

250 Years of Holiday Tradition — Morale, Mission, and the Modern Warfighter

Feature Article – U.S. Army Cyber Center of Excellence

For **250 years**, the United States Army has stood as a symbol of strength, discipline, and unwavering dedication to the defense of our nation. Through every era of American history—from the Revolutionary War to today's rapidly evolving cyber landscape—one truth has remained constant: **our Soldiers are the Army's greatest strength.**

As the Army celebrates its 250th anniversary, we also honor one of its most enduring morale traditions: **Holiday Block Leave**. For several decades, HBL has offered Soldiers the chance to return home, reconnect with loved ones, and recharge before returning to the demanding training that shapes them into capable, resilient warfighters.

A Tradition Rooted in People First

Holiday Block Leave is more than a pause in training—it is a deliberate investment in the well-being of the force. Throughout Army history, commanders have understood that a rested, connected Soldier is better equipped mentally, emotionally, and physically to meet mission requirements.

Whether traveling across the country or remaining on post for holdover activities, Soldiers experience a season of community, support, and connection that strengthens the entire formation.

The Army's commitment to morale is no less important today than it was two centuries ago. In fact, as the domains of warfare grow more complex, maintaining the health and resilience of our Soldiers is mission essential.

Fort Gordon: Preparing the Army's Most Technical Warfighters

Home of the **U.S. Army Cyber Center of Excellence**, Fort Gordon trains Soldiers in some of the most advanced and fast-evolving military specialties in the world—**Signal, Cyberspace Operations, and Electronic Warfare.**

These Soldiers represent the cutting edge of modern warfare, operating in domains where milliseconds matter and threats evolve at the speed of technology. Their training is rigorous, demanding, and vital to national defense.

Because of these high operational demands, ensuring our Soldiers remain connected to the families and support systems that sustain them is not simply tradition—it is a strategic imperative.

Why This Year Matters

Holiday Block Leave 2025 holds special significance as the Army celebrates **its 250th birthday**—a milestone that reflects centuries of service, sacrifice, and tradition. This year, more than **3,000 Soldiers** from Fort Gordon will travel home to experience the restorative power of family, friendship, and community.

For those who remain on post, Fox Company, 369th AG Battalion, will host a robust schedule of holiday activities, ensuring every Soldier—whether traveling or staying—experiences support and camaraderie throughout the season.

HLB serves as a reminder that while the tools of war have changed dramatically since 1775, the heart of the Army has not. Soldiers still draw strength from the people who love them, the communities that embrace them, and the traditions that bind generations of service together.

Morale Is Readiness

A Soldier who returns from Holiday Block Leave renewed in spirit returns stronger—sharper in the classroom, more confident in the field, and more resilient in the face of challenges.

Happy Soldiers become healthy Soldiers.

Healthy Soldiers become ready Soldiers.

Ready Soldiers make a powerful, unstoppable Army.

As we honor 250 years of Army excellence, the Cyber Center of Excellence and Fort Gordon proudly continue this legacy of people, purpose, and mission. Whether through the journey home, the activities provided for holdovers, or the shared traditions that connect us, Holiday Block Leave reinforces what the Army has always known:

Mission first — but Soldiers always.

