

Dear Generous Friends:

Hello... Hello... and CAUTION: This email is very long – about 18 pages.

(Don't print it unless you are you sure you want 18 pages...:-)

I would like to take this time to **Thank you, ALL**, for helping to make our “little” community project, **“Stockings for Soldiers”** so successful this year. You **ALL** have helped to bring some extra smiles to our wonderful Troops for the Holidays. **Thank you** for making such a great difference in the lives of so many of our Troops.

In previous years, it had been our honor to mention **EVERYONE** who had helped us with this community project. **However** ... this year, due to the tremendous growth of this great project, it has become impossible to do that. There are literally hundreds and hundreds of volunteers who have joined with us to send holiday greetings to our troops.

Because there are far too many people to name individually, please accept this heartfelt Group Hug and **THANK YOU**. We all realize that we all could never have been successful without **EVERYONE's** assistance. So, **THANK YOU**, wonderful volunteers, for everything that was donated, purchased, sewn, knitted, glued, glittered, cut, pasted, taped, carried, written, typed and sent to our wonderful troops.

This OFFICIAL **THANK YOU** goes out to each and every one of you for all your kindness, generosity, compassion, time, energy and love for our wonderful troops.

At the end of this long email, I have included some emails and photos from some of our troops who have received our boxes.

Please allow me to tell you all how many people stepped up to assist us in our **Fifth Annual Stockings for Soldiers** community project.

Our sincere **THANKS** go to over 500+ hard working volunteers who came to our Stocking Store to donate their time, purchase Goodies for our troops, donate needed funds and bring a cheerful, happy-to-help attitude. **Thank You** to all these new friends and to our dedicated **Team Leaders** who maintained the continuity needed throughout the week and who worked so hard to keep this community project going. Our community endeavor was tremendously successful because friendly folks with like minded attitudes all worked together, beautifully, to achieve such a high level of success and cooperation. My deepest **THANKS** to these wonderful people for making everything look so “easy”. Our winning team was:

Lyn Gill, Sandy Pembleton, Denise Lazar, Ann Hein, Peg Stewart, Betsy Wenny, Pam Yarborough, Fannie Kessler, Amy Mousley, Kathy Hankins, Barbara Schinchirimini., Nancy Meier, Judy Tarlov, Karen Sieber, Eleanor Wilson, Betsy Morocco, Carol Wootten, Lori Miller, Cathy Morgan, Terry Meyers, Dianne Seidel, Patti Mishaw, Peggy Munley, Barbara Gilbert, MaryAlice Budd, Janet Armitage and Bonnie Costas.

Thank You to Patterson-Schwartz Real Estate for allowing us to use their very spacious vacant office in Branmar Plaza, North Wilmington, Delaware. Our deep appreciation goes to Dick Christopher and Jeff Olmstead for allowing us to have such a great temporary “home.”

Thank You to the wonderful and generous members of the Rotary Clubs in our area. Our Rotarian friends have been invaluable in their donations and contributions. **Thank you** to all the members of the Brandywine-Naamans Rotary Club, Wilmington Rotary Club, Caesar Rodney Rotary Club, Wilmington West Rotary Club, Hockessin-Greenville Rotary Club, Brandywine Hundred Rotary Club and the Newark Rotary Club. And **Thank you** to Rotarian Carol Ann Weisenfeld for inviting me several times to be a guest on her radio show on WDEL radio, "Rotary Pathways to Service".

Thank You to our wonderful Girl Scout friends. We especially appreciate the Chesapeake Bay Girl Scout Council Service Unit 629. Thank you to all their Girl Scouts and Leaders. We are so grateful for all their enthusiasm, helpfulness and hard work. They made such a positive contribution to this project.

Thank You to our corporate Sponsors who took us under their wings and guided us with their tremendous support in so many ways. We are so very grateful to the following Friends:

Bank of America for their very generous \$5,000 grant that honored our community project. Walmart for their very generous \$2,000 grant that honored our community project.
Polartec, LLC for donating polar fleece allowing us to make over 2200 fleece blankets.
Trump Taj Mahal for donating over 3,600 decks of playing cards for our troops.
Kraft Foods Company for donating over 11,000 packets of Crystal Light Lemonade.
Ben-Dom Printing Company for donating 1,000 colorful letters mailed to our troops. Friends of the Hockessin Library & Larry Thurrell for donating over 4,000 paperback books. The Brandywine Hundred Rotary Club for their generous \$1,000 District Matching Grant.
Unique Industries Company for their very generous donation of Goodies.
The Wilmington Blue Print Company for donating 3,000 printed Blessings for the troops.
The Hercules Corp for their generous financial donation that honored our project.
Corporation Service Company for their generous financial donation and support.
Ultrachem, Inc. for their continued generous financial support.
The Castle Bag Company for donating 3,000 ziplock bags.
Mike Do at TD Nails in Branmar Plaza, for his generous computer assistance.
Pat & Josh at the American Karate Studio, for their generous computer assistance.
John & Donna Bell & the Hanby Middle School Chorus & Band for creating such an excellent DVD for over 1,500 of our troops.
Julie Kubacki and Atlantic Records for donating hundreds of CD's and DVD's.

