



Military's Holiday Exodus Coincides with Busy Travel Season

Airport prepares for large number of Military personnel; hopes to relieve pressure on check-in and security process

SAN ANTONIO TX- December 20, 2012— This holiday season, San Antonio International Airport (SAT) experiences the traditional “Military Block Leave” over a three day period beginning December 21, when more than 6,000 military service members are temporarily released from duty at Fort Sam Houston and Lackland Air Force Base to begin their trek home. On top of an already-busy holiday travel season, planning starts months in advance to facilitate and streamline the so-called “Exodus”. SAT works with Transportation Security Administration (TSA), airlines, airport concessions, military staff and Bags, Inc. to coordinate a stress-free send off to the military personnel who generally return shortly after the New Year.

One of the unique aspects to this program is, along with Airport officials, TSA, airline personnel and representatives from Bags, Inc. are partnering with Fort Sam Houston and Lackland AFB to assist soldiers and airmen by printing boarding passes and pre-checking luggage. In addition, for the first time Bags, Inc. will pick up and deliver luggage to the airport for security screening. Bags, Inc. will be assisting for the first time this year, and are donating their services to military personnel free of charge.

“The airport is honored to be a part of Holiday Block Leave and pleased that we can help make the travel experience a little easier for the soldiers and airmen,” said Tim O’Krongley, Assistant Director for San Antonio Department of Aviation. “But, we also recognize this helps other passengers and airport guests by alleviating some pressure on check-in lines, TSA checkpoints and the loading zones of the airport. We want to assure everyone’s travel goes smoothly this Holiday season. It is always amazing to see these young men and women, heading home for the Holidays. Some have never been away from home and we just want them to enjoy their time in San Antonio.”

The largest affected day for “Exodus” will be **FRIDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2012** when Ft. Sam Houston and Lackland AFB will begin to release its personnel. It will begin Friday morning at **4:00 AM** and will continue through **Sunday, December 23**. All personnel will return on or around January 2, 2013, after the New Year.

Friday evening, airport officials, the Transportation Security Administration, airline personnel will be onsite at Fort Sam Houston to assist by printing boarding passes, check-in luggage and pick up and deliver luggage to the airport for security screening. In addition, Bags, Inc. will be assisting for the first time this year, free of charge.

VISUALS FOR MEDIA- The best Video/Photo opportunities will be:

-4:00 AM FRIDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2012, first Ft. Sam bus is scheduled to arrive at the airport around 4:00 AM filled with military personnel heading home. Buses will unload at far west end of Terminal B Upper level. Buses will arrive every 7-10 minutes.

-4:00 AM SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2012, first Lackland buses are scheduled to arrive at the airport.

-Volunteers at the USO and at the airport information booths assisting the military.

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