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## PRESS RELEASE

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## PROFESSIONAL ARMED FORCES RODEO WORLD FINALS RETURNS TO MIDLAND FOR 4<sup>TH</sup> CONSECUTIVE YEAR Come Support the Troops!

*Midland, Texas (Sept 8, 2014)* — The Professional Armed Forces Rodeo Association (PAFRA) will host their World Finals Rodeo for U.S. military men and women at the Midland County Horseshoe, 2514 Arena Trail, for the fourth year in a row. There will be three performances on Friday, Sept. 19, and Saturday, Sept. 20, followed by a community team roping fund raiser for the armed forces event on Sunday, Sept. 21. Event planners hope to fill the entire Horseshoe Arena with supporters of the men and women who serve this country.

Greg Phillips, retired Master Sergeant from the U.S. Army and president of PAFRA, said there will be a competitor at this year's finals that has recently returned from a combat deployment. Chief Warrant Officer 2 Courtney Stephens, U.S. Army, returned in August from a seven-month deployment to Afghanistan. She will compete in this year's PAFRA World Finals in Midland.

"This year's PAFRA World Final Rodeo contestants include many men and women who have served our country and have earned top rodeo titles," said Phillips. "We hope to have a lot of spectators to see these performances."

U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Eric 'Wild Goose' Walnofer, the 2011 World Champion Bull Rider, served a deployment in Iraq and will compete against Second Lieutenant Tommy Taylor. Taylor is a graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy who works as a space operations officer and is a two-time and reigning World Champion Bull Rider. Spectators will see a competitive barrel race at this year's finals. U.S. Air Force Reservist and reigning World Champion Barrel Racer Abby Ford will defend her title against a talented field of racers, which includes Jessica Beck. Beck was formally in the U.S. Navy and is a 3 time World Champion Barrel Racer.

"Spectators can expect to see active duty, guard, reserve, and honorably-discharged veterans and their dependents compete," said Adam Pollard, PAFRA member from Midland who served in the Marines and is part of the team supporting the World Finals in Midland. "Contestants will be coming from all over the United States."

There are numerous spin-off events: the Friday and Saturday night after-party hosted at The Lone Star Bar; 621 W. Wall St.; the community and contestant fund raising team roping on Sunday, hosted by Pollard; and cowboy church service Sunday morning at the Horseshoe.

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Tammy Dooley, Vice President Marketing & Promotions for the Horseshoe Arena, said that while the rodeo is a wonderful event, spectators are really moved by the patriotic performances, like the Reining Horse Memorial Tributes and the Grand Entry saluting each branch of service with service flags being displayed at full speed on horseback by contestants. This year the rodeo will include Mutton Bustin' for the first time and is always a popular event.

"Midland has been so supportive of this great patriotic event through sponsorships, ticket sales, and military organizations coming together to lend support," said Dooley. "We are thrilled to host the event in Midland at the Horseshoe Arena. This is the fourth year, and final year of PAFRA's commitment to Midland, and we hope to have such a great event that they want to make Midland and the Horseshoe their permanent home for the World Finals."

In past years PAFRA hosted their world finals in a different city each year. In 2011 PAFRA made the move to Midland based on a strong commitment from the Midland County Horseshoe Arena, Midland Convention & Visitors Bureau, and the Sports & Entertainment Association of Midland (SEAM). After the success of that first year, PAFRA signed a three-year commitment with the Midland County Horseshoe and expects this year to be just as successful.

The rodeo is open to the public and tickets can be purchased at the Midland County Horseshoe Arena Box Office or online. It will feature events such as bull riding, barrel racing, bareback riding, saddle bronco riding, tie down roping, breakaway roping, steer wrestling, chute dogging, and team roping. Rodeo performances are at 7 p.m. on Friday, and at 1 p.m. and 7 p.m. on Saturday. Doors open one hour before each performance. Matinee ticket prices are \$9 for adults, \$5 for children. Evening performance ticket prices are \$12 for adults, \$8 for children. VIP sponsor packages are available.

PAFRA is a non-profit, tax-exempt veteran's organization comprised of active duty service men and women, reservists and honorably-discharged veterans. PAFRA's goal is to provide a venue where men and women who share the bond of military service can come together and compete in the sport of rodeo. PAFRA was formed in 2000. Members are allowed to compete at local rodeos in their areas and accumulate points for PAFRA. Currently, they have eight circuits encasing the U.S. and Europe. The PAFRA World Finals Rodeo is the association's final event where members travel from all over the world to compete. All PAFRA donations and sponsorships are tax-deductible.

The Midland Convention & Visitors Bureau will be giving attendees of this rodeo a warm West Texas welcome and providing complimentary services they qualify for through hotel room nights booked.

For more information, visit [www.pafra2000.com](http://www.pafra2000.com). For sponsorship or ticket information contact Tammy Dooley at the Horseshoe Arena at 432-682-1300 or (254) 897-9533.

#### **About the Midland Convention and Visitors Bureau**

The mission of the Midland Convention & Visitors Bureau is to encourage economic growth by developing, promoting, enhancing and supporting Midland as a vibrant visitor destination.

For more information on the Midland Convention & Visitors Bureau or to request a free Midland Experience Guide and Map, call (800) 624-6435 or visit [www.visitmidlandtexas.com/Guides-and-Brochures](http://www.visitmidlandtexas.com/Guides-and-Brochures).

The above information has been provided by PAFRA and distributed by the Midland Convention & Visitors Bureau. This event is projected to bring in \$1,350,000 in direct visitor spending to the Midland economy.

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