

US ARMY'S FREEDOM TEAM SALUTE PROGRAM

This program was initiated by the Army in May of 2005. It is primarily an outreach program to honor and recognize all Army veterans (Active Army, Guard, or Reserve) for their service, be it for 6 months, two years, or as a retired Army soldier. Our WW II veterans that served in the Army Air Corps are also eligible to receive this commendation. The program also recognizes those that support the Army soldier. For example, a soldier currently in the Army, Guard, or Reserve is not eligible for a Freedom Team Salute (FTS) commendation because he or she is not yet a veteran. However, that soldier, and that soldier alone can nominate his spouse, parents and if in the Guard or Reserve, his employer, to receive a FTS commendation. .

A FTS commendation includes the following:

1. A very nice Certificate of Appreciation addressed to the person by name and signed by the Chief of Staff of the US Army, General George Casey, Jr. and the Secretary of the Army, Pete Geren.
2. A letter of thanks addressed to the person by name and address and also signed by the two Army officials.
3. A lapel pin with the Army logo.
4. Two US Army decals.

In addition, in 2008 the program was expanded to include a category called Army "Supporter". Anyone who supports the Army in a variety of ways but does not qualify under one of the other categories can be recognized under this category. For example, it could be the wife of an Army veteran or a deceased Army veteran. It could be a civic group that raises funds to purchase care packages for soldiers deployed overseas. This category requires a sentence or two describing why this person or group should be recognized.

To date over 1.5 million veterans have been recognized under the Army's FTS program. The Army is the only service that has a program of this nature. Since it is funded by the Army it is a program only for Army veterans or those that support our soldiers.

Jim Rudy, a retired US army lieutenant colonel, is one of approximately 600 volunteers across the country that assist to spread the word about this great program. It is free and does not cost the recipient or the nominating person anything. The names and addresses are not shared with any other organization and are kept internal to the Army's FTS program office in Alexandria, VA.

To receive a FTS commendation package provide your name, address, and former Army rank to Jim at his email address at jimrudy@bellsouth.net. Do not use a PO Box in your address as the package is too large to fit into the typical PO Box. If you do not have a computer you may send the information to his home at James J. Rudy, 712 Tall Oak Trail, Seneca, SC 29678.

Remember, that if someone is being nominated under the "Supporter" category, please provide a sentence or two describing why this person or group should be recognized for a FTS commendation..