The Adult Learning Center in Alexandria, VA for their very generous financial donation that was collected from men and women who have just become new citizens of the United States. Their contributions touched our hearts and we are so grateful for their love of their new Country and for the brave men and women who are defending it.

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Thank You to all our Wonderful Sewing Elves who created and sewed over 5,400 stockings for our project this year.

There have been literally thousands of volunteers who have sewn the most beautiful stockings for us this year. Without **ALL** of your generosity and sewing skills, we could not have completed this project. We apologize for not being able to list everyone. Please know that we are so sincerely grateful to all of you for doing this for our troops.

THANK YOU to our large groups of sewing volunteers, our small groups of sewing volunteers, our quilting friends, our neighborhood sewing circles, school groups, church groups, Girl Scout groups, sewing hospital volunteers, out-of-town sewing friends, Office friends, sewing elected officials, and to our special Team Leaders and Friends who sewed for us every night.

Thank You to our Wonderful Stocking Decorators Who Decorated 5,400 Stockings:

Our "Glue & Glitter" volunteers worked constantly to meet our challenge. They all did a magnificent job and our troops were thrilled to receive their personalized stockings with their own names on them. A special **THANK YOU** to Mike Assile from Signature Crafts, Inc. in Hawthorne, New Jersey for donating all the beautiful and colorful glitter and the glue that we used for the stockings.

Thank You to our Wonderful Volunteers who made 5,400 packets of Snowman Soup: (Hot Cocoa)

Thank you to all the Brownie Troops, Girl Scout Troops, Boy Scout Troops, all the children and their parents who came to our Stocking Store to help us and to all the families who sat around their kitchen table to make almost 6,000 packets of Snowman Soup.

Thank You to our Wonderful and Clever Polar Fleece Blanket Team who made over 2,200 Blankets:

Thank you to all members of our Fleece Blanket Committee. Some donated fleece, some carried the huge bolts of fleece, some unraveled and cut the fleece, some folded and tied the fleece blankets. A very special **THANK YOU** to Polartec, LLC. of Lawrence, Mass. for their tremendous donation of hundreds and hundreds of yards of their beautiful and luxurious polar fleece. With their assistance, we were able to warm up 2,200 Soldiers and Marines this winter.

Thank You to those who knitted over 2,400 wool hats.

Many volunteers responded to the request to help us knit hats for our troops. We are so very grateful for their beautiful creations and we thank the Brandywine Hundred Rotary Club, Rotary District 7630 and Dr. Peggy Munley for their generous grant to fund this aspect of our project.

Thank You to those who wrote 5,400 Greeting Cards for each Stocking:

Everyone helped to make sure that each stocking had a personal greeting card with a personal message for the recipient. **Thank you, Everyone,** who took the time to write a personal notes to our troops.

Thank You to those who supplied all the Goodies for the Stockings and

Thank You to those who organized and stuffed the stockings and

Thank You to those who helped to pack up all the boxes:

Thank You to the hundreds and hundreds of volunteers who stopped by to donate so many, many items for our troops. We estimate that we mailed over **30,000 lbs** of donated items.

THANK YOU to all the large groups of friends, the small organizations, the Rotarians, the Girl Scouts, the school children, the generous professional dental community, the generous legal community friends, the Boy Scouts, the small businesses, the large businesses, many church groups and neighborhood groups, the wonderful retirement community of Maris Grove, PA., our exercise friends at Curves in Blue Bell, PA., The Delaware Military Academy, our friends at University of Delaware, our WVU Friends & Alumni, Ladies WAC's of Delaware Veterans, our new friends at the Delaware Field & Stream Club and **ALL** our many new friends. **EVERYBODY** combined all their donations and we were able to fill **5,400 stockings** with "a little bit if home." **THANK YOU** everyone for all your very generous contributions. **THANK YOU** to Mgr. Bill Grant and the Happy Harry's/ Walgreen's Company for donating cases & cases & cases of candy and snacks for our troops. A special **THANK YOU** to **Vice President Joe Biden and Dr. Jill Biden** who came to the Stocking Store to join with us to send our love and support to our troops. **THANK YOU** to all our great volunteers.

