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RELEASE #2009-04-15- 1 *2009: THE YEAR OF THE NCO* April 15, 2009

Schools, U.S. Army Europe teaming up again to broadcast graduations live to deployed parents

Department of Defense Dependents Schools - Europe release

Deployed servicemembers will be able to view their graduating high school seniors crossing the stage and moving their tassels from right to left via live webcasts on graduation day.

The Department of Defense Dependents Schools - Europe, U.S. Army Europe and 5th Signal Command are combining assets, talents, and technologies to enable the live webcasts via the Internet. The effort will allow at least 18 graduation ceremonies to be viewed by an estimated 125 deployed parents in Iraq, Afghanistan and other locations around the world.

Using Web technology, deployed parents will be able to see their graduating seniors cross the stage and view student messages recorded for the occasion.

The first graduation ceremony will be webcast June 4. The bulk of graduation ceremonies will take place simultaneously on June 5. The last ceremony will be webcast on the evening of June 11. A list of participating schools and information on how to access the broadcasts will be available at the DoDDS-Europe Web site once details are finalized.



TOM BUDZYNA

Katherine Brunskill (left) and Makayla Deshazor, salutatorians for the AFNORTH International High School class of 2008, welcome dignitaries to the ceremony under the lens of a television crew that broadcast the entire ceremony to deployed family members via the Internet last year. Department of Defense Dependents Schools – Europe and U.S. Army Europe officials began planning in January for this year's upcoming broadcasts.

This is the seventh year the effort has been undertaken. Diana Ohman, DoDDS-Europe director, who has been involved with each of the yearly webcasts, said although it is a monumental technical challenge, the webcasts are emotionally significant to the student and the deployed parent.

“There is no room for error. It is too important. It is important to the graduating senior that he or she be able to share the event with their parents, as well as for the deployed parent to be able to view their son or daughter crossing the stage,” Ohman said.

Planning for this year’s webcasts began in January. Seniors who have, or anticipated having parents deployed at graduation, were identified through the high schools and the coordination process began -- all in an effort to broadcast the graduations in real time.

Information on viewing the 2009 graduations will be posted to the DoDDS-Europe Web site at www.eu.dodea.edu as the events approach.



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