



*Always Ready  
Always There*

# The Gem State Guardian

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Idaho National Guard

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## Chaplain corps Thanksgiving Dinner 2013

By Chaplain (Captain) John  
Martinez

The formula is simple: Provide a Thanksgiving-style meal with all the fixings and night of fellowship at no cost to veterans and their families. Volunteers have literally

This year's entertainment was the 25<sup>th</sup> Army Band's "May Day" Saxophone Ensemble. The band captivated the kids and enthralled the attendees with their renditions of popular and traditional fare.

In order to provide the meal and event at no cost, everything from food to supplies are taken in by donation from local churches, vendors and volunteers. The food for this year's dinner was donated by our local Grocery Outlet, owned and operated by Jason and Amanda Steele. Many of the pies and deserts were provided by churches and volunteers to make the night a memorable time.

A special moment came when we were able to make a Skype connection with our very own Chaplain (Major) Robert Morris who was deployed to Kuwait at the time (he safely returned in December, 2013).



Veterans and service members enjoy a Thanksgiving dinner in the Air Guard dining facility. Photo by Daniel Gonzalez

Four years ago the Chaplain Corps of the Idaho National Guard began a ministry in response to our Brigade returning home from deployment to Iraq. The effort was to find a way to bring Soldiers and their families together around the Thanksgiving table on Gowen Field.

What grew out of the first dinner has become a tremendous ministry and outreach on behalf of the Chaplain Corps of the Idaho National Guard to Veterans past and present to gather the week before Thanksgiving for a meal and a night of fun and fellowship.

come out of the woodwork and stepped up to be part of this annual event.

Operation Military Kid provides crafts for the children and Family Programs helps out with registration. Our Military Faith Alliance, (a pastor/clergy group) provide a host of volunteers for everything from parking to clean-up. For the past two years, the Knights of Columbus have provided hard-working men ready to set up tables, sweep, scrub pots and pans and then vacuum when everything is done.

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