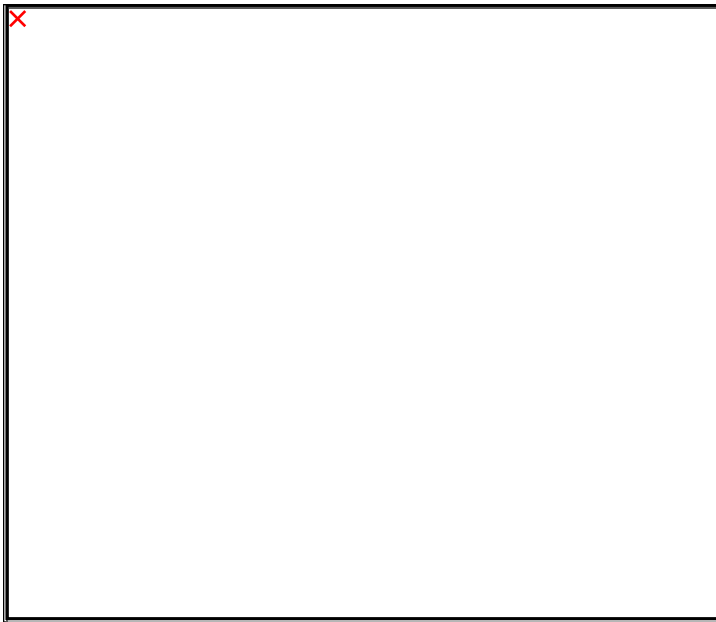


"From the Army's Home Front:" Caring exemplifies the spirit of the holiday season

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Editor's Note: Lt. Gen. Michael Ferriter assumed command of the U.S. Army Installation Management Command at Joint Base San Antonio Nov. 17. He is also Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management. IMCOM is the Army's home. Its mission is to provide Soldiers, Civilians and their Families with a quality of life commensurate with the quality of their service.



Gate guard Jimmy McCoy and then - Maj. Gen. Michael Ferriter, when he was commanding general of the Maneuver Center of Excellence at Fort Benning, Ga. in 2010.

One of the world's greatest leaders was a gate guard who worked at the main gate of Fort Benning, Ga. What made Mr. McCoy so great was that he knew his job was more than checking ID cards. With his awesome attitude, he conveyed to every person passing through his lane that he cared.

Somehow he succeeded in making a difference just through his genuine message of "Welcome Home!" I've talked with many people who had contact with him—Soldiers, parents visiting their Soldiers, Civilians going to work, and visiting retirees who were stationed at Fort Benning years ago, and all agreed. He made a difference.

We've all seen this type of inspired leadership on every installation. Showing that we care exemplifies the very spirit of the holiday season.

The great thing about being part of the Army Family is that caring goes beyond the holiday season. It is day in, day out, year-round.

Margie and I and our four kids have lived and grown as a Family on Army installations around the world. In addition to Mr. McCoy, we've met many whose sense of service far exceeded their job description—really dedicated people at a housing office, Youth Sports coaches, and Child Development Services, to name just a few. My family's experience is not unique. Every Soldier and Family member can point to service providers on our garrisons who go out of their way to help.

The same sense of caring is why so many Soldiers, Family members, Civilians and retirees volunteer their time and talents across the installation. Our volunteers welcome newcomers. They teach classes, mentor children and teens, and run play groups for young mothers and toddlers. They plan outings for Wounded Warriors, build houses for disabled veterans, support Survivors, help prepare Families for deployment and throw welcome home parties.

Caring and selfless service is ingrained in our Army culture, and we are much stronger because of it.

Army Strong!

To everyone who has extended a helping hand this past year, whether in a professional capacity or as a volunteer, thank you. Thank you for choosing to go the extra mile to make a difference for Soldiers, Civilians and Families.

Let's all enjoy what the season offers, wherever we are, and enjoy time with friends and loved ones. As we celebrate, let's remember those who are deployed and extend extra support to their Families at home.

Let's also be mindful of those around us who may find this time of year more difficult. For those who need assistance, our installations provide a number of Soldier and Family support services. If you are unsure where to go, start with Army Community Service or the chaplain's office.

From my Family to you and yours, we wish you a safe and happy holidays and a blessed new year.