soldiers would come to have their photographs taken, on the famous tip of Lookout Mountain.

**JAMES OGDEN**  
National Park Service Ranger





After reading about the use of artillery during the battle, I was excited to actually see and touch the cannons we had learned about.

**DESTINY JORDAN**

Southwest High School

I learned about so many types of rifles developed during the Civil War. I even got to carry a Spencer repeating rifle, which was used by the Union and was modified to fire far more accurately and quickly than the Confederate's muskets.

**JORDAN NEALY**

Eastern Hills High School





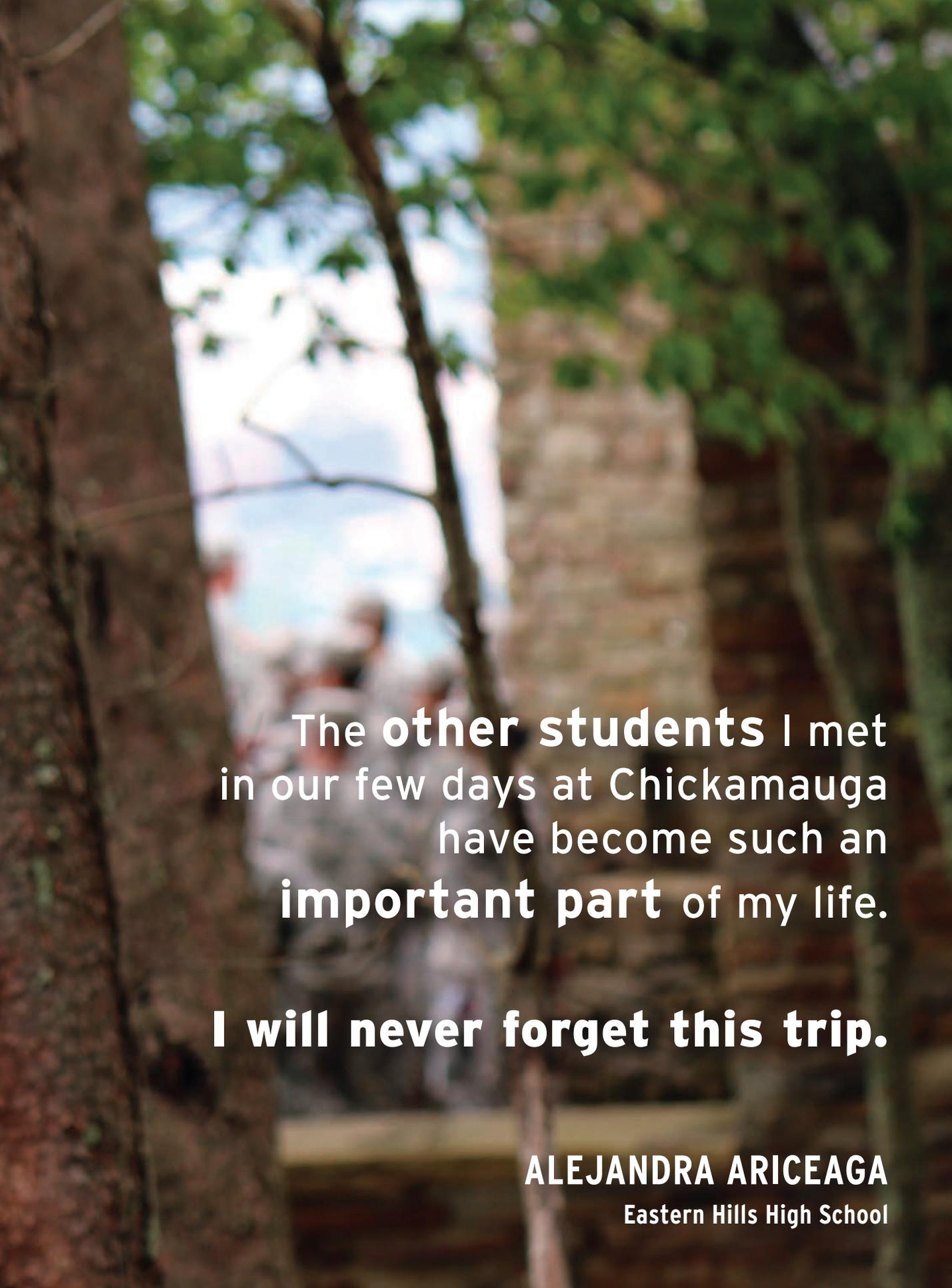
I think that actually physically being on the grounds of the events that we are studying about provides a whole different experience than what we're used to in the classroom. I think that these trips are not only necessary, but they're crucial to the learning experiences and the learning opportunities of students.

**ASHLEY NELSON**

Diamond Hill-Jarvis High School



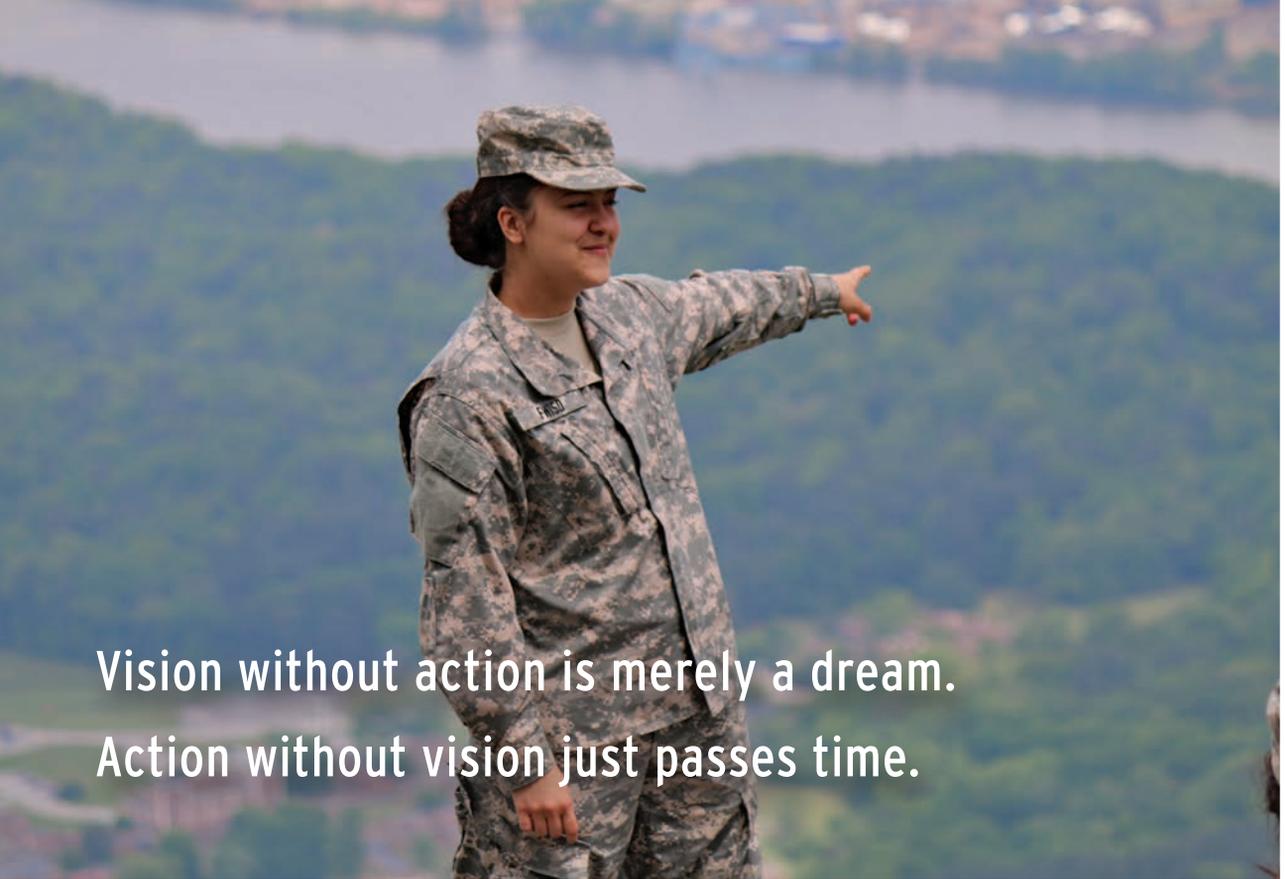




The **other students** I met  
in our few days at Chickamauga  
have become such an  
**important part** of my life.

