

237th Army Birthday celebration held in Times Square

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As of today, 237 years have passed since the organizing of the world's greatest fighting force for good, the United States Army – June 14, 1775 was the birth of America's Army

Times Square hosted the official location to celebrate the Army's 237th birthday with Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, 38th Chief of Staff of the Army, as the distinguished guest; with many more in attendance.

Members from the 10th Mountain Division, the Army's Parachute Team "Golden Knights", New York City Recruiting Battalion Soldiers, and thousands of on-lookers convened to join in the celebration of the Army's birthday.

"The Army has stood strong for 237 years, more importantly, America's public has stood strong along side of us," said Lt. Col. Richard Davis, New York City Recruiting Battalion commander. "What this is about today is bringing the Army and the celebration of the Army back to the American public, bringing it back to the communities that we serve every day."

The strength of the Nation is the Army, the strength of the Army is its Soldiers, and the strength of the Soldiers is its Family and community members. Without the support of the American people, the Army would not be able to perform as exceptionally as it does while serving in many locations throughout the world.

"Today, America's Army is engaged in nearly 150 countries around the world, on six of seven continents, with over 94,000 Soldiers deployed today and 94,000 forward stationed. Our nation depends on its Army to defend the shores of our homeland to defeat enemy forces abroad, and help with recovery efforts in the wake of natural disasters," said Odierno.

Odierno not only gave a compelling speech, but also enlisted 16 men and woman into the Army. He also took part in the cake-cutting, as him and the oldest and youngest Soldier in the ceremony's attendance, held a saber together to cut through the massive tank-shaped cake.

When it comes to cake-making, no one does it better than Buddy Valastro, master baker of Carlo's City Hall Bake Shop in Hoboken, N.J. Valastro is well known throughout the country for his television show, Cake Boss.

Buddy and his team constructed the tank-shaped cake to be more than 3-feet tall and with a moving turret set atop; an above-and-beyond cake for an above-and-beyond Army.

During the week, the previously mentioned groups of Army units were involved in community outreach events throughout New York City.

"We want to make sure there is no disconnect between the American community and their Army. It's important to know who their Soldiers are and better relate to them, to hear their stories, hear what the Army experience is like and get to know them a little better," said Maj. Charles Jaquillard, executive office for the New York City Recruiting Battalion.

The thousands of Americans in attendance wasted no time in showing their appreciation to Soldiers for their dedicated service and were very involved in celebrating alongside the service members.

"It's always great to be appreciated, and I'll tell you, New York City does a great job at that," said Jaquillard.

Though Times Square was the focal point of today's celebration, Army units across the country and deployed units in Afghanistan joined in celebration on this monumental occasion, as well as many other places throughout New York.

"We are having demonstrations all over New York City where everybody is having fun and getting involved with the community," said Sgt. 1st Class Cesar S. Sanchez, 3rd Battalion, 71st Cavalry Squadron, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division. "We are here to work for them and fight for them."

The sacrifices made by U.S. Soldiers are not left unappreciated. Days like this stir the strong sense of pride this nation's people have for the troops as well as pride continuously displayed by Army leaders.

"I'm proud of your accomplishments, your sacrifice and your selfless dedication to our Army and to the nation," said Odierno.