

Immediate Release
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NH and VT Christmas Tree Growers Send Christmas Cheer to US Troops

Governor Hassan Cut “First” Tree of the Season for Donation to Local Navy Family

New Hampshire Governor Maggie Hassan participated in the annual Trees for Troops program by helping to load local trees for shipment to military bases across the country and cutting a Christmas tree for delivery to a local resident currently serving in the Navy in the Persian Gulf.

Christmas trees from thirty growers across New Hampshire and Vermont were collected at the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests Rocks Christmas Tree Farm in Bethlehem, NH as part of a nationwide effort called “**Trees for Troops**.” This program provides Christmas trees to US military families at home and abroad.

Nigel Manley, Director of the Rocks Estate Christmas Tree Farm, is also the Chairman of the national Christmas SPIRIT Foundation, the organizer of the Trees for Troops program and he coordinates the collection of the trees from the New Hampshire and Vermont region. Trees were donated by growers from both states and by regional businesses, schools and individuals. Fifth grade students from the Bethlehem Elementary School helped tag and load the trees for shipping. As a local community service project, the students are also involved with helping to solicit donations from area businesses to support the program and have raised close to \$1000.

Yesterday, over 450 trees were loaded into a FedEx trailer for ultimate delivery to Fort Knox in Kentucky. Arriving from another event, Governor Hassan loaded the last tree on the Fed Ex truck to send the delivery on its way. Then, as a kick off to the 2014 NH Christmas tree season, the Governor cut a Christmas tree from one of the Rocks Farm fields, assisted by Julie Ferland and her two year old son, Christopher, of Sugar Hill. Ferland’s husband Kyle, who is serving in the Navy aboard the USS Carl Vinson, will be receiving the tree.

The Christmas SPIRIT Foundation and FedEx, in cooperation with the National Christmas Tree Association, have partnered on this effort to boost the Christmas spirit for U.S. military men and women. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the program where Christmas tree growers and retailers have donated real Christmas trees to be distributed at military bases in the U.S. and overseas. Across the US, Manley expects the effort will bring close to 18,000 trees this year and

will top 130,000 trees donated in total since the program began. The program reaches those serving in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard and National Guard.

For more information about “**Trees for Troops**”, visit www.christmasspiritfoundation.org. For more information about where to find Christmas Trees for your own holiday celebration, visit www.nh-vtchristmastree.org, or www.nhchristmastrees.com. Contact the NH Dept. of Agriculture, Markets & Food for more Christmas tree information at 271-3788 or www.agriculture.nh.gov.

Photos:



Volunteers who loaded the truck with more than 450 trees donated by NH and VT Christmas tree growers for military families at bases across the country and overseas. The group included 5th grade students and staff from Bethlehem Elementary School, members of the North Country Chapter of the Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association and Christmas Tree growers.



Governor Maggie Hassan (ctr) confers with Julie Ferland (rt) and her son Christopher from Sugar Hill, about which tree to choose. Julie's husband Kyle is serving in the Navy aboard the USS Carl Vinson and will be receiving this tree.