**I will never forget this trip.**

**ALEJANDRA ARICEAGA**  
Eastern Hills High School



Vision without action is merely a dream.  
Action without vision just passes time.

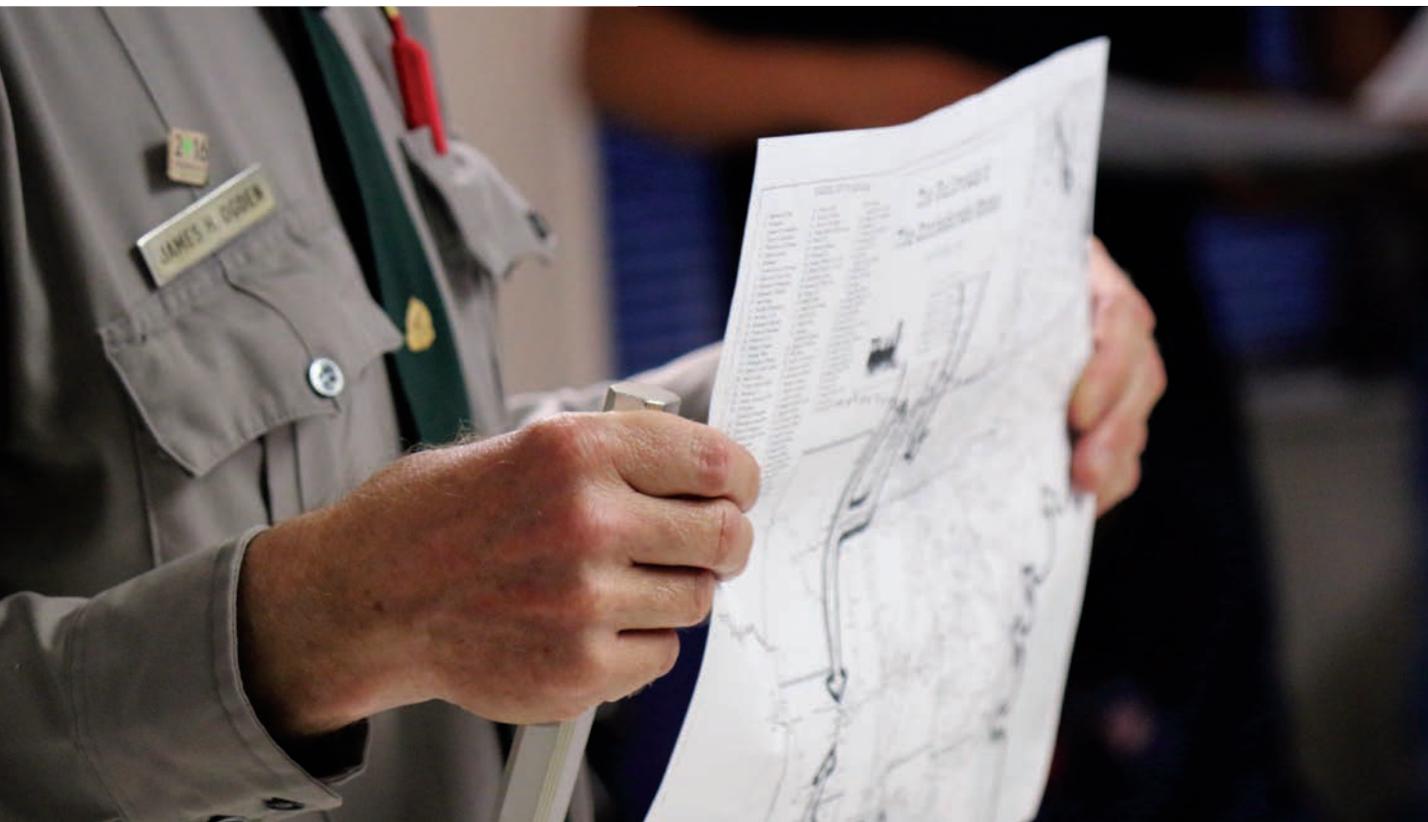
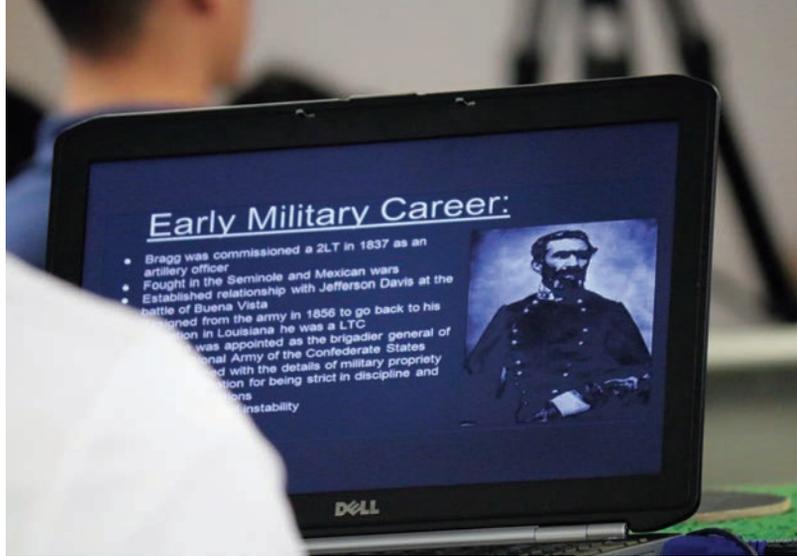
Vision *with* action can  
change the world.

