



## State of Wyoming Military Department Office of the Adjutant General

5500 Bishop Boulevard  
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82009-3320  
<http://www.wy.ngb.army.mil>

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#### Media contacts:

Deidre Forster 307-772-5253; cell 307-631-4153; email [deidre.forster@us.army.mil](mailto:deidre.forster@us.army.mil).  
Lt. Col. Samuel House 307-772-5935; cell 307-275-6414; email [Samuel.house@us.army.mil](mailto:Samuel.house@us.army.mil).  
Master Sgt. Trudy Woodcock 307-772-5229; email [trudy.woodcock@us.army.mil](mailto:trudy.woodcock@us.army.mil).  
1st Lt. Christian Venhuizen 307- 772-5040; email [christian.venhuizen@us.army.mil](mailto:christian.venhuizen@us.army.mil).

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## Cheyenne gathers to celebrate Armed Forces Day POW/MIA ceremony brings tears to the eyes



Members of the F.E. Warren Color Guard fold a flag during the Armed Forces Day Ceremony at the Frontier Mall in Cheyenne, Wyo., May 21, 2011. Each fold in the 12-step represent a piece of U.S. military culture. (U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Ashley L. Motley)

CHEYENNE, Wyo. – The town and troops gathered to celebrate during an Armed Forces Day ceremony at the Cheyenne Frontier Mall, May 21.

“This is the day on which we have the welcome opportunity to pay special tribute to the men and women of the Armed Forces...to all the individuals who are in the service of their country all over the world. Armed Forces Day won’t be a matter of parades and receptions for a good many of them. They will all be in line of duty and some of them may give their lives in that duty,” the Honorable Richard L. Kaysen, city of Cheyenne mayor, quoted a New York Times article published on May 17, 1952, during the ceremony.

The ceremony came to life with the Patriot Guards posting a flag line surrounding the stage. Following the flag line, the Central High Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps presented the colors while everyone stood for the playing of the National Anthem. It was after the colors were presented that everyone in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance together as one.

“No matter what walks of life we come from or who we meet on the streets, there is always a sense of pride and support for our Armed Forces,” said Air Force Maj. Gen. C. Donald Alston, 20<sup>th</sup> Air Force commander.

“We shop together, we pray together, we depend on each other,” said Lt. Cmdr. James N. Washington, United States Navy, commander of the Navy Operation Support Center, in reference to community relations with the military.

The military demonstrates what America is made of and pulls everybody together with respect and pride, according to Kaysen.

“Today is about honoring those currently serving,” said Wyo. Sen. Wayne H. Johnson. “Those who fell get recognition on Memorial Day and those who have served get recognition on Veterans Day; therefore today was about you. We earned it; it wasn’t given to us.”

After listening to the honored guests speak, those in attendance fell silent as members of the F.E. Warren Honor Guard conducted a flag-folding ceremony. The crowd remained quiet as F.E. Warren first sergeants performed a Prisoner of War/ Missing in Action ceremony for those who could not be in attendance.

According to Johnson, the flag-folding and POW/MIA ceremonies were very emotional.

“As I looked out over the crowd, I could see people with tears in their eyes,” said Johnson.



Anakaila Merriam, age 2, climbs around in a UH-60 Black Hawk on display during Armed Forces Day at Frontier Mall in Cheyenne, Wyo., May 21. The Black Hawk belongs to the C Company, 5th Battalion, 159th General Support Aviation Brigade.

With the ceremony coming to a close, service members and veterans of the crowd were asked to stand up as their branch hymn was played. There was at least one community member from each branch of service who stood up, with Johnson being the only Coast Guard veteran.

“I think the playing of the hymns is pretty honorable,” said Johnson. “It allows the past and current members to stand united.”

The ceremony was more of celebration of the dedication and services rendered by the Armed Forces today, rather than a look into the past, stated Brig. Gen. Kathy Wright, Wyoming Army National Guard assistant adjutant general.

“It was impressive to see the pride and support of the community,” said Wright.

In addition to the ceremony, service members from the Air Force and Wyoming Army National Guard, as well as numerous community groups set up displays throughout the inside and outside of the mall.

“We are proud of our military without a doubt,” concluded Kaysen.



F.E. Warren 1st Sgt. Stephan Hart participates in the Prisoner of War/Missing in Action ceremony during the Armed Forces Day Ceremony at the Frontier Mall in Cheyenne, Wyo., May 21. POW/MIA ceremonies pay tribute to those who can no longer be in attendance. (U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Ashley L. Motley)

**Photos available on our Flickr site located at:**  
<http://bit.ly/IGO4gh>