



Army Emergency Relief Press Release

Helping the Army Take Care of Its Own

January 26, 2009

Army Emergency Relief Sets New Record For Assistance in 2008

Washington, DC – Headquarters, Army Emergency Relief (AER) today announced a record year in providing emergency financial and educational assistance to Soldiers and their Families in 2008. Total AER assistance reached \$83 million - up from the \$74 million of assistance in 2007.

During 2008, AER handled 66,000 cases of financial assistance for unexpected financial stress to include emergency travel, housing, car repair, utilities, medical expenses, funeral costs and disaster relief along with support to surviving Families of Fallen Soldiers, and grants to widows and Wounded Warriors.

Financial assistance in 2008 represents an overall 12% increase over 2007 levels. While some of this increase may be related to the economy, AER also credits its efforts to improve access to AER assistance through our Command Referral and Retired Soldier outreach programs. The Command Referral Program gives Company / Battery Commanders and First Sergeants the authority to approve up to \$1,000 in interest free loans for their Soldiers and provides a meaningful way for unit leaders to be directly involved in addressing financial problems of their Soldiers. The AER Retired Soldier Outreach effort is conducted during the Annual Campaign to provide an opportunity for retirees to make donations as well as provide information on how to obtain assistance if needed.

In support of its education program AER disbursed \$12.1 million in scholarships to over 5,600 children and spouses of Soldiers. AER Scholarship programs include the MG James Ursano Scholarship Program for dependent children, the Overseas Spouse Education Assistance Program for spouses of active duty Soldier's assigned and living in Overseas Commands, and the Stateside Spouse Education Assistance Program. Full details on these programs to include eligibility requirements and application deadlines, may be found on the AER website: www.aerhq.org.

AER assistance is available to Soldiers and their Families, wherever they are located and the amount of assistance is only limited by a valid need. Soldiers and their Family members requiring AER assistance can contact their unit Chain of Command or go to their local installation AER office.

Your local AER program falls under Family and Morale, Welfare, and Recreation, Army Community Service (ACS). The ACS Center is located at 622 Swift Road (across from Buffalo Soldier Field). Please feel free to contact AER Specialist, Amy Weyhrauch, at 845.938.5839 or by email amy.weyhrauch@us.army.mil. Additional information on AER is on the web at <http://www.westpointmwr.com/ACTIVITY/ACS/AER.htm>.

This year's annual AER Campaign for the West Point community will run 2 March -1 May 2009. We look forward to 100% participation from Cadets, Soldiers and Retirees. The goal for the campaign has been set at \$100,000. To meet this goal everyone is encouraged to consider this worthy cause. Remember even the smallest of contributions count; **together we are ARMY STRONG, Helping the Army Take Care of Its Own.**