**JOEL A BARKER**

*Scholar and Futurist*









During the trip, I met and connected with so many new people. I loved hearing the different presentations that every school had to prepare so other cadets could get to know some of the major leaders during the battles. I also learned about different strategies that were successful, and some that were not.

### **NAYOBI MUNOZ**

North Side High School

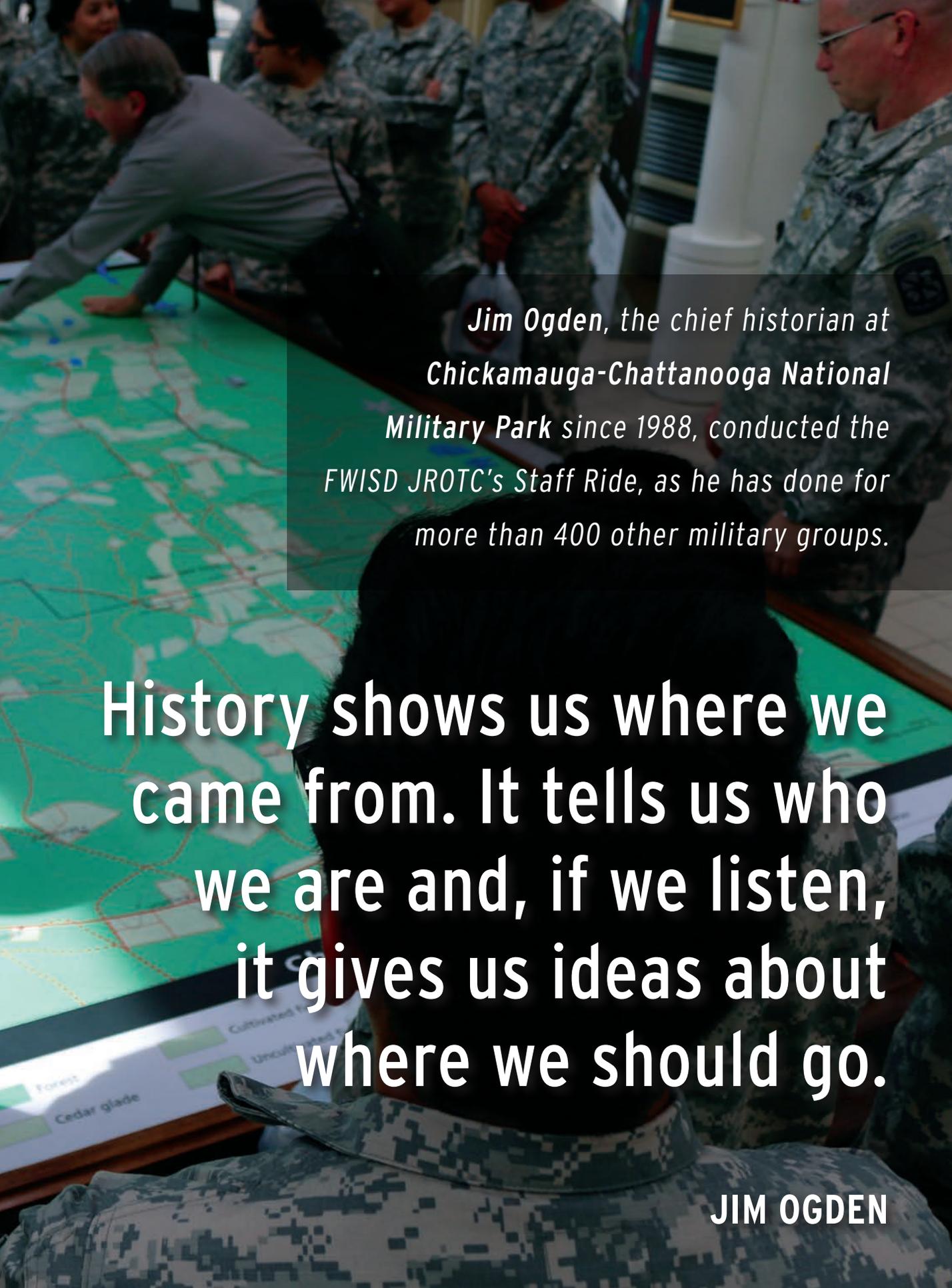
Handling some of the articles of clothing and supplies made me feel like I had gone back in time and gave me a sense of the resources that were and were not available during the war.

### **DAVID RIOS**

O.D. Wyatt High School







*Jim Ogden, the chief historian at Chickamauga-Chattanooga National Military Park since 1988, conducted the FWISD JROTC's Staff Ride, as he has done for more than 400 other military groups.*

