



150
Years of Service
1861-2011

OPERATION
LIGHTEN THE
LOAD ★★★★★

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Armed Services YMCA Launches Campaign to Help 'Lighten the Load' for U.S. Service Members and Families

Social media campaign encourages troops and military families to share their stories to raise understanding and appreciation of military life

Alexandria, Va. – The Armed Services YMCA (ASYMCA) today launched “Operation: Lighten the Load,” a campaign designed to raise awareness, understanding and appreciation of the heavy burden of military life for service members and their families alike, and what others can do to make life easier for those who are dedicated to serving our nation.

The campaign hub is www.operationlightentheLoad.org, where service members and military families are encouraged to upload videos of their “military life” stories and how the programs and services of the Armed Services YMCA help make their lives easier. They are stories of hope, strength and sacrifice that show just how great their commitment is to our country – and just how much they deserve the support of the neighbors, communities and organizations like the Armed Services YMCA. Volunteers and supporters are also encouraged to share videos of why they’ve made a commitment to help “Lighten the Load.”

Selected stories will be chosen to appear in a public service announcement for the Armed Services YMCA, airing Dec. 30, 2011, during the [Bell Helicopter Armed Forces Bowl](#) on ESPN. The stories will also appear on the jumbotron inside Ford Stadium in Dallas, Texas during the game.

Soldiers, military families, volunteers and civilians will also be encouraged to share their stories or show their gratitude and support via Facebook and Twitter, using the hashtag #asymca.

“For families of deployed military personnel, support programs and services help make life easier as they try to cope and continue marching forward in the absence of their loved one,” said Armed Services YMCA National Director and CEO CAPTAIN Mike Landers, USN (Ret). “For our troops – both at home and away – helping care for them and their families lifts the weight of worry from their shoulders, so they can feel confident that their loved ones are in good hands while they focus on the mission at hand.”

“We are excited to be launching this campaign – the first of its kind for the Armed Services YMCA,” said Deputy National Director and COO Brigadier General Tom Landwermeyer, USA (Ret). “This is a new and engaging way to raise support and awareness for America’s service members and their families, and show support for the Armed Services YMCA as we help make their military lives easier.”

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ABOUT ASYMCA: Celebrating 150 Years of Service to America’s Military

The YMCA’s dedication to America’s armed forces began in 1861 when a handful of members voluntarily provided relief services to Civil War soldiers. Today, the Armed Services YMCA (ASYMCA) is the leading private provider of educational, recreational, social and support services to

military personnel and their families, promoting youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.

The Armed Services YMCA, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, recently earned a four-star rating from Charity Navigator for the sixth consecutive year and is a top-rated charity according to the American Institute of Philanthropy. An affiliate of the YMCA of the USA, ASYMCA is headquartered in Alexandria, Va. For more information, visit www.asymca.org.