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For Release: At will

**COALITION TO SALUTE AMERICA'S HEROES
TO SPONSOR MARCH 22 RECEPTION FOR RETURNING MEMBERS
OF U.S. ARMY RESERVE'S 7/158th AVIATION COMPANY**

Kansas-based unit suffered major loss in deadly August 2011 helicopter crash in Afghanistan

WILTON, CT – March 20, 2012 – Nearly eight months after enduring a tragic loss in Afghanistan when one of its Chinook helicopters was shot down, killing 30 service members, the U.S. Army Reserve's 7/158th Aviation Company will be welcomed home in style on Thursday, March 22 with a "Yellow Ribbon Ceremony" at Gardner Municipal Airport near Olathe, KS, that is being sponsored by the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes (CSAH).

Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback is expected to be among the large crowd of family and friends greeting the approximately 110 soldiers upon their arrival at the unit's hangar, which is planned for around 10 a.m. CDT. The ceremony and subsequent reception will mark the completion of the Company's second deployment in Afghanistan in the past four years, during which time its members – known as the "Spartans" – flew more than 1,400 missions and logged in excess of 12,300 flight hours.

Unfortunately, the deployment was also marked by the accident last August 6 that claimed 38 victims altogether, including eight Afghans, and that represents the United States' single deadliest day of the decade-long war. Among the U.S. casualties in the helicopter crash were eight members of 7/158th Aviation Company and 22 Navy SEALs, most of them from SEAL Team 6, the counterterrorism unit that carried out the successful Osama bin Laden mission in May 2011.

The CSAH agreed to underwrite the costs of the "Yellow Ribbon Ceremony" after learning recently that there were no plans to formally recognize the unit for its service in Afghanistan. Earlier this year, the CSAH had some initial contact with the Company when the organization provided emergency financial aid to one member, Sgt. Ezekiel Crozier, who was severely wounded in a separate helicopter incident in June 2011 and has been back in Kansas recuperating since then.

"The mission of the Coalition is not only to assist our disabled troops in progressing along their road to recovery, but also to make sure they are aware of the public's gratitude for their sacrifices and their willingness to defend our country," says Michael Meyer, CSAH vice president, programs, who is helping to organize the reception. "We are both delighted and proud to have the opportunity to provide these heroes from the 7/158th Aviation Company with the kind of proper homecoming they deserve."

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About the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes

The Coalition to Salute America's Heroes (CSAH) is dedicated to providing severely wounded veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom with the financial assistance and support they need to rebuild their lives and restore their hopes for achieving their greatest potential.

CSAH is a 501(c)(3), non-profit, non-partisan organization, founded in 2004 and headquartered in Wilton, Connecticut. All funds raised by CSAH to support its mission come from contributions made by individual citizens, corporate donors and foundations. Eligibility for CSAH's programs and services for injured veterans requires a disability rating of 30% or greater from either the U.S. Department of Defense or Department of Veterans Affairs.

Since its founding, CSAH has provided emergency financial assistance and other services for thousands of severely wounded troops and their families, including more than 27,000 separate emergency aid payments, grants and holiday gift checks. More information is available at www.saluteheroes.org.

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