**History shows us where we came from. It tells us who we are and, if we listen, it gives us ideas about where we should go.**

**JIM OGDEN**











I am amazed at the effort and dedication volunteers and historians have taken to preserve these national historic battlefields. So many people have given their time to learn the history of these places in order to educate cadets like us, who will be the future generation of this country.

**YESICA SANCHEZ**

North Side High School

Our tour guide was a walking encyclopedia, full of facts and information about virtually everything that happened during these battles.

**NAYOBI MUNOZ**

North Side High School









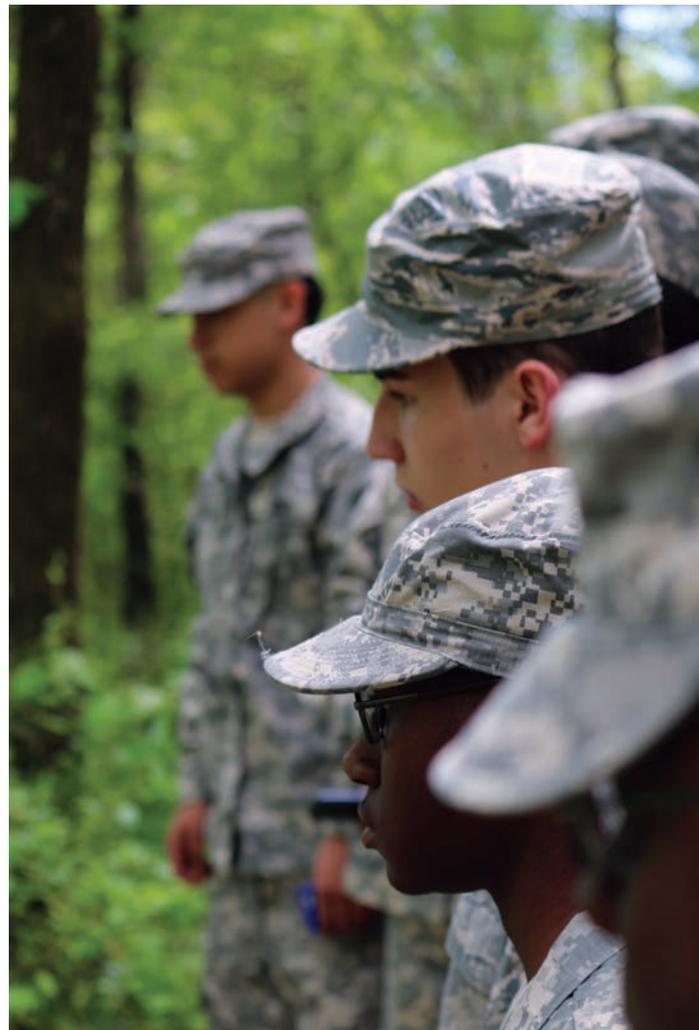
*Students visited the "River of Death" in the swampy Chickamauga Creek where the Battle of Chickamauga began.*





