

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Highest Ranking Army Enlisted Soldier Honors North Texas And DFW International Airport For Daily Assistance To U.S. Military's Rest And Recuperation (R&R) Program

Airport and North Texas Commission debut new PSA campaign recruiting volunteers to greet troops: "Welcome Home a Hero Today"

(DFW INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT – February 22, 2006) – The Sergeant Major of the Army and community greeters welcomed home 195 soldiers, returning to DFW International Airport to start their two-week R&R today. DFW and the North Texas Commission debuted the first ever media campaign aimed at recruiting new community volunteers and organizations for the "Welcome Home" program. Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth O. Preston made his own recruitment pitch to North Texas as he honored DFW, the North Texas Commission and DFW USO for service to the U.S. military.

"There is nothing more important to the American Soldier than the support of the American people," said Preston. "It is a part of the Soldiers Creed we live by that we serve the People of the United States and live the Army values. The support provided by the members of the DFW team makes a world of difference to our returning patriots."

Preston's visit served as the kickoff for the Airport's new multi-media public service campaign to attract new organizations, civic groups and businesses to greet the daily arrival of troops at DFW. Working with the theme "Welcome Home a Hero Today," DFW and the North Texas Commission launched a bilingual campaign that will include PSAs on North Texas radio and TV stations, information boards in DFW's baggage claim areas and brochures to be distributed throughout the community. The campaign also debuted a simple email address for volunteer groups and organizations to use for easy contact: heroes@dfwairport.com.

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"Having the Sergeant Major of the Army at DFW is a great honor and we all appreciate his recognition and support," said Jim Crites, executive vice president of operations at DFW, who brought the Airport together with the community in the other stages of the program. "Now, we are asking the community to renew its commitment to this incredible volunteer effort. We need businesses, churches, chambers and other civic organizations to sign up to greet our troops. I have had the pleasure to greet more than 20 flights myself and can never get enough of the North Texas spirit shown by our community. Boy Scouts, veteran groups, social clubs and businesses are all welcome. Send an e-mail to heroes@dfwairport.com and we'll be delighted to find a slot that will work with your group's schedule. You will literally be making the day - indeed the year- of the soldiers you greet."

DFW is one of only two airports in the United States with daily R&R flights; it shares the duty with Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International. More than 100,000 soldiers have been greeted by more than a 100 different North Texas organizations since the program began in June 2004, making it one of the largest ongoing community service projects in the history of the region. The North Texas Commission coordinates the scheduling of the groups, which commit to a one-week stint to greet the troops as they arrive from the war zones of Afghanistan and Iraq. The daily welcome may feature anything from a kilted Boy Scout playing bag pipes to a Veterans of Foreign Wars group providing enthusiastic support. North Texas corporations and volunteer groups have also made the program part of their overall community service effort.

"North Texans will support our troops and be gracious hosts as these fine men and women travel through our region on their way home for a well deserved rest," said Dan S. Petty, President and CEO of the North Texas Commission. "With 125,000 troops expected to pass through DFW this year, I know in my heart that we will rally around our men and women in uniform and show them how much we care."

The "Welcome Home" program was honored with the George Washington Honor Medal by the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge in November of last year, one of the most prestigious community service awards in the country. But it is the heartfelt thanks and appreciation that men and women in uniform write back to DFW, the USO and the North Texas Commission that demonstrates the impact of the program.

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"I just returned from a glorious two-week leave in the great state of Texas. I expected to arrive and wander to my connecting flight to Houston and get home without any real memory of DFW. Instead, I was blown away by the whole experience," e-mailed Daniel Phillips of the 111th Area Support Group Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan. "At the reception at the gate it was all I could do to choke back the tears. Thank you so much for the completely unexpected and wonderful welcome. I really don't know how I can ever express the gratitude I feel for the homecoming you gave us. It makes me prouder than ever to be a Texan, to be an American and to be a soldier. God bless you all."

Many times, returning service men and women are seeing their newborn baby for the first time or seeing family and friends for the first time in many months, and volunteers give top priority to making sure soldiers and families are reunited as quickly as possible.

"We're very proud to have the opportunity to show each one of these soldiers how much we support and appreciate them," said Petty. "I can't imagine what it would be like coming home from a long deployment and not be welcomed by the community. It would be heartbreaking to see a couple embrace for the first time in months and not hear the cheers and applause. How awful would it be if soldiers came back to the states and headed off to connecting flights on their way home with no one to say thank you or offer them assistance. These fine soldiers deserve to be cheered, hugged, and handed cell phones so that they can call home wherever it is, and say, 'I'm home, y'all!'"

DFW has made a major financial commitment in support of the R&R program and other organizations assisting military personnel, waiving more than \$1.2 million in landing fees, construction costs and office space to host the R&R flights and open the USO.

"We're extremely grateful for the opportunity to show our soldiers just how much we appreciate their brave efforts," said Jeff Fegan, CEO of DFW International Airport. "The Sergeant Major of the Army's recognition for our community and our volunteers is truly special, and it will encourage and inspire us to provide an even higher level of service for our troops in the coming year."

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To volunteer your business or organization to greet flights at DFW, please contact the North Texas Commission at (972) 621-0400 or email heroes@dfwairport.com. More information on the "Welcome Home" program is also available on DFW's Web site: www.dfwairport.com/heroes.

About DFW International Airport

Located halfway between the cities of Dallas and Fort Worth, Texas, DFW International Airport is the world's third busiest, offering nearly 1,900 flights per day and serving 59 million passengers a year. DFW International Airport provides non-stop service to 129 domestic and 36 international destinations worldwide. For the latest news, real-time flight information, parking availability or further details regarding the many services provided at DFW International Airport, log on to www.dfwairport.com.

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