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AFN Celebrating 80 Years of Broadcasting

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American Forces Network (AFN) Broadcast Center

The American Forces Network (AFN) is celebrating its 80th year of providing the overseas military community with a touch of home, but the “presents” are going to its audience!

AFN is testing a new video on demand streaming service *AFN Now* as well as launched a new improved radio streaming App, *AFN Go*. Stay tuned to AFN for future updates on both new services.

The Armed Forces Radio service began May 26, 1942. Since then, America’s military broadcast network has operated under many different names. AFN followed American warriors wherever they served, even on U.S. Navy ships afloat. Today, the overseas military audience we serve knows their network simply as “AFN.”

While millions of Americans serving overseas have tuned in AFN for popular entertainment, the network has served as a crucial tool for commanders to reach the force and their families, both on and off military installations, with critical information. During World War II, the network communicated messages to American forces advancing in Europe via mobile radio vans. In 1991, broadcasters in the Philippines became a lifeline when the Mt. Pinatubo volcano erupted catastrophically and forced evacuation. Amid the horrors of September 11, 2001, AFN communicated force protection guidance from commanders, regarding additional security measures and threat vulnerabilities, updates on airline flights and travel and provided information on the changing global threat level. When the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami hit Japan, AFN coordinated its radio, TV and social media platforms to provide real time updates on damage, recovery efforts and ongoing hazards. Following the 2016 terrorist attack at the Brussels airport, AFN Benelux became the American military’s trusted source for real-time information, synchronizing radio coverage and Facebook posts in a series of force protection updates spanning the attack and its aftermath. Most recently, AFN has kept the force informed throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Today’s AFN stations enjoy advantages unimagined generations ago. Once a single channel, radio now offers a dozen different audio services and streaming Internet radio. A single channel

of AFN television was a big deal a generation ago. Now, the network offers eight and a video on demand, TV streaming service is under testing. Social media didn't exist in 1942. Now every station and the AFN Broadcast Center use social media to interact with the audience.

What hasn't changed in the past 80 years is that the American Forces Network continues to provide the most deserving audience in the world, America's warriors, with a touch of home, by providing real time force protection messages, and the very best live entertainment, news and sports from the United States.

See how AFN has served the overseas military over the past 80 years with an extensive look back in time with a large variety of TV, radio and print stories at <https://myafn.dodmedia.osd.mil/afn80>.