It's important that we continue for future generations the appreciation of our American heritage and history. That is one of the prime goals of Cadet Command. We motivate young people to be better citizens, but citizens must be aware of their past.

**LTC RICHARD CROSSLEY JR. (RET.)**  
Director of FWISD JROTC





Having the ability to go to key points on the battlefield and see the land from the same view as the commanders gave me a better understanding of what really happened at Chickamauga.

**KA MOO**

**Southwest High School**



My school group studied about and gave a presentation on the actions of General George H. Thomas during the Battle of Chickamauga. I thought I knew a lot about him, but visiting the actual sites gave me a whole new level of appreciation for his role in the battle.

**ODILON DELATORRE**

**Southwest High School**

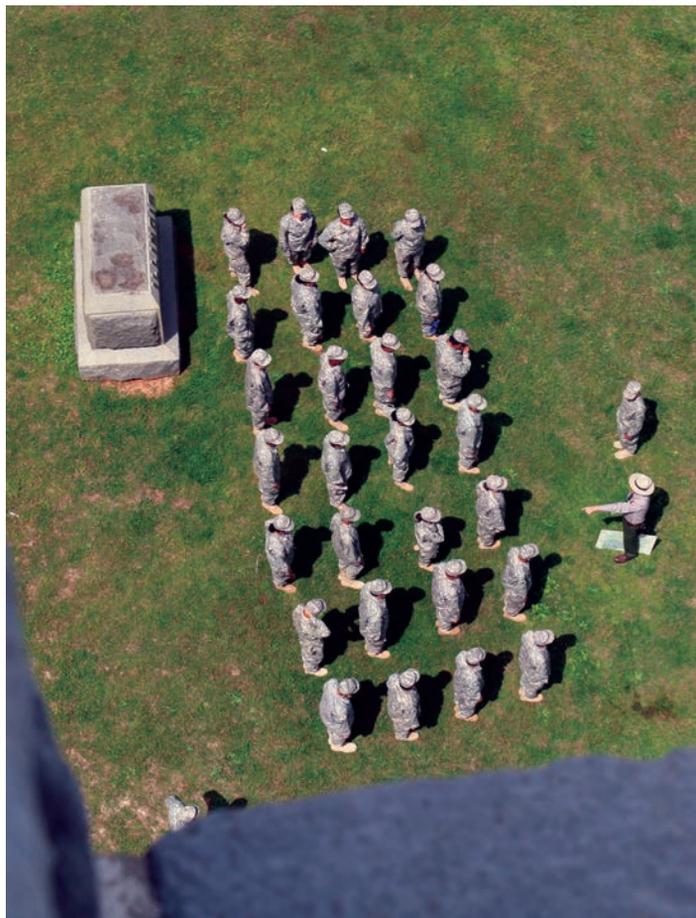
I found the battlefields to be really beautiful. The grass flowed with the wind and the cannons are still placed where the Union and Confederate armies were located during the battle.

