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Lake Mexia VFD enhances fleet with converted military vehicle

June 7, 2016 — MEXIA, Texas — A five-ton Bowen-McLaughlin-York military cargo truck was transformed into an emergency response vehicle by Lake Mexia Volunteer Fire Department. They stripped its camouflage paint, outfitted it with a 600-gallon tank, standalone pump and fresh coats of white and pink paints.

Texas A&M Forest Service Regional Fire Coordinator Matthew Schlaefer said, “Lake Mexia’s five-ton is one of six DoD Firefighter Property five-ton trucks that are in Limestone County. They painted their truck pink in honor of breast cancer awareness and it has been used several times already, not only for grass fires but swift water rescues as well. They did an awesome job converting this truck.”

“Our department did all the work to convert this vehicle,” Chief Gene Parrish of the Lake Mexia VFD said. “Our volunteers are ladies and gentlemen and they each put in about 25 to 30 hours painting the truck and adding the [equipment].”

The department’s volunteers, almost 30-percent of whom are female, chose the pink and white paint scheme to show solidarity within their department as well as to support breast cancer awareness.

The truck has improved the department’s capabilities, especially for high and swift water rescues.

“We live on a lake and have had six floods since October. We used it then to rescue residents. This type of vehicle can get into areas where other trucks can’t,” said Parrish.

The DoD Firefighter Property Program, overseen by the USDA Forest Service, provides excess military equipment to fire departments and emergency service providers. Launched in Texas in 2005, this program has released over 400 retired military trucks to VFDs across the state to help them better protect lives and property. Texas A&M Forest Service picks up the vehicle from a military installation, performs necessary repairs and delivers it to the volunteer fire department at no cost to them.

To learn more about this and other fire department assistance programs offered by Texas A&M Forest Service, visit <http://TexasFD.com>.

