



Defense Media Activity
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AFN: Serving the Overseas American Military Community for 75 Years

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The American Forces Network (AFN) provides overseas U.S. military, DOD civilians and their families force protection information and a touch of home with radio and television entertainment, news and sports.

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 us 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.

Today's AFN stations enjoy advantages unimagined generations ago. Radio is now just one part of a force protection and entertainment triad that includes television and social media. 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. Social media didn't exist in 1942. Now every station and the AFN Broadcast Center use social media to interact with the audience.

More enhancements are on the way. Later this year, the AFN Broadcast Center will send out all eight television channels in high definition and field a new decoder allowing direct-to-home customers to record programs on two channels while watching, pausing and fast-forwarding a third. Sailors serving afloat will get their AFN sports, news and entertainment in dramatically improved clarity.

What hasn't changed in the past 75 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.