**LUIS DIAZ**

**Western Hills High School**











We climbed and walked outrageous heights, saw some outstanding and truly breathtaking sights, and gave our moment of silence for those who gave us their all as we walked amongst their gravestones. As we were walking through the cemetery, I saw an engraving that said “semper fidelis,” and quickly thought back to what brought me there in the first place... this class that was filled with so much enrichment, so much knowledge, and taught with passion. I was honored to be learning the history behind one of our country’s important battles and seeing in person how it all went down. That is something not many get the opportunity to experience.

### **SAHIRA SALAZAR**

**North Side High School**

At the Chattanooga National Cemetery, I enjoyed learning about the Andrews’ Raiders, a group who helped the U.S. stop a train overtaken by robbers.

### **JORDAN NEALY**

**Eastern Hills High School**

At the cemetery, I felt like we stepped back in time to see all these people who had given their life to protect our nation. The tour guide discussed the most important people in this cemetery and described how they went above and beyond their duties with honor on their way to the afterlife.

**LUIS DIAZ**

Western Hills High School





*Students visited the Texas Soldiers Monument, honoring the fallen Texans who participated in the Battle of Chickamauga.*

I am proud to be part of this exciting new course with JROTC, focusing specifically on military history and learning about our involvement from the Civil War to current conflicts like Iraq and Afghanistan. Cadets who excel in military history are afforded the opportunity to travel on trips like this one and see parts of the country they might not ever see.

**NAYOBI MUNOZ**

**North Side High School**







## CONCLUSION

On behalf of the Fort Worth ISD JROTC Department, I want to express my sincere gratitude to our myriad donors and supporters, historian James Ogden for his selfless service, and to the Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park staff for ensuring FWISD JROTC Cadets conducted a remarkable Staff Ride and gained invaluable insights into our unique American history. This walk in the shadow of Civil War history ignited in our cadets a desire to know more about our national parks and imbued within all a greater appreciation of American heritage and history. This Staff Ride validated that history is more than a collection of dates and events contained in a dull textbook. Studying results of the historian's art is of immense value in helping to acquire wisdom. Much can be learned from defeats and mistakes in national history – as much, if not more, as from successes.

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FWISD

JROTC



The best way to  
*predict* the future  
is to **create** it.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

I'm especially grateful to Jim Ogden. He was our resident expert for three days as we conducted a Staff Ride for more than 50 JROTC cadets and instructors. He is an imaginative historian, and he truly provided an exceptional learning experience for both cadets and instructors. His diagrams, terrain boards and myriad artifacts enhanced the learning environment. He is a teacher, willing to share his wealth of knowledge to bring history to life from a historical, social, intellectual, economic, and political perspective. The National Military Park system's first-rate multimedia materials, interactive exhibits and vast historical files allowed our instructors to add depth and complexity to subject matter and spark further interest among students. The program gives our students an expanded awareness of complex issues, from historical military conflicts and civil crises to current international challenges.

The National Park Service's mission of preservation and education not only expands understanding of our past, but also allows our students to become aware of complex issues that will contribute to future challenges. This comprehensive foundation of resources helps our students become well prepared for further education and become better citizens.

I look forward to a continued mutually rewarding partnership with the National Park Service. One of our common goals of helping students become engaged, thoughtful citizens will be accomplished through the inspiring efforts of JROTC instructors supported by National Park Service personnel and its resources.

Again, I want to personally thank all for the exceptional support of Fort Worth ISD JROTC educational efforts both before and during our Chickamauga and Chattanooga Staff Ride of 2015.

