



MEDIA RELEASE

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Children of Tennessee National Guard members benefit from Toy Drop

SMYRNA, TN – Children of Tennessee Army National Guard members received gifts on December 7, 2013, at the Christmas Toy Drop conducted on the Guard’s Volunteer Training Site in Smyrna.

“Dollar Tree customers show their generosity by purchasing a toy or a care item for our military members. The customers then place their gift in a collection box located within the store. Operation Homefront is responsible for distributing the toys throughout military installations,” said Tennessee National Guard Family Assistance Specialist Dorothy Russell.

Russell partnered with six Rutherford County Dollar Tree stores and received approximately 12,000 toys from local customers. The Toy Drop continues an annual tradition between Dollar Tree and Operation Homefront that collects toys for the nation’s service members throughout 4,500 stores.

“I’ve been deployed twice in the last five years, so it has been a strain on the family,” said Master Sgt. Robert Bowen, “but the family is what keeps us strong. I appreciate your donations.”

Since September 11, 2001, the holidays can be a difficult time for military families with deployed loved ones. Master Sgt. Bowen, acting first sergeant for the 230th Special Troops Battalion, knows firsthand the hardships of deployments on families. The vital support by Dollar Tree and Operation Homefront provides families with military members a lessened level of stress and greater sense of hope during the Holiday season.

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

Photo 1: Children of Tennessee Army National Guard members pick out Christmas toys at the Toy Drop. The toys were collected by six local Dollar Trees in Rutherford County and distributed at the Volunteer Training Site in Smyrna, Tenn., December 7, 2013. (US Army Photo by: Staff Sgt. Shannon R. Gregory, 118th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment of the Tennessee Army National Guard.)

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Photo 2: Sgt. Brittany George (Right) of the 230th Special Troops Battalion shows her daughter, Christmas toys that were donated by local Rutherford County Dollar Tree customers. (US Army Photo by: Staff Sgt. Shannon R. Gregory, 118th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment of the Tennessee Army National Guard.)

Photo 3: Master Sgt. Robert Bowen, acting first sergeant of the Special Troops Battalion of the 230th Sustainment Brigade with the Tennessee Army National Guard, speaks with Dorothy Russell, the family assistance specialist, while looking for toys for his daughter. The toys were collected by six local Dollar Trees in Rutherford County and distributed at Volunteer Training Site in Smyrna, Tenn., December 7, 2013. (US Army Photo by: Staff Sgt. Shannon R. Gregory, 118th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment of the Tennessee Army National Guard.)

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