



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on August 11, 2011

U.S. Armys Ft. Bragg to Host Atheist Rock Concert

A group of atheist soldiers has been cleared by the U.S. Army to hold a rock concert at Ft. Bragg next spring, the Associated Press has reported. Organizers of Rock Beyond Belief had planned the event for this year at the North Carolina Army base, but they canceled after saying Bragg leadership was not providing the same support it gave to an evangelical Christian concert last fall, reported the AP.



The godless event is slated for March 31, 2012, at Ft. Bragg's main parade field the same venue that held a 2010 [Rock the Fort](#) Christian event featuring Franklin Graham. The Freedom From Religion Foundation protested that event, claiming that it was exactly the type of thing the First Amendment was designed to forbid.

This time, however, opponents of faith in God are cheering the copy-cat concert sponsored by the group of atheist clubs. You know those goose bumps you get when your favorite song hits that sweet spot? asked Sgt. Justin Griffith, military director for the group [American Atheists](#) and the main organizer of the event. I was overcome with joy and a sense of vindication.

On the Rock Beyond Belief website, Griffith proudly announced that the keynote speaker would be [Richard Dawkins](#), whom he claimed regularly draws crowds in the thousands, especially in the so-called Bible Belt. Additionally, Griffith boasted, Fort Bragg's prestigious Golden Knights parachute team have been requested for an epic jump. I can't say much more at this point, but some atheists may just be falling out of the freaking sky [with parachutes]. Also, a talented singer and foxhole atheist volunteered for the honor of singing the National Anthem, Griffith announced.

While the planned event appeared to many observers to be little more than an in your face opportunity for atheists to party in defiance of last year's Christian celebration, Griffith insisted that there was more to the concert. We are not interested in just being a counter-event to the [offensive](#) Rock the Fort concert, he intoned in the [About](#) section of the event website. [Emphasis in original.] We are also not interested in putting on an anti-Christian, anti-religious, or anti-anything event. Rock Beyond Belief is a Day of Fun and Entertainment for the Rest of Us meaning a small handful of military personnel at Ft. Bragg who claim no faith in God.

Continued Griffith: In the spirit of Richard Dawkins [Out Campaign](#), we are embracing the fact that just by coming out and saying we are non-theists, and also we are your firefighters, your military members, and your neighbors, that we help to shed the negative connotations and debunk the myths associated with being a non-believer.

Griffith expressed hope that the event would be a turning point in the foxhole atheist community's struggle for acceptance, tolerance and respect. It's an amazing time to be a nonbeliever in the U.S.



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military on the cusp of a major breakthrough.

While Ft. Braggs commander had initially turned down requests to hold the atheist event at the main parade ground where the Christian concert had been held, he apparently changed his mind after organizers complained to the Secretary of the Army and supporters of the event came up with \$30,000 to pay for lighting, the sound system, and other expenses. The Army said that it would provide electricity, water, and security for the event, but would offer no other financial assistance.



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