Thank You to our very generous friends who donated funds for postage and covered our expenses:

Thank you to the hundreds and hundreds of volunteers who helped us to collect the funds needed to cover the postage costs. We received small donations and received large donations that combined allowed us to pay the postage fees of \$17,000. A heart warming Thank You to all who helped us to meet that challenge.

Thank You to all the students who helped us from the following Schools:

A.I. DuPont High School, Avon Grove Charter School, Brandywine High School, Brandywine High School Honor Society and Key Club, Carrie Downie Elementary School, Charter School of Avondale, PA, Charter School of Wilmington, Claymont Elementary School, Concord High School, Corpus Christi School, Delaware Military Academy, Delaware School for the Deaf, Faith Pre School, Garnet Valley Schools, Hanby Middle School's Band & Chorus students and Hanby Middle School's Family and Consumer Science Sewing students, Hodgson Vo-Tech High School, Holy Rosary School, K Kids Barkley Elementary School, Mt. Pleasant Elementary School, Mt. Pleasant High School, Navitty Prep School, P.S. DuPont, Richey Elementary School, Salesianum School, Sanford School, Silver Lake Elementary School, St. Ann's School, St. Anthony's Grade School, St. David's School, St. Edmond's School, St. Elizabeth High School, St. Matthews School, Thomas Edison Charter School, Ursuline Extended Day, Ursuline School, Valley Forge Middle School of Berwyn, Pa, Washington Township High School, Chestnut Ridge Middle School, Orchard Valley Middle School and Thomas Jefferson Elementary School.

Thank You to our Religious Community: **Thank You** to Christ Episcopal Church in Delaware City, Ebenezer U.M. Church, Elsmere Presbyterian Church, Faith Presbyterian Church, Good Sheppard Lutheran Youth Group, Grace Bible Fellowship Church, Holy Rosary Church, New Life Baptist Church, N.E. Christian Church, People Settlement Senior Center, Sisters of St. Francis, Aston, PA, SS Peter & Paul U. Orthodox Church, Siloam L.M. Church, St. Anthony's Senior Center, St. Helena's, St. Mark's Lutheran Church, St. Paul's Methodist Church, St. Mary Magdalene, I.H.M., Jewish Federation of Wilmington and so many others Fellowship groups.

Thank You to our Customs Form Team: **THANK YOU** to Bill McLachlan, from the Caesar Rodney Rotary Club, who brought us into the 21st Century by computerizing the entire huge process for us. We processed **1150** boxes in a very short period of time. Thank you, Ann & Rick Hein, Amy & John Mousley and Terry Meyers.

A Very Special Thank You to our Dedicated Apple Box Committee:

Thank You to Jim and Cathy Morgan worked so hard to organize, gather and deliver almost **900** apples boxes that we used for mailing this year. Thank you also to Acme Supermarkets for all their help. Thank you also to Frank and Barbara Schinchirimini and the Smurfit-Stone Company for bringing us the additional **400** boxes needed for the project.

Thank You to PS DuPont Elementary School:

Thank you to Ms. Susie Murdock, teacher extraordinaire and Mr. Lincoln Hohler, their terrific Principal for organizing support for our project from their entire student body. This wonderful group of students and staff donated over **900** items that were sent to our troops. And **Thank you** for all their cards and letters that they all wrote for our troops. The entire PS DuPont School deserves all our gratitude. Our Troops really look forward to receiving their letters.

Thank You to the wonderful Delaware National Guard who transported all our 1150 boxes to the New Castle Post Office: Gen. Vavala, Lt. Col. Pankiw, Capt. Wolhar, Sgt. Strouss, Dean, John, and all their fellow Guardsmen and women. They were wonderful.

Thank You to the US Post Office who made our process so simple this year. Thank You to Wilmington Customer Service Manager - Dave Pudvan and his wonderful staff.

Thank You to Radio Station WDEL. Rick Jensen and President and CEO, Pete Booker, for broadcasting their radio show from our Stocking Store. A special **Thank You** to Carol Ann Weisenfeld and Jim Edwards for helping us to inform her listening audience on "Pathways To Service" WDEL.

Thank You to Operation Support Our Troops for all their help this year: Thank you to President Mary Kay Salomone and Megan Hostler. A special **THANK YOU** to Pam Sutey for making sure that **Stocking for Soldiers** has a wonderful home on the Web.
Our web address is:

<http://www.west-point.org/family/support-our-troops/delaware/stockings.html>

Thank You to Ms. Robin Brown of the Wilmington News Journal for her wonderful story.

Thank You to Adam Zewe of the Brandywine Community News for his great article.

Thank You to Mr. Doug Shimmell from NCB-10 TV in Philadelphia who came to our Stocking Store and helped us to tell hundreds of thousands of viewers in the Philadelphia/Delaware/New Jersey area.

In case some of you might have missed our publicity, here are some links:

2008 TV NBC story: This video will be available at our own website **soon**. <http://www.west-point.org/family/support-our-troops/delaware/stockings.html>

2007 TV NBC story: This video will be available at our own website **soon**. <http://www.west-point.org/family/support-our-troops/delaware/stockings.html>

2006 TV CBS story: <http://cbs3.com/video/?id=33551@kyw.dayport.com>

2008 Wilmington News Journal Story with Vice President Biden:

<http://www.delawareonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2008811250364>

DE National Guard 2007 article website LINK:

<http://www.delawarenationalguard.com/home/new/content/dngnews/2007/dec/xmasstocking.cfm>

DE National Guard 2006 article website LINK:

[Delaware National Guard >Army and Air Home Page- DNG NEWS](#)

Our 2008 photos are available at the following Kodak.com website:

<http://www.kodakgallery.com/stockingsforsoldiers2008/main>

Our 2007 photos are available at the following Kodak.com website:

<http://www.kodakgallery.com/Slideshow.jsp?mode=fromshare&Uc=iqgrmp2.7fclzwuy&Uy=vtf8bk&Ux=0>

Our 2008 Project was Dedicated to all the deployed members of the U.S. Military:

Over 140,000 of our troops are currently deployed and have volunteered their Service to our Country. We send a special Thank You to them all. In addition, we are grateful for our West Point officers and their

families. They have supported this project while their sons and daughters are in Harm's Way. Thank You, West Point Community.

It has been my privilege to coordinate this wonderful project. **Thank You**, everyone, for all your support and assistance. We are getting ready to start our planning for our 2009 project. If anyone would like to assist us, there are many ways to start:

1. Sewing Stockings now would give us a head start for next September. See our website for a **new** sewing pattern that measure 16" high.

http://www.west-point.org/family/support-our-troops/delaware/stocking_pattern.html

2. Knitting hats for our troops. See our website for the pattern.

http://www.west-point.org/family/support-our-troops/hat_directions.htm

3. Purchasing and donating fabric. (Please hold on delivery until September.)
4. Collect small sizes of dental supplies throughout the year from our wonderful friends in the Dental community.
5. Collecting gently-used DVD movies, Music CD's. (Please hold until September.)
6. Tell your Friends to join with us in September to help make the Holidays special for our Troops.

With sincere appreciation and gratitude,

Judy

Judy Travis
Delaware Project Coordinator

"Stockings for Soldiers"

Operation Support Our Troops
501 (c) (3) Tax ID # 20-2655437

Have a Happy & Healthy New Year. Hope we'll see you all next September.

LOST AND FOUND – Did anyone mistakenly take the wrong ladies coat home one evening? Please email me and we can return your black down jacket with a fur collar. Thanks

[Here are some emails and photos from some of our troops. I hope their notes of gratitude bring you all some smiles.](#)

Merry Christmas from Afghanistan!!!!!!

Thank you for the wonderful gifts that lifted the spirits of the soldiers!! Santa delivered all of them individually to the soldiers. We sincerely appreciate the Wilmington Kindness and thoughtfulness during the holidays. Again, our warmest and heartfelt thanks!!!

Sincerely,
SRT

V/R,
MAJ Ruth
2-2 IN RAMRODS!

On behalf of everyone at the 521st at Kirkuk AB Iraq who received a stocking, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude for the stocking packages you sent out. It is always hard being away from our loved ones and family during the holidays, and the gift certainly goes the extra mile to make things a little more comfortable. Thank you again, god bless

MSgt Curtis C. Security Forces Advisor - Kirkuk AB

Judy,

My name is SFC Soriano. I received my Christmas Stocking that you and your little elves filled. I wanted to say how grateful and appreciative I am. I wish all of you and your families a safe and happy Holiday. Thanks again.

V/R
SFC Soriano TJ
261st TTSB Training

Ms. Travis,

Thank you so much for the awesome care packages. We got them dropped in **by helicopter** a couple of days ago and they are great! We all really appreciate it. It must have taken a ton of effort and a good deal of free time on the part of you all to get them out here to us in the middle of nowhere! It really means a lot to us to get any mail, so for such a big bunch of stuff to come in at once it was like Christmas 2 weeks early!

Thanks a ton and have a Merry Christmas!

SFC Isaac M., Korengal Outpost, Afghanistan.



I received the hand-made stocking your elves made for me today and wish to express my surprise and gratitude. To know that you all took the time to make the stockings and fill them with the essential hygiene products and goodies makes it feel more like the holidays.

Please give my thanks to all that support us and we wish you all a very Merry Christmas and an even Happier New Year!
GySgt Jones, R.D.

Judy and the rest of your elves,

I received a stocking from your group and wanted to extend my thanks from Afghanistan. Your support is appreciated. I'll have to work that much harder to actually earn your gratitude ;) Take care.

Semper Fi, Thomas B. - SGT / USMC

Dear Ms Judy Travis, Elizabeth, Brooke, Matt, Aniya, Sarah, Zenzi, Matthew, Owen, Jay, Caroline, and all the other helpers,

Thanks you so much for the box of goodies. I really enjoyed reading all of your letters. Your act of selflessness and community spirit inspired me to send the box and your letters (after I made copies) on to a soldier who has only received one care package since he arrived.

I live on Bagram Airbase. Because of the large number of soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen here, the conditions are pretty nice compared to other places in Afghanistan. I grew up in Wilmington. I went to elementary school at Lancaster Elementary. I've been in the Army for over 20 years and have lived all over the country plus Germany and Italy. I work with a group of people who arrange to get high technology equipment for the soldiers throughout Afghanistan. I specialize in communications equipment, computers, phones, and radios. A long time ago I was able to drive a tank. It was really fun because it was so powerful and could go almost anywhere. I don't sleep in a tent here but I am a Boy Scout leader in Virginia and I get to sleep in a tent with the scouts.

Afghanistan is hot in the summer and cold in the winter. It's currently about the same weather as Wilmington but it does get to about 60 degrees during the day. It is very dry here. I've been here for about three months. It has only "rained" five times since I've been here. Two of those times, it rained hard enough to make puddles. Because it is so dry here, it is very dusty and the dirt feels like flour. The weather forecasters say it will get colder and we will have a few snow storms. The airbase is surrounded by mountains. Those mountains have been covered with snow for over a month.

I was able to watch most of the Phillies games as they were winning the World Series. Our time is 9 and a half hours ahead of your time so when you go to bed at 9 at night, we are waking up at 6:30 the next morning for exercise and breakfast. I've been watching the Eagles games on TV. They've been playing well recently and I hope they make the playoffs. Sorry, Jay, I'm not a fan of the Giants, but please enjoy the freedom of being able to root for whatever team you want to. For some reason, my wife likes the Cowboys – Yuck!

Keep up the hard work in school and your other interests. I've enclosed a picture of the group of people that I work with. We're on the roof of the building we work in. Thank you again for the box of goodies.

Lieutenant Colonel Mark B., 101st Airborne Division

P.S. I work with numbers a lot and so do two others around me. We really enjoyed Sarah's use of logic and statistics to determine there was a 50/50 chance of us attending PS DuPont.



Stockings for Soldiers,

Thank you everyone for our Christmas Stockings.
We all enjoyed opening them to see all the treats inside.
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from
1st Marine Logistics Group - Camp Pendleton San Diego, CA 2008



Ms Travis,

I am currently deployed to Baghdad Iraq. I received two wonderful boxes today with stockings and goodies in the boxes. The stockings were made for my co-workers and me...I just wanted to thank you and your volunteers (Operation Support Our Troops, West Point Parents Club, Rotary Clubs, and the area Girl Scouts) for thinking of us during this holiday season. We certainly have new friends in Wilmington Delaware!

Merry Christmas to you and all of the wonderful folks in Wilmington Delaware.

Jim L. JAMES A. "Jim" L., Capt, USAF,
Chief, Logistics, Sather AB, Baghdad Iraq

Dear Judy –

I wanted to thank you for the wonderful care package I received from you and your organizations at Christmastime. Although I live in Florida now, I grew up in Wilmington, and my family still lives there.....

I am a Navy doctor here, serving with the Army for the last 7 months (1 more to go!). Surprises such as your box lift our spirits, and keep us from getting too thin! My fellow sailors and soldiers are very grateful.

Do you know how much stuff you get in that box? I had to spread it out, and send a photo to my wife so she would believe me.

Thank you again, you are appreciated! Kind Regards,

LCDR Daniel B., US Navy 101st Sustainment Brigade Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan



Yes, we sent him Halloween candy "blood" .

Hi there,

I received your Christmas stocking and I have to say that I'm really grateful. I really appreciate the thoughts and gifts. The guys I'm with are really appreciative and grateful for the stocking and asked me to include them in this thanks to all the kids that put their time for us. We all really thank them and wish them the best. I personally want to say thanks to Taylor the 3rd grader from East Millsboro Elementary thanks for the card, it's really nice. I have it hanging up next to me. I really appreciate it. Hope you have a great Christmas.

God bless
 Lance Corporal Thomas
 USMC Afghanistan

Dear Ms. Travis,

On behalf of Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit ONE Detachment FOB Summerall, thank you so much for the Christmas stockings. Our neighbors and workmates, the Army Green Berets, shared what they received with us. We are 8 EOD techs stationed out of San Diego, CA and deployed to an Army Base called FOB Summerall near Baiji, Iraq. Our mission is to defeat, render safe and dispose of IEDs and unexploded ordnance. I just wanted to let you know that you made our Christmas brighter. I hope your Christmas is blessed and filled with friends and family.

Mahalo and Merry Christmas,
 LT Allison M.
 FOB SUMMERALL, EOD Officer-In-Charge



Chief-Elf-in-Charge,

I recently received one of the care packages you and your crew sent here to our unit in Iraq. Thank you for thinking of us and taking the time to put together these stockings loaded with a piece of home. Please pass on my personal appreciation to all the organizations that participated in this effort. Part of keeping our Armed Forces strong is the knowledge that our friends, family, and neighbors back home support us.

Thanks again for your thoughtfulness,
Dave

CW4 David A. G.
TF Diamond, S4

Dear Ms. Judy Travis

I would like to personally thank you and all that is involved in your organization for the gifts. I was very surprised and delighted to receive your stocking and to see the moral of the other troops rise when they received their stockings. I want you all to know that the whole squadron appreciates your support and we're honored to receive these special gifts during the holiday season.

I would personally like to thank Adrianna Arnold for the Christmas card. Being away from home and away from family is tough for all military personnel, especially during the holidays and this card brought a smile to my face. I wish Adrianna the best Christmas and New Years and would again like to say thank you.

For all that you do, Thank You

MSgt Brad G., 777 EAMU, Ballad Iraq

Ma'am

This is Scott L. I also wanted to express how thankful we all are for everything you've done for us. It brings a lot of troops here something they miss a lot and it is extremely kind and very much appreciated. From the bottom of my heart, thank you.

Sincerely, Scott L.

Dear Chief elf-in-charge,

I recently received your stocking with a bag of "goodies". Thank you very much for your support and your good will. Christmas is a wonderful time of year and it is very warming to know that those in the States are thinking about us. God Bless you and yours during this holiday.

God Bless, Brian B. USMC **1ST MLG, Systems Planning and Engineering Officer**

I just wanted to send you guys a quick thank you note. My name is 1LT Brandon T. and I am the platoon leader for 3rd Platoon, C Company 2/30 IN. My platoon received individual Christmas stockings from you guys. All of my soldiers really appreciated it, knowing that someone was thinking about them during the holidays. Thanks again for your kind efforts

All the best,
Brandon

All,

..... A couple of weeks before Christmas I received several packages containing Christmas stockings for every soldier on our camp. So, on Christmas Eve, my platoon sergeant and I put one on every soldier's bunk while they were sleeping. It was fun to do, but more importantly, it gave everyone a surprise on Christmas morning that hopefully reminded them of being home.

Typically, when we receive packages, we will take a few of our favorite items for ourselves and offer the rest up to everyone else in the platoon. After everyone has an opportunity to take something, we will divide up whatever is left over and take it on patrol with us to hand out to Iraqi children. Sometimes handing out candy and snacks can cause problems as mobs of children surround our Hummvees, but we enjoy doing it and it goes a long way in showing the young people that we are here for them, and that they should not fear us.

About three weeks ago we were able to drop off some bags of grain, rice, cooking oil, and other essential food items to a very poor village on the outskirts of the small city that we operate in. Not only was it great to help those less fortunate, but it helped us to establish a better relationship with the people in that community, which later led to them giving us some very good information on the whereabouts of some wanted criminals operating in the area.

As far as Iraq is concerned (for those of you who are interested), the security situation seems to be improving. Attacks are at an all-time low, and since the Status of Forces Agreement was signed by the U.S. and Iraqi Governments, Iraqi Security Forces have taken the lead in securing the Iraqi people. We eat, sleep, live, train, and fight along side Iraqi units who are very capable and very committed to helping their own people. We have developed a very close bond with them and Iraq is fortunate to have such brave men working on its behalf. In the next few months, the role of U.S. forces should slowly start to diminish, provided the upcoming Iraqi elections go off without a hitch at the end of January. I did want to make sure you all know how much your support means to all of us over here. Sometimes the smallest gestures go a long way.

Thanks again,

Drew

Judy!

Just a quick thank you to you and all your buddies for sending us all the holiday packages. It's much appreciated and everything will go to good use. As the temperatures get colder here, it's nice to know that we're supported by those like you who warm things up. Please take care and have a great Christmas.

Sincerely,
Dave C, FOB Tillman, Afghanistan

Dear Ms. Judy Travis,

On behalf of our team, I'd like to thank you for your incredibly thoughtful packages. The guys were all very grateful for your hard work and for the donations. The individual bags with personalized Christmas stockings definitely brought us that much closer to home and meant a lot to us - a lot more than I can express into words. We also loved the letters from the young students. Their creativity and innocence sheds new light on what we do here and refreshes our motivation to work that much harder and get home.

Again, sincere thanks for your thoughtfulness and support. Everyone here appreciates it. I hope you and yours have a very Merry Christmas and we wish you all the best.

V/R, CPT Dave B., 2/20/5 MiTT Operations Officer

HELLO MS JUDY. I WOULD LIKE TO SAY THANKS ALOT TO YOU AND EVERYONE ELSE FOR THE CHRISTMAS STOCKINGS THAT YOU ALL SENT TO ME AND THE OTHER TROOPS HERE IN IRAQ. THAT REALLY BRIGHTENED UP ALOT OF OUR DAYS, ESPECIALLY SINCE WE HAVE TO SPEND THE HOLIDAYS OUT HERE IN THE SAND. MY FAVORITE PART WAS THE CANDY OF COURSE. I MUST SAY, IT WAS TONS OF STUFF IN THE BAG! YOU GUYS PUT ALOT OF TIME AND EFFORT INTO THESE CHRISTMAS CARE PACKAGES. (LIKE ALL OF THE STOCKINGS HAD BEEN HAND MADE AND NOT STORE BOUGHT)! WELL TAKE CARE FOR NOW AND I HOPE YOU ALL ENJOY THE HOLIDAYS!! BE SURE TO TELL ALL THE OTHER ELVES THANKS FROM ALL OF US HERE AT FOB FALCON, IRAQ! 😊

Dear Ms Travis,

I am Lt Col Joe T. I have been deployed to Baghdad, Iraq for the last ten months. I recently received a care package from your organization...THANK YOU!!! The items are extremely helpful and brought some holiday cheer to us. More importantly, your packaged served as a reminder that great Americans like you and your organization are behind us. During the holiday season, our deployed troops need this support more than ever...it reminds us of the importance of our mission and that America does truly care for us. May God continue to bless you, your families and the United States of America. Happy holidays!

Sincerely and very respectfully,

Lt Col Joe T., Baghdad, Iraq **USAF - Director, Mission Support Unit**

Judy,
Please give my thanks to all who helped make the package you sent. It is greatly appreciated and I was certainly moved by the love you all shared with me this Christmas season. Proudly serving to keep you free. Merry Christmas to you all and thank you... Ken

CW5 Kenneth E. F., TF DIAMOND, Senior Signal Systems Tech

Dear Elf-in-Charge Ms Judy Travis,

Thanks so much for the wonderful care package. I received it the other day from the Post Office when I arrived back from a recent trip. Thanks so much for all the wonderful goodies. It brings a little bit of home to Tikrit, Iraq.

Please tell the entire group thank you for all their love, support and prayers as we really appreciate it.

Again, I wish you the Happiest and Safest of Holidays.

Respectfully, STEVEN G. H., LTC, GS, A Co S, G8 TASK FORCE LIGHTNING



Judy,

First of all, I personally would like to thank all the Organizations for the outstanding Christmas Stocking and the bag of wonderful personal items that I can use over here. I would also like to thank Lilly for the beautiful Christmas card. I have it hanging on my wall in my room where I'm living. I would like to wish everyone who participated in Operation Support Our Troops a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

John D., CW3, SC SYSCON

Judy-

We received your holiday care packages and greatly appreciate your support. What a nice thing to do for me and these brave young Americans out here. We are located in Konar Province, Afghanistan along the Pech River valley. We live in a remote outpost with about 65-70 soldiers located on our camp. We have been in country since July and are on order to stay until October 2009. Everyone is hoping that we will be out in the summer sometime- we will have to wait and see.

I have been in Command of the company since May of last year and have seen these guys grow into a disciplined machine that is capable of almost everything. I ask them to do the unthinkable and they continue to impress me. The greatest thing of all is that they are normal guys (some kids- 18 or 19 years old) from normal places like Wilmington DE, small towns in Ohio, big cities, and beach towns in California. They all have answered a very difficult call to duty in some of the toughest times we have ever seen in history for our armed forces.

Our mission in Afghanistan is to conduct counterinsurgency operations to legitimize the Afghan Government and increase the capabilities of the Afghan National Security Forces. In any one day, our guys work with the Afghan National Police force, the Afghan Border Police, the Afghan national Army, and the list goes on and on. We focus on development of infrastructure along the valley floor through projects with a provincial reconstruction team. We are an infantry company, so naturally we continue to spend long hard hours moving through difficult terrain hunting the Taliban who try and disrupt progress. It is a very diverse and complex mission and the men are doing it in the finest traditions of the US Army. We would not be able to accomplish this mission without the tremendous support you at home continue to provide.

There are several men who come from difficult backgrounds and do not receive many care packages. Through organizations like yours, our Family Readiness Group, and countless others, we are able to hand those guys a box on mail day and see their eyes light up. For the holidays, we plan on giving everyone something to open on Xmas morning- these packages fill many stockings and get the guys through some tough times. Again, I cannot thank you enough for the love and support you provide. The platoon on the camp will take some pictures in the next few days I can email you to show you some of the guys who are opening the packages and you can see some pictures of the environment.

Thanks again and have a happy holiday.
Very Respectfully,
CPT Nick B.

Judy and the Wonderful People of Operation Support Our Troops,

Thank you so very much for your generosity and thoughtfulness. Your unwavering loyalty and dedication to the men and women of the Armed Services is truly appreciated and please know that your tireless endeavors brought smiles to those of us serving here in Afghanistan. 1SG Montoya and I have received several boxes and distributed them to the Soldiers of HHC 1-26 Infantry as well as members of the Provincial Reconstruction Team. My Soldiers are thankful for your kindness and appreciate the contents of your care packages especially for the blankets because the weather is changing. Judy, once again thank you and your team for thinking of us during the holiday season.

Sincerely

CPT Bobby J., Commander HHC 1-26 Infantry "Wolf Pack" Camp Wright, Asadabad, Afghanistan



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Miss Travis,

My name is Sergeant First Class Scott A. H.. I am currently deployed in Iraq with the 4th Iraqi Army Military Transition Team. Today I received a wonderful holiday stocking from your Operation Support Our Troops organization. What a great surprise it was to be handed this gift with my name on it, as you can imagine when you are called by your last name as much as we are it is a real treat to see your first name again. You and your team of stocking makers put a lot of smiles on people's faces today and helped make this place, that can feel pretty lonely, feel like the holidays. I want to commend you for a job well done and thank you for making my holiday season that much more special.

Very Respectfully, Scott

Thank you for the Christmas Stocking!!!!!! "smile on this soldier's face"

v/r
MSG Keith W., 261st Signal Brigade

Greetings And Happy Holidays From Afghanistan! Myself and The Men of Recon Platoon 1-26 wanted to thank you all very much for your support, Kind Words, and contributions you have made to not only ourselves but the Men and Women of our Great Countries Armed Services! We hope you and your family and friends have a very happy and safe holiday season!

Zachary R. R., United States Army, 3-1 Infantry Brigade Combat Team, HHC Recon 1-26

Judy,

Just wanted to thank you for the great care package you sent to me and my team. I appreciate you taking the time to include us in your holiday. My wife Erika, and my daughter Kennedy enjoyed stuffing the stockings. I look forward to helping out next year. Thanks again.

Sincerely, SFC Joseph R. L., Gunslinger Mitt Team

Hello Ms Travis,
My name is Sergeant First Class Matthew W. and I am currently serving in Iraq. I just wanted to express my thanks to you and everyone in Wilmington, Delaware for the Christmas Stockings. This truly made it feel like Christmas at home. Thank you again and God bless.

Sincerely, Matthew W.

Ma'am,
I just wanted to send a quick note of thanks for the Christmas stockings received by my soldiers from your organization. The gifts were wonderful, the candy and personal items much enjoyed and your kindness certainly appreciated. I thank you on behalf of myself and my combat advisory team, TEAM MONSTER.
Sincerely, Major Brian P., Diyala Province, Iraq

Mrs. Travis,

Thank you for the gifts, cards, and food. I wrote back to the students who wrote to me. Please pass my appreciation to everyone who participated. I really treasured a card from a woman who just signed it with the initials "E. S." who talked about writing to her husband in World War II.

Thanks, again., Richard M.

XEROX IS DOING SOMETHING COOL

If you go to this web site, www.LetsSayThanks.com you can pick out a thank you card and Xerox will print it and it will be sent to a soldier that is currently serving in Iraq . You can't pick out who gets it, but it will go to a member of the armed services.

How AMAZING it would be if we could get everyone we know to send one!!! It is FREE and it only takes a second.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if the soldiers received a bunch of these? Whether you are for or against the war, our soldiers over there need to know we are behind them.

This takes just 10 seconds and it's a wonderful way to say thank you. Please take the time and please take the time to pass it on for others to do. We can never say enough thank you's. Thanks for taking to time to support our military!

Hope to see you all in September.....

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