**LTC RICHARD CROSSLEY JR. (RET.)**  
Director of FWISD JROTC

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Fort Worth Independent School District (FWISD)

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National Park Service (NPS)

Association of the United States Army (AUSA)  
Audie Murphy Chapter

Tarrant Regional Water District (TRWD)

Veterans National Education Program (VNEP)

North DFW Military Officers  
Association of America (MOAA)

Texas Trail of Fame

Fort Worth East Rotary

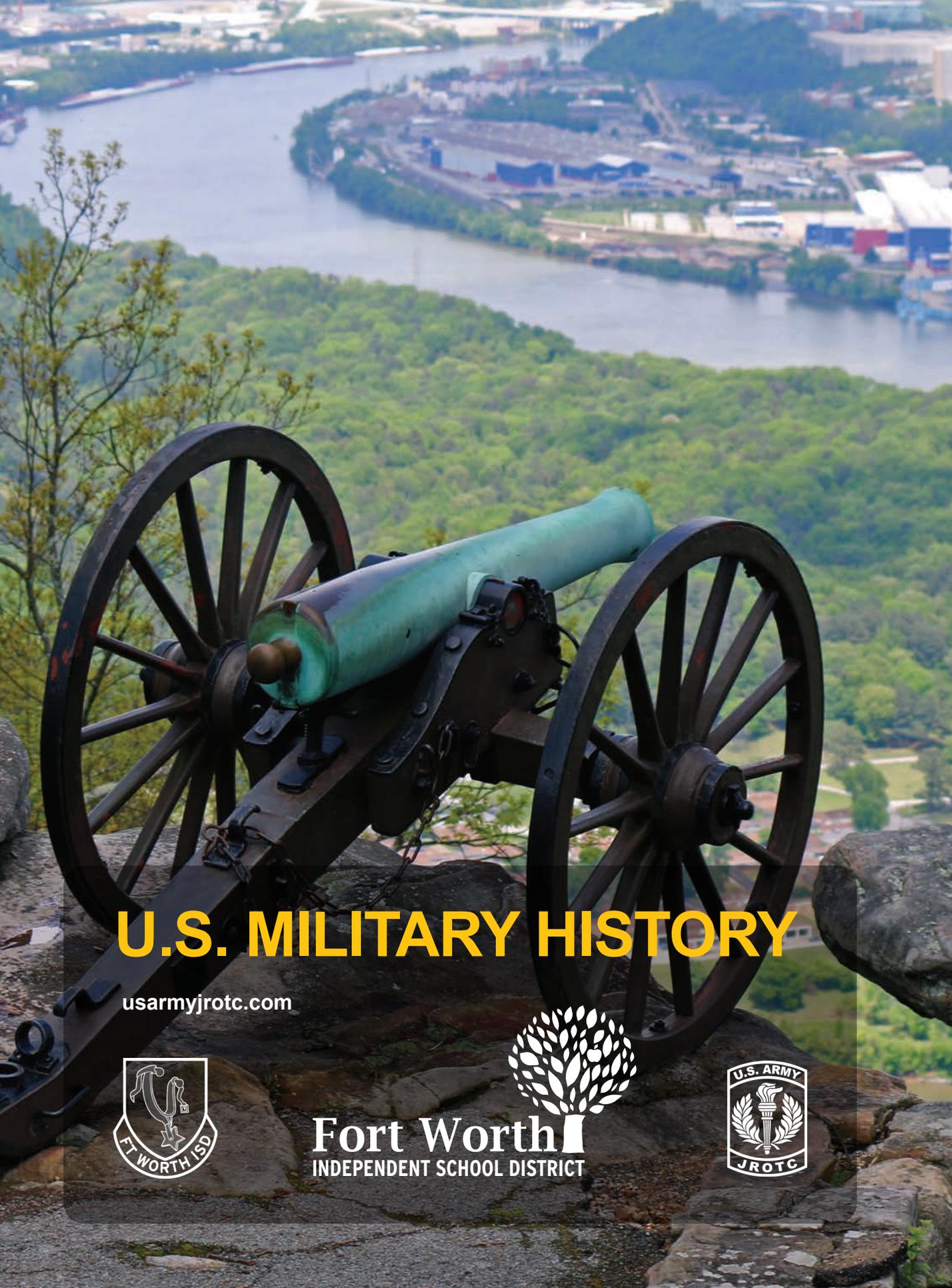
Mulholland Company

Cowtown Charter

Photo on page 9 is courtesy of the  
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**FWISD.ORG/STAFFRIDE**



# U.S. MILITARY HISTORY

[usarmyjrotc.com](http://usarmyjrotc.com)



**Fort Worth**  
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

