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**COALITION TO SALUTE AMERICA'S HEROES TO PROVIDE MORE THAN \$35,000 IN CHRISTMAS GIFT CHECKS
AT FORT RILEY DURING DINNER FOR WOUNDED SOLDIERS AND VETERANS**

Backpacks from Coalition sponsor T-Mobile also to be distributed

WILTON, CT – December 16, 2011 – Looking to brighten the holidays for those severely wounded in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes (CSAH) will be hosting a dinner at Kansas' Fort Riley on Sunday, December 18, for nearly 75 soldiers and Army veterans who will each be presented with a \$500 Christmas gift check.

The event, which is being conducted in partnership with the Army Wounded Warrior (AW2) Program, will take place at 4 p.m. at the Soldier Family Assistance Center (SFAC) where the injured guests of honor will be joined by their family members, as well as leadership from Fort Riley's Warrior Transition Battalion (WTB), AW2 Advocates from the local area and the SFAC Director.

Michael Meyer, the CSAH's vice president of programs, will pass out the Christmas gift checks along with backpacks provided by T-Mobile, a corporate sponsor of the Coalition. The checks, which are among hundreds of identical value being issued nationwide by the CSAH this week, reflect contributions made by the organization's many donors to ensure severely disabled service members from Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom can enjoy the holidays and, in particular, buy presents for their children.

"On behalf of the CSAH, it is a privilege for me during the holiday season to provide these brave men and women with a sign of our donors' gratitude for their willingness to defend our nation's freedom at their own peril," says Meyer. "Given how memorable Christmas is for children, we think it's especially important that no service members' sons or daughters be denied a gift from Santa just because their parents may not be able to afford one."

Recipients of the gift checks across the country have been identified based on criteria that the CSAH has used for awarding financial assistance since the non-profit was formed in 2004. Service members must not only have sustained an injury in either the Afghanistan or Iraq wars, but also have at least a 30-percent disability rating as assigned by either the Department of Defense or Department of Veterans Affairs.

Funds for the Christmas gift checks were raised through an annual appeal the CSAH calls its "Secret Santa Program." In addition to Fort Riley, the checks are being handed out at a number of other military facilities, including Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, TX and the Balboa Naval Medical Center in San Diego, CA.

"We are delighted that the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes has designated Fort Riley as a location for distributing these checks and backpacks to our WTB Soldiers and local AW2 Veterans," says Patti Walker, one of the



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Army Wounded Warrior Program advocates located on Fort Riley. “We expect these items, and the dinner the Coalition is hosting, will certainly help make the holiday season more joyous for those who have sacrificed so much.”

For more information on this holiday check distribution program or the CSAH, contact the organization’s media representative, Chip Warren, at (203) 645-4529 or cwarren@saluteheroes.org, or visit the Coalition’s website at www.saluteheroes.org

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About the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes

The Coalition to Salute America’s Heroes is a leading non-profit organization dedicated to helping severely wounded troops from Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. The mission of the organization is to enable these servicemen and women to transition from the battlefield to the home front and to provide them and their families with the assistance needed to get their lives back on track.

Since it was founded in 2004, the CSAH has partnered with corporate sponsors, individual contributors and volunteers to contribute millions of dollars in aid and support services in more than 24,000 cases. Among the organization’s other initiatives is its all-expenses-paid Road to Recovery Conference & Tribute, at which those disabled during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as their families, can attend seminars and job fairs, receive career counseling and evaluations, and hear inspirational success stories.

For more information on how the CSAH can help you or to learn how you can help, please visit the organization’s website at www.saluteheroes.org.