

BOWL NEWS

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December 30 Press Conference Quotes - BHAFB

Executive Director Brant Ringler - "I'm expecting us to have a new record attendance for our bowl game, as long as we're blessed with good weather. Last year's record was just over 41,000. So I think we'll easily beat that record."

"Not only the military, but our sponsors, have gotten behind us. They underwrite all tickets for our military. We'll have over 12,000 tickets distributed to local bases, and bases in a 3-4 hour radius. It allows the military active-duty and reserves and their immediate family members to come to our game for free, because of these sponsors."

On the special Wounded Warriors area behind the south end zone: "We will cater to them. People will continually walk back and forth getting them whatever they want, so they can relax and enjoy the game. Our special guests and other people can come by and say thanks to them, also."

On Admiral Michael Mullen receiving the Great American Patriot Award on behalf of the men and women of the U. S. Armed Forces: "This year, we said 'Let's give it to everybody and honor the Armed Forces collectively instead of one person. It worked out perfectly, because Admiral Mullen said he'd only come if he could accept it on behalf of the U.S. Armed Forces. When he made that decision, it was a perfect fit."

On how the Houston-Air Force rematch unfolded: "With TCU being in the BCS, it came down to two bowl-eligible teams for three bowls (Armed Forces, New Mexico, Humanitarian). We knew Air Force would travel better to us and Wyoming better to New Mexico. With the name of our game, it makes perfect sense to have Air Force come back. We made that decision amongst our people at ESPN and couldn't be happier. We decided in advance to take the runner-up in the C-USA championship and extended an offer to Houston. Some scenarios could have played out differently, but all in all, it's best situation for our game and the fans. Houston is in this state, and it makes it easier for them and their fans to travel to our game."

On bringing Navy to the BHAFB in 2013: "Their last six or seven bowl games, they're averaging over 21,000 fans. That will be fantastic for us."

On Bell Helicopter's continuing support as title sponsor: "Bell is a local company that does a lot for this city. When we changed the name to the Armed Forces Bowl (in 2006), Bell within a week signed the contract for two years and a two-year option. They picked that up and we're in our fourth year now. Fortunately for us, their new CEO, John Garrison, is a West Point grad and played on Army's football team for four years. He understands what a team can do for its school and what this game means to the military and Bell Helicopter. They were quick to sign on for two more years with a two-year option, and we're good through 2011. We can move forward without so much watching the pennies and have flexibility. Having a title sponsor guaranteed for at least six years, that's fantastic in this business. Most title sponsors last 3 or 4 years."

Next year's BHAFB and beyond: "We want to keep tickets sales up, obviously. The sponsorships are great and during these economic times really shows support of what our bowl has. We also want to make sure we get more involved with bringing Wounded Warriors to our game and have more veteran initiatives – things to make our game truly a facet of the military. It's called the Armed Forces Bowl for a reason. We're here to honor not only active-duty, but also our veterans, and we think we need to get them as involved as possible."

Tom Starr, former BHAFB executive director, on the game MVP award being named after him: "I wasn't expecting this. It's so wonderful, but you feel guilty. Thousands of people make it possible. It's so humbling to get credit for what so many people did. I was a small part of it. I've never been quite so honored. For the first time in my life, I think I was speechless."