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## **PRESS RELEASE- *For Immediate Release***

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## **PROFESSIONAL ARMED FORCES RODEO WORLD FINALS IN MIDLAND TO SUPPORT VETERANS AFFECTED BY RECENT TRAGEDY**

*Midland, Texas (Nov. 19, 2012)* — 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, in Midland on November 24 and 25. PAFRA will donate 20 percent of all ticket sales to the families involved in the recent Hunt for Heroes tragedy. Additionally, during each performance, PAFRA cowboys and cowgirls will participate in a special Military Rodeo Tribute, which will include a memorial performance by the Lone Star Cowgirls Drill Team, a Free-Style Reining Horse Tribute, along with a moment of silence and community prayers.

Tammy Dooley, Vice President of Marketing and Promotions for Dooley Management Company, said the men and women of PAFRA would like to extend their thoughts and prayers to the families and friends affected by the recent tragedy in the World Finals' home community of Midland, Texas. As fellow veterans, they mourn the loss of these wonderful people and pray for a speedy recovery for those injured. They offer the Finals' venue to the community to come together and heal.

"The PAFRA World Finals is such a moving patriotic event and now it will take on even more significance," said Dooley. "These cowboys and cowgirls are veterans themselves. How they reacted to the recent news was heartwarming, with an outpouring of concern to give back to their fellow veterans."

"A donation collection area will be made available inside the Horseshoe Arena, and a tribute banner will be displayed for everyone to sign. Now more than ever, PAFRA's motto 'Courage is being scared to death, and saddling up anyway' by John Wayne seems applicable," said Dooley. "With heavy hearts, we move forward and offer an event where the community can come together, cheer on their favorite branch of service, and pay tribute to those affected by these recent events."

United States Air Force Technical Sergeant RJ Eppers is the president of PAFRA and competes in bull riding, bareback riding and chute dogging.

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“At times like these, we ‘Soldier Up’,” said Eppers. “We identify the situation, we respond as we were trained, and we hold our fellow soldiers up in any way we can. It will mean so much more for all of us to compete this year in honor of the soldiers who suffered in this tragedy.”

PAFRA is a non-profit, tax-exempt veteran’s organization comprised of active duty servicemen 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 strives to provide a worthy morale and welfare outlet for their members. It operates on the money generated by membership sales, sponsorships and donations.

United States Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Val Baker recently returned from an eight-month deployment and is the vice president of PAFRA. She competes in tie-down, team roping, breakaway and barrel racing.

“This is the second year to host our finals at the Horseshoe Arena and we expect to see over 70 active duty, guard, reserve, and honorably discharged veterans and their dependents from all over the U.S. compete,” said Baker. “This year we are working with the West Texas VA Health Care System (WTVAHCS), VFW, and Hospice of Midland’s ‘We Honor Veterans’ program, along with Soldiers of Today and Yesterday. We continue to want to make Midland our home because of Midland’s patriotic spirit.”

The rodeo is open to the public and tickets can be purchased at the Midland County Horseshoe. 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. Cowboy Church will be inside the Main Arena on Sunday at 11 a.m. and everyone is invited.

PAFRA is seeking sponsorship to help with prize money for the rodeo competitors. Please contact Tammy Dooley at (254) 897-9533 or Katie Sangl with Midland Convention & Visitors Bureau at (432) 686-3568 to donate to the cause.

For more information, visit [www.pafra2000.com](http://www.pafra2000.com) or call the Midland County Horseshoe at (432) 682-1300.

*The above information has been provided by the Professional Armed Forces Rodeo Association and distributed by the Midland Convention & Visitors Bureau. This event is projected to bring in \$138,000 in direct visitor spending to the Midland economy.*

*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.*

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