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U.S. ARMY MANEUVER SUPPORT CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FT. LEONARD WOOD, MISSOURI



Media Release

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE
FORT LEONARD WOOD, MISSOURI 65473
VOICE: 573-563-4145
FAX: 573-563-4012
BY: Jeff Maddy
EMAIL: jeff.maddy@us.army.mil

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Troops can call in holiday greetings for satellite radio

Story by Army News Service

FORT MEADE, Md. - The Joint Hometown News Service is partnering this year with SiriusXM Radio to allow service members worldwide to send holiday greetings to loved ones back home.

Military members anywhere can call a toll-free number, 888-776-2790, to record a holiday message for airing on the satellite radio network.

For 30 years, holiday greetings have been collected by Joint Hometown News Service teams that travel overseas and bring messages back to air on stateside radio and television stations.

While this year's team has already returned home, it's not too late for service members to participate by calling the toll-free number or DSN 312-733-4660, said the program's director.

"Even in the world today with social media and service members able to Skype from anywhere, there's still something special about turning on the radio and hearing a family member who cannot be home for the holidays," said Rick Blackburn, director of the Joint Hometown News Service.

"This is a great opportunity for our folks and is a reminder to the American public that our men and women serve around the world, 24 hours a day, seven days a week," he said.

Soldiers can call SiriusXM around the clock and leave a 15-second greeting. They will be prompted by a recorded message to provide their name, rank, duty location, hometown and then a short greeting to friends or family.

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"Our goal is to get as many military members on the air for the holidays as possible," Blackburn said.

So far this year, 2,658 holiday greetings have been collected. A Joint Hometown News Service team traveled to Alaska, Japan, Korea and Guam. Additional greetings were also collected from troops in Afghanistan and Europe by American Forces Network broadcasters.

With Department of Defense budget cuts, teams are not able to travel as much, and the Joint Hometown News Service appreciates others pitching in to help with holiday greetings, said Amy "Natasha" Schleper, JHNS broadcast chief.

"With other outlets willing to pitch in and shoot for us, we're able to really get a good number of holiday greetings, as well as a better mix of locations," Schleper said.

"It's a lot of extra work for them," she said. "We hope they know the families at home appreciate their efforts."

Every video greeting is turned into a radio greeting as well, Schleper said.

SiriusMX Radio is "another avenue we are using" to collect and distribute important holiday greetings, Blackburn said.

Sirius XM has more than 25 million subscribers on two services operating in the United States, Sirius Satellite Radio and XM Satellite Radio. The holiday greetings will be aired on SiriusXM's "Holiday Traditions" channel, now through Jan. 1.

Link to this story:

http://www.army.mil/article/115335/Troops_can_call_in_holiday_greetings_via_satellite_radio_partnership/

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About Fort Leonard Wood

Fort Leonard Wood is a thriving and prosperous installation that has evolved from a small basic training post 70 years ago to a premier Army Center of Excellence that trains 80-90,000 military and civilians each year.

Home to the Maneuver Support Center of Excellence, Fort Leonard Wood now trains and educates service members and develops doctrine and capabilities for the Training and Doctrine Command's U.S. Army Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear School, U.S. Army Engineer School, and U.S. Army Military Police School, three gender integrated Initial Military Training brigades, one of only five reception stations in the Army, and the Army's largest Non Commissioned Officers Academy.

Over the past several years, Fort Leonard Wood has received numerous additional responsibilities to include supporting the 4th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, a large Forces Command unit that is responsible for all deployable capabilities at Fort Leonard Wood. A colonel-commanded Marine Corps Detachment and an Air Force Detachment,

which are both the largest on any Army installation, are located on Fort Leonard Wood; a large Navy Seabee Detachment and elements of the Coast Guard train here as well.

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