Press Release

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Fort Drum Public Affairs

Fort Drum delivers holiday support to local organizations

FORT DRUM, N.Y. (Dec. 16, 2020) -- It’s hard to think about the holidays without being reminded of the great efforts throughout the North Country to support the troops, both home and abroad.

Building on that tradition of giving and community spirit, Fort Drum wanted to give back to area health care workers – those serving on the front lines in the fight against COVID-19 – as well as others in need, with a special delivery on Dec. 15.

Soldiers from the 10th Mountain Division (LI) chapter of the Sgt. Audie Murphy Club loaded up a van full apple strudel, scalloped potatoes, frozen and canned fruit and baking supplies to present to the staff at United Helpers in Ogdensburg.

They also made a trip to the Salvation Army in Watertown with more provisions – German sausage, beef roulade, sauerkraut and cookies – all the fixings for a perfect comfort meal.

“This was an unexpected and welcome surprise,” said Maj. Karen Smullen, corps officer for the Watertown Salvation Army.

Smullen said that they serve lunches from the soup kitchen every day except Sunday, but because of the pandemic, the meals are provided in to-go containers to replace dine-in services.

“We can provide 150 to 200 meals a day, and this is really going to help us out a lot,” she said. “This is a specialty we’ve never served before, so I think it’s a quality meal that our guests are really going to enjoy.”

First Sgt. Raymond Huff said that they were glad to be help with the food delivery because of what it meant to everyone involved.

“As members of the Sgt. Audie Murphy Club, we are always looking for ways to support the community, and contribute something positive,” he said. “Doing something like this makes me proud of our organization, our Army and Fort Drum.”

Fort Drum officials said that the food was originally purchased for a scaled-down, socially distanced Fall Celebration as a long-overdue opportunity to welcome community partners onto the installation. As the event date approached, COVID-19 spread rates in the area became a concern, and the event was cancelled.

“This food was bought to support an event to thank the community, and although I don’t think any of us could have anticipated that it would ultimately be enjoyed by front line health care workers, I can’t imagine any other scenario where it meets its mission more successfully,” said Brig. Gen. Brett Funck, 10th Mountain Division (LI) and Fort Drum acting senior commander.

Fort Drum Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation has the authority to donate excess food that cannot be timely consumed to non-profit organizations, although this authority is very rarely used since FMWR events are well planned for, advertised and attended.

Additionally, members of the 10th Mountain Division Band visited the United Helpers senior living facility on Dec. 16 to play holiday tunes for the staff from the parking lot during a shift change.

“Our health care workers who are battling COVID on the front lines are inherently isolated,” Funck said. “With the food donation and the music, it’s our hope that it reminds them they are not alone and we appreciate the strength it takes to keep fighting.”

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Media with inquiries regarding this press release should contact Fort Drum Public Affairs, Julie Halpin, julie.a.halpin2.civ@mail.mil, 315-772-8286.

Photo Captions:

Caption #1, Holiday Delivery 3: First Sgt. Raymond Huff and Sgt. 1st Class Eric Guzman, both members of the Fort Drum Sgt. Audie Murphy Club, deliver provisions for a hearty meal to the Watertown Salvation Army on Dec. 15. The Soldiers made another food delivery to support health care workers at United Helpers in Ogdensburg. (Photo by Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs)

Caption #2, Holiday Delivery 5: Soldiers from the 10th Mountain Division (LI) chapter of the Sgt. Audie Murphy Club unload a van full of food for the staff at United Helpers in Ogdensburg on Dec. 15, in a show of support and community spirit for those on the front line in the fight against COVID-19. (Photo by Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs)

Caption #3, 10th Mtn Band at United Helpers: Soldiers from the 10th Mountain Division (LI) band play festive holiday tunes for staff at United Helpers in Ogdensburg on Dec. 16, in the parking lot during a shift change. (Photo by Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs)