



Liann Meyer

Objects for Deployment

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When I was in high school, the Army recruiter came to school. I talked to him about joining as an MP. I was excited about doing that. When he asked me questions about any medical conditions, that didn't go so well. I have had kidney problems all my life, and severe migraines and neck injuries since junior high from too many horse wrecks. Well, the Army would not take me. I was really disappointed. I still occasionally wonder how life would have been different if I had joined the Army, and where I could have gone around the world.

Luckily, I found another great way to serve my country. I can make deployment life better for our troops and their families back home. Letting our veterans know I am proud of them for their service and sacrifices is important to me as well. I can give the public a way to also show their support for our troops abroad, and importantly, for our troops when they return home.

What follows are the relationships and the organization I formed through these activities, and the connections I've made.

If there is anything I want the reader to walk away with, it's how important it is to recognize and thank our veterans and our troops. "Thank you." It is a simple, but powerful statement. So many veterans, both past and present, have gone unrecognized for actively serving. I want to change that.

MONTANA SUPPORTING SOLDIERS
(MSS)



In 2003, when my son Clint was in Basic Training, I belonged to an online Air Force Family Support Group. Through that group, I learned that too many of our troops are not receiving mail or care packages. I wanted to do all I could to change that. I got in touch with Mia in Ohio. Her brother's platoon needed support. I got 86 names right away and knew that I needed help; I couldn't do this myself.

I asked a few people in the community if they wanted to send some care packages. Soon the media got a hold of it and people around the state were contacting me.

We decided to officially become a 501(c)3 because I knew this initiative would be long-term, and I wanted to do it correctly. We wanted people to have incentive to donate by having the tax deduction. Though, I never imagined it would get this big. We're now in thirteen states. People say we should change the name, but I say no. Montana reaches nationwide. Marines give us a bad time because they say they are not soldiers. Then I say, "Well, does that mean you don't want our care packages?" That settles them down quickly.

It's not just me. Our organizing began with three or four people helping in my basement. Now, we're 60 members strong and located across the country. These dedicated folks volunteer a lot of their time. Without them, MSS wouldn't be successful. People help in various ways: assembling care packages, writing personal letters, helping at events, cooking for our dinners, and involving their own communities in projects and events.

The interest and support isn't as strong as it was in the beginning; the support and the donations have really fallen off.

People sometimes ask me, "Why are you still doing that?" I'm still involved because our troops are over there, and we need to take care of them. For some, the only piece of home they receive is what MSS sends them. There are various reasons soldiers do not receive enough support. Some join the military because they don't have much family life. The military becomes their family. Other families can't afford to send needed items to their loved ones, especially if the soldier is in the Guard or Reserves. The income from their regular job is suspended while they're deployed.

For other family and friends, it is emotionally hard to make the commitment to be there.

Troops share with each other. When they get a care package, they open it up and everyone gets something. We always ask how many are at a single location, and send extras. We don't just send a small box for one person.

Some soldiers have what they call "Hallmart". Any extra items that one troop cannot use are placed in a box in the hall for other troops to take. On most bases, all branches of the military are working, living and sharing together.

The "pay it forward" concept definitely comes into play. We send a package to one person knowing that its contents will be shared with everyone in the immediate area. One soldier will give another soldier some of the goodies in his/her care package, especially if that soldier doesn't have much.

We have had individual soldiers and Marines tell us "You have no idea how far your support reaches." We have received cards and letters from troops we don't even know. I often look at the mailing address to figure out where the soldier is located. Someone at their location gave them an item in one of our care packages, which they totally appreciated.

Some people say, "They are bringing all of our troops home. We don't need to send them anything." But, we're going to be stationed in various countries for years to come. MSS sends care packages to troops in Djibouti, Kyrgyzstan, Kuwait, Qatar, Korea, and of course Afghanistan and Iraq.

Please don't ignore our troops just because you don't think they should be there! Our troops are proudly serving our country, and protecting our freedom. I feel it is my duty as an American to proudly support them!



All of the items we receive for the care packages, and the money for postage and other expenses, are donated. We have lists of items requested by troops. There is a winter list and a summer list because temperatures vary greatly.

We receive donations from various organizations, youth groups, schools, businesses and individuals around Montana. Some of the contributions have been made with lots of love: a big box of dried apples from a woman's tree; handmade denim Christmas stockings shaped like cowboy boots; handmade knitted helmet liners; handmade felt Santa and Mrs. Claus filled with candy; children's handmade decorations, just to name a few.

People want to support our troops, but often are not sure how. We give them a way.

Handmade cards and written letters are just as meaningful to the troops as boxes of needed items. Knowing that someone took time to write is a huge morale booster.



THANKS!





It takes a big area to sort, prep and box all of the items. MSS has moved locations around Helena 13 times in 4 years. We are obtaining funding for a permanent location that fits our growing needs. That takes time and research, which is a challenge because we are all volunteers with limited time.

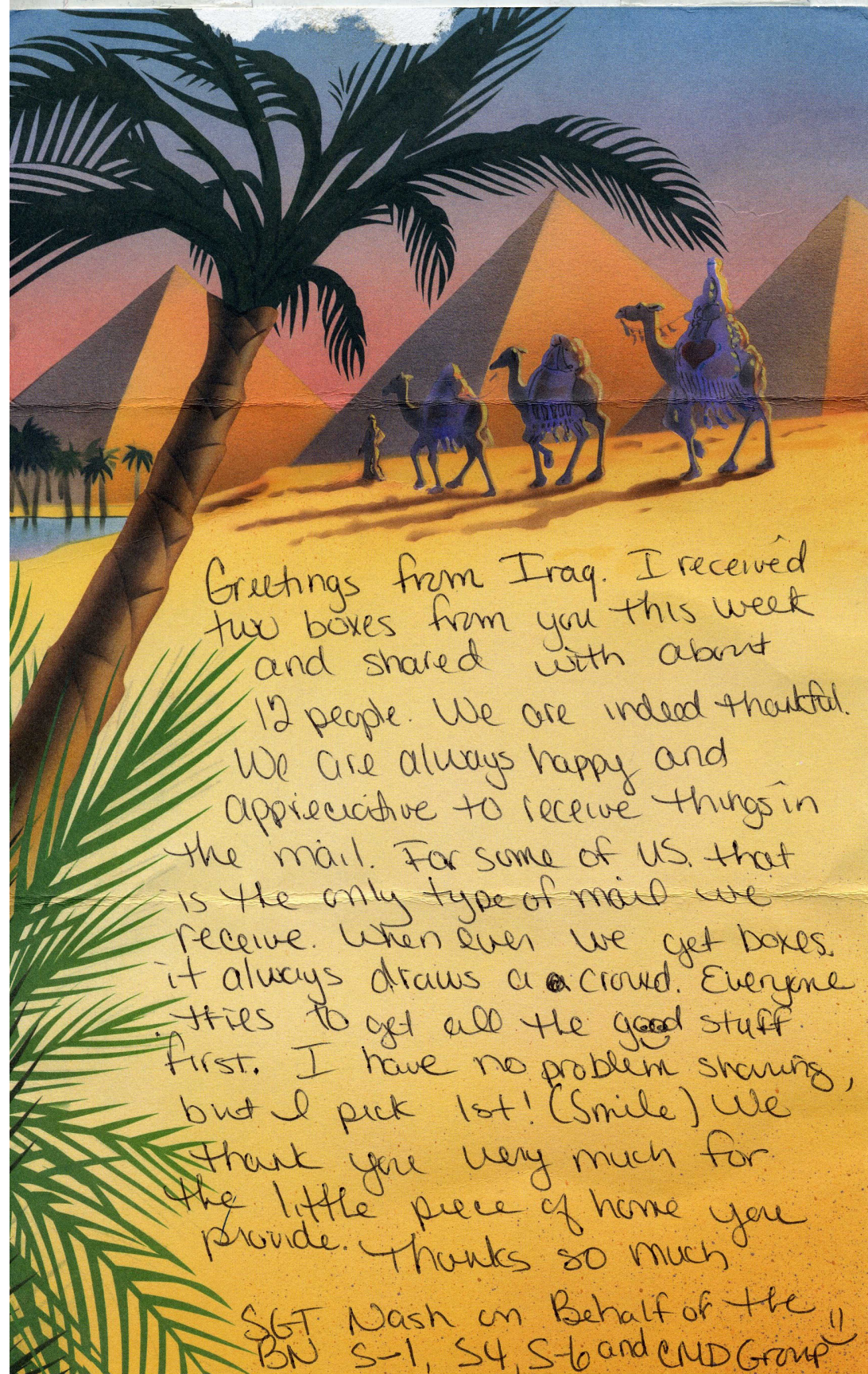
MSS sends packages throughout the year to troops. Our two biggest projects of the year are the “Cool Aid Relief Drive” in May, and “Christmas for Troops” in October-November.

Getting the items ready to ship is a very important step. There's no sense in sending the package if everything is going to be damaged and/or shampoo spilled all over when it gets there.





Receiving a card, letter or email from a soldier saying how much our care package meant to him or her is so awesome. That is what motivates me and the other MSS members... knowing how much our cards, letters, and care packages boost their morale.



Greetings from Iraq. I received two boxes from you this week and shared with about 12 people. We are indeed thankful. We are always happy and appreciative to receive things in the mail. For some of us, that is the only type of mail we receive. When ever we get boxes, it always draws a crowd. Everyone tries to get all the good stuff first. I have no problem sharing, but I pick 1st! (Smile) We thank you very much for the little piece of home you provide. Thanks so much.


SGT Nash on Behalf of the
BN S-1, S4, S-6 and END Group

The following Christmas card is from the first soldiers that I adopted. It took awhile before I heard from them. I wasn't sure if my packages were getting to them. It was so awesome to finally receive a card!

Because they were the first "adoptees" this card has a special significance to me.



Hello Liann

I want to thank you with all my heart for your support, you make us proud to serve our country and our way of life, Here is a little info about me, I have been serving our country for almost 17 years now, I also have been married to my wonderful wife for 17 years as of this past Aug. and we have 3 wonderful children 1 son and 2 daughters. although I am far away from them during this holiday season we still stay in touch by way of the internet and phone so all is well. So inclosing 
Thank you so much

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SFC
James
Wicks



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The beautiful stockings have warmed
 our hearts being so far away from home
 they are a gentle reminder that Our yellow
 Ribbons are still up. We will continue to
 Strive on to let Freedom ring through
 ignorance. To let equal Liberty rise
 above this Country's Confused set of Standards
 of living that is being displayed in this
 foreign land Thanks so much!

PFC *Michael Clarke*

Spc Ballard

Thank you very much Lianna you made it
 Xmas for us here in DRAG. Merry Xmas
 and God bless you and your family.

THANK YOU FOR THE
 SUPPORT FOR OUR TROOPS
 DURING THIS HOLIDAY SEASON. WE
 MAY BE AWAY FROM OUR IMMEDIATE
 FAMILIES BUT THINKING TO PEOPLE LIKE
 YOU WE WILL SPEND IT WITH AN
 EXTENDED FAMILY. THANK
 YOU. HAPPY HOLIDAYS.
 SPC THUNDER

Spc. Guerrero

Thank you very much
 for making X-Mas for
 all of us ~~short~~ over here
 away from home.
 Merry X-Mas & a
 happy New Year.

SFC Batson
 AKA Batman

A Big Thank you to
 you and your family we
 have fully enjoyed all
 you have done!

SFC Lianna's
 Warmest greetings

and sincere best wishes

at Christmas and

throughout the New Year.

Hats off to you,

SFC Samuel Uhler's Motorpool
 Soldiers.

The books came in handy.
 Thanks. PFC Anderson

LIANN -

IT IS SO GREAT TO
 HAVE SUPPORT FROM
 PEOPLE LIKE YOU, BACK
 HOME. THE STOCKINGS
 WERE SUCH A MORALE
 BOOSTER. THANKS FOR ALL
 YOU DO FOR US. Sincerely,
 PFC REE

Drag Dec. '03

MY ADOPTED TROOPS

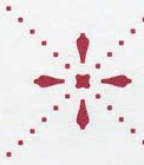
I've become friends with so many troops since 2003. They are all special to me. It is hard to mention everyone in this book.

The following are people with whom I've established particularly close relationships.

A special relationship was formed with Myles and me. He was the Captain of the first unit I adopted. He emailed me a couple times from Iraq. When he returned to Ft. Hood we kept in touch. He then transferred to Virginia, so we met for the first time in the lobby of the Walter Reed Hospital. He went with me to visit the patients, and has gone with me on the three visits since then.



Happy Holidays



Happy Holidays

LIANN,

I'M GLAD WE'VE CONTINUED OUR
FRIENDSHIP THIS YEAR.

2007 SHOULD HAVE GREAT NEW
OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU AND YOUR
FAMILY.

KEEP SUPPORTING THE TROOPS!

YOUR FRIEND IN VA,

Myles

MAJ. U.S. ARMY

Jason

01-June-04

Dear Liann

Thank you for the letter and uppermost the support from "MSS" your letter was the first that I have received so it made my day.

Again my name is Jason Lloyd I am a SGT for a military police company in Al Rasheed Baghdad our primary mission at the moment is training the Iraqi Police at there station, so we can later allow them to work on there own.

The weather is getting hotter every day this is nothing new to me. When the twin towers first went down I was a young

private serving in Kuwait and it got hot!!

My Family lives in CA and WA. I spent the first part of my life in CA living with my DAD. When I turned 13 I moved to WA to be with my mother and sister. I joined the army in 2000 from the Spokane Meps Station.

I have to say I am excited to know I will be getting a box my room mates get boxes almost every day and it sucks when I don't even ~~get~~ get a single letter

Well Ciann thank you again
for the letter and I hope
to hear from you again

Sincerely

SGT Lloyd

Since receiving this letter from Jason, he and I have grown close. We keep in constant contact. I think of him as "my Army son."

Jason and I were able to "instant message" and email a lot during both of his deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. I was grateful that he was able to call often.

Unfortunately, we have not had the chance to meet in person... yet. In 2009, Jason visited his mother for Thanksgiving. We made plans to meet. Much to our disappoint, there was a bad ice storm and the pass between Montana and Spokane, Washington was closed. I was so bummed!

The following is the postcard he sent after returning to Germany, as well as a few of the email conversations between us.

Dear Liann,

I wanted to wish
you a merry Christmas
and tell you thank you
for the support you gave
me, and how much
spirit you gave to my
troops. I am sorry for
not keeping contact
but I will continue
to think of you every
day. Merry Christmas

Love
(Sgt) Jason Lloyd
former 630 MP CO



Liann Meyer

4330 Hart lane

Helena, MT 59602

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7316198032031

PS, I have not forgotten

Sent: 12/27/08

Subject: looking for support

Hello,

I joined the army in may 2000 and exited the military as a SGT. I spent two years in germany after getting out. But the whole time I was out, there was somthing calling me back to service. Maybe a little voice or maybe Patrisim or just plane stupidity. Any how I rejoined in mid 2007 as a information technology specialist (the geek squad). I am now a Staff Sergeant (SSG) enjoying the fun in afganistan.

I had the blessed opertunity to be sponsored by MSS in Iraq (2004-2005) All I can say is that it made my stay a whole lot easier. I never did get to say a proper thanks to my sponsor Liann Meyer. she was somthing and I appreciate everything she did for me. Thank you Liann!! I still remember those popcorn balls. mmm mmm good. Any how I was wondering if I can be sponsored again.

please let me know
thank you
Jason

Sent: 12/27/08

Subject: re: looking for support

Hey Jason!

It's so great to hear from you again!! I still think about you quite often, wondering how you are doing, and about some of the packages I sent to you. I tell people about the wading pool I sent you, and all the Sponge Bob stuff, lol. Whenever I see Sponge Bob things, it reminds me of you.

I am in fact eating one of my mom's yummy popcorn balls right now that she made for Christmas. She's 88 now, and still baking and cooking goodies. She still makes her carmel corn for me to send to the troops. I don't know if I will have her make any for you though. I am mad at you! Why the hell didn't you let me know you were back in the States, and that you joined the Army again???? I really would've liked to have known that! I have missed keeping in touch with you. You are like a son to me, and will always hold a special place in my heart, where ever you are in the world. Why are you assigned to the 10th MTN DIV? What made you pick them? Just

Happy belated birthday. I did remember that your birthday was this month, I just couldn't remember what date. Hope you were able to celebrate your day in some way.

Congrats on making SSgt! That's what my son Clint is now in the Air Force. He is stationed in Utah, doing battle damage repair - sheet metal repairs. Currently he is in Spangdahlem, Germany working on planes. He got there in Nov. and will be there awhile yet. He got married in August, so their first holidays, and he's deployed. It was hard for me to get in the Christmas spirit, not having him and Tiffany here.

I'm trying to remember what part of Germany you lived in. Where you near the Spangdahlem area? Clint's been going to lots of holiday bazaars and other events. He has a friend stationed in Ramstein and went there for Thanksgiving. Someone was telling me that they do a lot there on New Year's Eve. Do you have any suggestions of places for him to go?

MSS is now in 13 states all across the U.S.! We have over 60 members nationwide! Is that awesome or what! We continue to grow.

I have met with President Bush, our congressmen and senators, several generals and other officers with all military branches. It's overwhelming at times. I never dreamed my little troop support would grow this big, and open so many doors!

Please catch me up on the happenings in your life the past couple years! I attached the questionnaire for you to fill out and return. We will certainly adopt you during your deployment!

Where are you in Afghanistan? I have several soldiers in various units throughout that country.

Do you get a chance to Instant Message? If so, which one do you use? It would be good to chat with you again.

I look forward to hearing back from you!

Happy Holidays :-)

Hugs & Smiles,

Liann

Sent: 12/28/08

Subject: re: looking for support

Liann,

I regret very much not keeping in touch with you and so many other people I even stopped talking to my family for awhile. A lot took place after I got out of the Army. I put in for VA disability and was granted 70% there were some injuries I received in Iraq almost all were due to the stress my body went through for example, heavy weight on my back all the time caused some damage to my shoulders. I was also told I had PTSD I never got help for it. So maybe that's why I came back into the Army still trying to figure that one out. Once I redeployed in 2005 I stayed in Germany till April 2007. lol the first job I had was flipping burgers on post at the BK. it was a tough realization to know that none of the government positions wanted to hire me. I was a vet but the spouses had priority over me. Finally I got a break and worked as a Child Care Provider at the Teen Center on Post.

I wanted to go back as a Military Policeman again but I was told I could not unless I took a rank reduction. So I chose something with computers. I shipped out to Ft Gordon Georgia where I trained till Oct 2007. I didn't want Fort Drum but I got orders there any way.

As for Clint heck Berlin or Munichen would be a great place to go for New years I was stationed in Ansbach near Nuremberg.

Congrats on the growth of MSS 13 states WOW!! that's awesome. I remember you talking about it and how it was growing but wow that's great.

Oh by the way I left the kiddy pool in Iraq for the guys who took over when we left. They laughed but I told them to wait till it got hotter lol. I still have a lot of the sponge bob stuff you gave me but there's one item I forgot who sent me it was a Tin of Sponge bob kind of like a lunch box but it had arms and legs. did you send that?

As for where I am at I have no idea I just know we are approximately 1 hour by chopper from

Heck on the trip here we stopped in a couple of countries and I had to ask the locals where I was at lol. I will find out and let you know. The morale tent where I am at offers every type of chat service. let me know which one you use the most and I will log on to that at the moment I use skype.

Liann, Thank you so much. I really mean it. Thank you. There is no way I will ever forget. and I am so sorry for not keeping in touch :-(

Jason

Sent: 12/29/08

Subject: re: looking for support

Hey Jason,

You are very welcome for everything. It was most definitely my pleasure. Thanks so much for catching me up with your life! You certainly have had some challenges the last few years. But, it sounds like you are overcoming them which is awesome. Having a positive attitude is a big part of how things play out in our lives. Did you get help for your PTSD when you got back in the Army? The Montana National Guard developed a PTSD program that is now being used nationwide. As you know, PTSD and TBI affect most every deployed soldier.

That's neat that you saved all the Sponge Bob things I sent, lol. Yes, I sent the lunch box too. What kind of characters are you into now?

I attached the photo of President Bush and me in the Oval Office. He was giving me a bad time about a comment I made to him before that, so I was laughing. He was so great to visit with. He spent about 45 minutes with 15 of us

He talked to each one of us. We were all with the DoD America Supports You program. I told him that Montanans and my organization respected him for having the (then I said I probably shouldn't use the word) to stand behind to the decisions he makes.

He just laughed and said he knew what I was referring to. So then when I stood beside him to get our picture taken, he said "You Montanans! You say it like it is don't you!" He has a great sense of humor. I got one of his coins! I also asked him for one for Clint, cuz Clint had just made SSgt. Clint was pretty surprised to get that!

I have about 30 coins now from various commanders, a couple Navy coins, some from Special Forces units that we support, and of course some Air Force coins Clint has earned. Each coin has a very special meaning.

Thanks for sending me the questionnaire. I will go shopping soon for you.

I just googled FOB Shank, so I know where you are, lol. After 6 years, I know where most FOBs and bases are. It's certainly been a good geography lesson for me!!

Did you get to see Gen. Casey when he was there last week? Or did they just have him see the "special soldiers in the special part of the base" like is most often the case?

As you can see, it's almost 2:00 in the morning, and I should be in bed. Not much has changed there, lol.

I use MSN messenger most of the time. I quit using Yahoo cuz it was messing up my computer. I use Myspace sometimes. We will certainly have to chat soon!

Have a great week! I'll write again soon.

Hugs & Smiles,

Liann



Sent: 1/25/09
Subject: Re: link

So,

SSG Farley and SSG Thomas were very interested in the new box. Oh they work the day-shift in my section. Anyhow i opened the box carefully because of the instructions and both guys had there mouths open like little kids looking into a candy store. I opened the box and the first thing we see is the Jagermister!!! WOO HOO is shouted in unison, but i new better. I through out the boxes and saw peanuts. I laughed and said your name. The dart board was the first thing taken out and set up in the tent and we immeaditly began playing. (I took pictures for you) while our game continued I looked through the box and realized I gotten the best sheet theme EVER! Wall-E! I ..How did i not think of that. after setting up my bunk and air mattress i could not wait to get rid of the sleeping bags. And would you belive i was warmer just sitting on top of the blankets and sheets than i was inside my sleeping bags? It was awesome. i was so comfortable that I didn't even go to sleep that night.

I was to busy reading the Twilight saga Wich I finished the 4th book last night. That was an awsome series. I love the little wall-e blanket that was the icing. I used the new underwear immeaditly (I had none. all dirty). The next day I was told I was flying out so I had to wright you ASAP just so you know I got the Box. So here I am in Bagrahm waiting for my classes on monday and enjoying the 4 days I kinda had off reading and sleeping.

Well I have homework to do found out that I didn't e-mail myself the correct stuff so I have to redo most of my work ugg.

Thank you so much I can't wait to sleep in my own cot again

BIG HUG
Jason



Lindsey



12/11/04

We have gotten a whole bunch of packages from you this week. All of the packages have been such a delight to open. Trust me all the stockings have found good homes. I have been on guard duty this week so it has been very hard for me to contact you. But while I was pulling guard at our front gate it really warmed my heart to watch soldiers leave the hospital with one of your stockings. Many of the soldiers leaving thanked us on the way out for them. Thank you for spreading the holiday spirit in Iraq, it really is a difficult time.

Everybody in the OR was much to eager to wait until Christmas to open the Christmas bags so we all thank you for all the special treats.

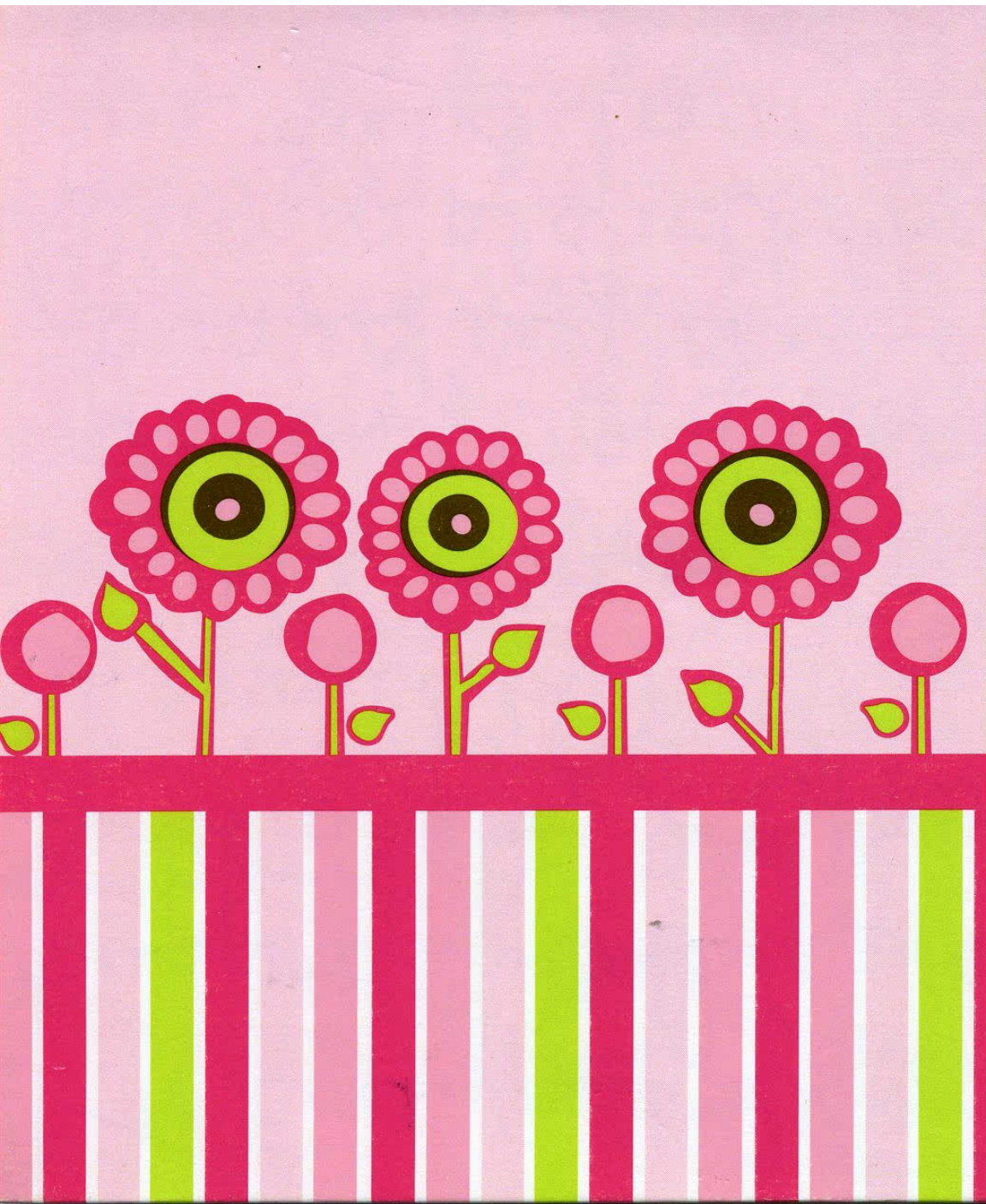
I can't share with you the dates of arrivals and departures of units on the internet, but as soon as the new unit arrives (shortly) I will have them e-mail you with a new list of soldiers.

About the flannel pants, we have been overwhelmed witheverything for patients. So I would just wait until the new unit takes over and then we would love to start recieving goodies.

Liann you have been such a moment of joy so often and we can't thank you enough.

I will help you with the news letter when I have a little bit more time.

Happy Holidays
Lindsey



To Everybody from Montana Supporting Soldiers, I want to send a big "Thank You!" I should be returning back to the USA in a couple of weeks, after a long 15 month deployment. This is my second deployment. This is also the second time you guys have adopted me. You have taken very good care of me each time I've been out here in the desert. What you guys do really does make a difference. Mail call is a huge morale boost & receiving packages from you guys always brought a smile to my face.

Thank You,
Sgt Chris Lindsey
745th Forward Surgical Team
Al Amarah, Iraq

Ben

Sent: 10-25-06

Subject: Needing support

Hi. My name is Ben and I am a military working dog handler in the Air Force. I am currently deployed to Baghdad, Iraq on my very first deployment. I have a 6 year old german shepherd named Riki. We go out with the Army and do weapon cache searches and clear roads for IEDs and even provide security for the Saddam Hussein trials.

I have been here for about 1 month and haven't received any packages and our dog supplies are dwindling. The local PX here is lacking to say the least. There isn't much sense going there anymore unless you are in the market for a big screen TV. Not to mention they don't sell dog items there anyways. Our dogs come first here so please send items they can use and if you have any left over room, feel free to add things for us. The dogs mainly need dog toys with squeakers and bleach, dog shampoo and some treats. If you need a more complete list feel free to email and let me know. I can also send pictures of us if you would like.

Ben





Greetings from Baghdad

REF: 536

Greetings from Baghdad

Ben Danton
MMFI-KS
APO AE 09316

DEPLOYMENT
Post Card

I just wanted to
say Hello from Iraq
with this postcard.
I hope everyone is
doing well. Thanks for
all of the ongoing
support for us. Things
are good here. We
appreciate everything
you have done. Take
care.

Sincerely,

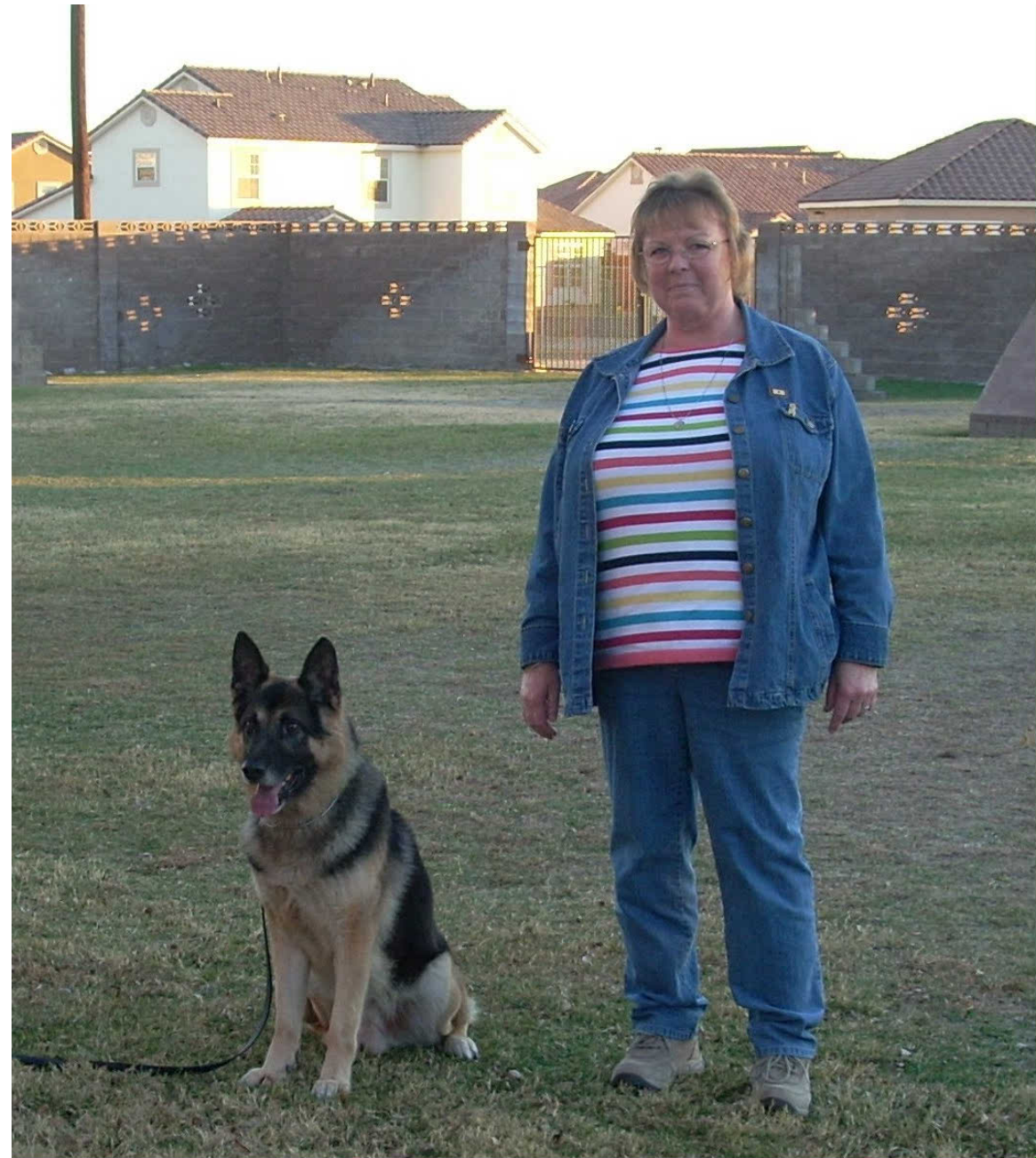
Ben Danton and
R.K.



TO: Montana Supporting Soldiers
Attn: Liann Meyer
PO Box 4964
Helena, MT

ZIP 59604-4964

In previous wars and deployments, they would kill the military working dogs at the end of deployments. They didn't want to worry about them bringing diseases home. It was heartbreaking for the handlers. I don't know when it changed, but they don't do that any more. I have proof... I met Riki at Nellis Air Force Base in Las Vegas.



Doug

COFFEE!!!

Good quality coffee is one of the biggest requests from troops. They work extremely long hours every day. Plus, for some of us, coffee is a necessity! We are very grateful to coffee shops around Montana. They have coffee donation drives. The employees also donate coffee.

In the following photo of Doug and his fellow soldiers, they are holding coffee that an MSS member got from South America. It's good to have connections!

MSS helped keep Doug caffeinated during this deployment, and his next one 2 years later. I was thrilled to finally meet Doug on July 4, 2010 when he and his family were in Helena seeing family. His mother-in-law Lucie is a valuable MSS member.

The next photo is of Jason and his platoon. As you can tell, they were very happy to get their caffeine fix!

The third photo is from Josh. His mother, Paula, initially contacted me. They used to live

Sent: Monday, June 26, 2006 8:30 AM
Subject: Gourmet Coffee Request

Hi Guys!

I was sure proud to see your website, Montana Supporting Soldiers! It does a soul good to see folks back home doing such great things to support our Soldiers around the world!

I found your link on the 'America Supports You' website. Sure was glad to see it!

I am currently in Kabul, supporting our strategic mission here in Afghanistan.

While we are not the guys down-range doing yeoman's work to provide security on the ground to the people of Afghanistan, we work some loooong days here keeping it all on track.

Our request is for Gourmet Coffee to keep us steaming full speed.

Thanks a Bunch,

Doug







Chad

I enjoy the friendship I have established with Chad, and his wife Sylvia. Unfortunately, every time I go to Washington, DC he is deployed. So we haven't had a chance to meet yet.

Sent: Sunday, January 08, 2006 10:50 AM
Subject: From a proud Montana Soldier in Iraq.

Dear MSS members,

I came across an article on the America supports you web site that told of what all MSS had done, especially over the holidays for soldiers deployed.

I cannot begin to put into words the feeling of pride I got seeing that people back HOME were thinking of us. Along with a serious pang of homesickness and a tear or two that went along with seeing your site, I just want to say thank you from all of us out here in Iraq, and a very heartfelt thank you from this Montana soldier himself.

God Bless you all,

Chad

Sent: 12/06

Subject: Need update from you

Hey there!

How are you doing? Sorry I haven't written for so long. As you can tell from my messages, I've been plenty busy. I thought Dec. was going to be a little quiet. Ha! It will be great to go to DC again next week though.

Don't suppose you will be home then? When are you supposed to return? When will your mail be shut down? I feel bad for not sending you a package yet. I'll get you a big package sent off if you will still be there.

It snowed the last weekend of hunting, which helped hunters. Clint got a deer and Mark got an elk. So the freezers will be full. We split half a beef with Clint too. Got a case of chickens from the Hutterites. Now we just need a pig. Although there's no room in the freezer. Hopefully we can find some weaner pigs to raise and butcher. We couldn't find any last spring.

I've been really searching to get a different job, but nothing yet. I want to get something that I can utilize the connections and knowledge I've gained the past 4 years with troop support. Jobs of that nature are scarce around Helena.

Well, it's 0100. I better get to bed. Have the next 2 days off. Have plenty to do as usual. A retirement home and some teenagers are helping us fill Christmas stockings with cards made by the residents and several kids in the community. I'm also getting some candy and fun things to put in the stockings. They will go to patients at Walter Reed Hospital. I'll send them to a friend of mine who goes to the hospital every weekend.

Hope to hear from you right away, so I know if I can send you a Christmas package.

Big Hugs & Smiles,

Liann

Sent: 12/15/06

Subject: re: Need update from you

Liann,

It's good to hear from you and sorry I didn't reply sooner but it's been crazy here also. I will be home for the holidays on leave (I saved my mid deployment leave for then) you can send something to the house and I can get it sooner!! I'll put the address at the bottom. I love hearing from you cause you talk about home, no one has talked about Hutterites in years to me!! Lol. It will be nice to get away from here to see the family. You have been a busy little bee. I think it's awesome that you've gotten to do this stuff though and it's deserved, I wish more people were as supportive and active as you are it really does get noticed and appreciated by us. Ok I'm gonna scoot and good luck with the job, I have faith you'll find something you're a good person so it will work out for you I know it will. Take care and hope to hear from you again soon. Hopefully I'll have a Christmas package from you waiting for me when I get home!!

Lots of hugs,
your friend

Sent: Thursday, July 6, 2006 4:14:48 PM

Subject: Re: How's it goin'?

heya Hon!

Well I started out going back to Iraq like I said I was. I spent about two weeks on mission there but then got diverted after it was complete to Afghanistan. I been here about a week or so now. Still getting use to it as it is completely differaEnt than where i was and what I had been doing in Iraq.

All in all no complaints though, actually I have more down time here which as sad as it sounds for someone like me I don;t quite know what to do with all the down time lol. But like I said I can't complain I caught up on my Smallville for this season except the last two episodes, which riled me up a piece but hopefully I'll stumble across the last two in the bazar some time. I caught up with my reading, actually have blown through my last book today I'll have to ask around to see where I can scrounge some more.

Independance day was Ok, we had a BBQ but it's not the same without the beer, fireworks, lil more beer lol.

Man I miss Red Lodge oh wow talk about a blast from the past there, never did much skiing there but I loved chasin the snow bunnies ahahahaha I love the area, well hell I love the whole state there isn't a bad piece of land that we have, well except Butte maybe lol. Man I have to get back home some day soon, you have no idea how much I miss it, no one out of state understands that but at least to me theres no place like our home it's perfect. OK I'm gonna scoot there's tons of guys waiting to do e-mail just thought I would drop you a note and let ya know all is well. Write back soon.

Your Friend,
Chad

Jim

Jim and I became friends through our emails. We would email and chat online as often as possible. I was very lucky because he was able to call me four times during his various deployments. He also called me when he returned to his base in Germany, to let me know he got home safely. That meant so much to me!

During one of his deployments to either Baghdad or Balad, I can't remember which, he coordinated the transportation for wounded troops to the hospital in Germany. Jim was concerned about one soldier in particular. Normally, he would never see them again once they left his compound. Jim gave me the soldier's name. I contacted Peggy, my friend in Virginia who goes to Walter Reed Hospital and the Fisher House every weekend. She visited the soldier when he arrived there, and got me in contact with him. I was then able to report back to Jim on how the soldier was doing.

Following are just a few of our emails to each other, and a card he sent to me.

Sent: Monday, October 17, 2005 5:44 AM
Subject: [U] Request from Iraq.

I am a soldier in Iraq that would like to get care packages or mail for my soldiers over here. I am not sure what your rules are or if you would like to adopt us, but it would be awesome to receive some things for Christmas.

Some requests I have over heard from my guys have been Hot Tamales, Bottle Caps (sp), sour skittles, any comedy DVDs, I am sure they would go crazy if we got any Under Armor Olive Drab T-shirts, black/desert colored caribiners, and any letters or postcards. I know they are not picky, and it would be awesome for them to receive anything.

My guys are from all over: Texas, Puerto Rico, New York, Ohio, Maryland, and Arkansas. We work on and support convoys and are located about 700+ miles away from our parent unit, I know that is vague but we are now under more scrutiny for what we say. Thank you for any support, especially as the holidays are getting closer. We really appreciate knowing that people care about what we are doing out here.

Sent: April 13, 2008

Hey Liann,

I hope that my email find you doing very well. I am back in Iraq once again on a 15 month tour, the second 15 monther and third as you probably remember. I am the Commander for my unit, so I have a lot more folks to take care of this time. The stress and rewards of command are great in both ways. I wanted to send you my updated address here, and hope keep as informed as I can about my comings and goings. Look forward to hearing all the great updates from you when you have a moment. I want to also thank you for keeping our spirits and morale high with the constant bad news or states going to hell in a handbasket news we see or read over here.

Your soldier,

Jim

Sent: 4/13/08

Subject: Re: I am back in Iraq

Hey Jim,

It's great to hear from you.... as always!! Things are going well here. I'm getting things done around the house and on the computer today. Trying to catch up a tad bit. I don't think I will ever be totally caught up! I was in town all day yesterday. Dropped some care packages off at the post office in the morning. Then spent 3 hours at our shipping office with another woman and her grandson. We boxed up disposable plates, cups and silverware that was given to us. I also got several other things done.

We hosted last evening for a Marine Reserves unit that had been here the past 2 weeks training. They all left today. They are going to deploy this fall. MSS provided yummy appetizers and desserts for about 150 Marines. We've got some great cooks in our group. The cook at the chow hall at the Fort had steak, corn on the cob and beans. Everyone was well fed.

It was a fun evening. I got lots of thanks, handshakes and hugs. (Hugs are always the best, lol). We had it at the service club, so the guys were happy to be able to drink too, lol. They were from all over the States, so most had never met each other before. They enjoyed the evening getting to know each other better. I stayed at the bar talking to several of them until they had to go back to the barracks at 9:30. The best part was that I finally got to meet one of my "adopted sons" for the first time. Tom is from Montana. I adopted him on his first deployment, and again on his second. He and I have talked on the phone and chatted online a lot, but have never had a chance to meet.

We will have a dinner again in June for the 20th SF Group when the battalion comes to train. They have been here several times. All the units really like training here. Ft. Harrison has a pretty good facility, and they are in the process of creating a separate SF training facility. The 20th was here over 2 years ago. It was nice meeting the ones we supported during their recent deployments. I went downtown with them a few times.

Hopefully some day you and I will meet in person too! That would be awesome. :-)

You can certainly depend on me and my group to support you and your unit. Let us know what you need. I have attached a questionnaire for you to fill out. Do you need coffee? 2 Starbucks stores here and 2 in another city had a promo during March asking their customers if they wanted to buy and donate coffee to our troops. We have about 800 lbs. of coffee!! Is that awesome or what! We've been busy boxing it up and shipping some it. It is whole bean, so do you have a grinder? If not, I will send one.

That's the highlights from here. I best get back to work.

Whereabouts are you this time, if you are able to tell me?

I look forward to hearing from you soon. I will give you positive news and events so you don't have to listen to the negative crap.

Hugs & Smiles,

Dear Liam -

Thank you so much for all the joy and cheer your care packages were able to give to my soldiers. I must apologize for taking so long to write as I have been a bit overwhelmed with the number of troops and craziness, however, I have a moment or two to write and relax. I hope everything is going very well on your side.

After being away for so long I am definitely starting to get homesick, but I got a while before we get back. The Montana Magazines were great and I enjoyed getting to know more about MT, it does look like a peaceful place. I am sure you are busy as well with Summer, but I wanted to thank you so much for making my command time here easier. Your Soldier,
Jin

Matt

Matt is my "Marine son." I was sending care packages to him through Tom, another Marine from Montana. Tom and Matt were together in Iraq in 2008 -2009. I supported Tom during his three deployments. He has a very special place in my heart as well. I finally met Tom when MSS hosted a dinner for his unit at Fort Harrison.

Matt and I met in person at the Darryl Worley concert in Helena in May 2009. I organized an Armed Forces recognition at the concert, as it was the day before Armed Forces Day. Matt and James represented the Marines on stage with Darryl in his song "Have you Forgotten."

Matt calls me "Marine Mom". We keep in touch and see each other as often as possible. The next photo is when Matt came to Helena to thank the community for supporting his unit during their deployment.

The other photos are from Matt during his deployment. Ben, the stray pup lived with them, and was then given to their replacement unit. Matt said their temporary home was okay. It looks pretty dang chilly and uncomfortable to me!







The preceeding photo that Matt sent to me is one of many that really opened my eyes to the harsh living conditions troops face. One soldier told me about his sleeping bag freezing to the ground on the mountain in Afghanistan. It certainly taught me that troops' needs vary dramatically from situation to situation.

FEEDING THEM WITH LOVE

Marine, National Guard and Army units from around the country come to Helena to Fort Harrison to train. They like the terrain, because it is similar to Afghanistan's.

MSS hosts a potluck dinner for the units while they are in Helena. We hosted the first dinner for more than 300 members of the 3rd Group Special Forces. Initially, we had only planned to feed 70! It all worked out though. There were even leftovers!

It was great to meet the soldiers that we later sent packages to. Most of the time, we're not afforded this opportunity.

It's common to get the following comment: "We love coming to Helena. People are so nice." "No one back home ever does anything like this for us".

Following are photos of food provided by our awesome volunteers and Van's Thriftway.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Over the past seven years I have received numerous certificates, challenge coins, (as of November, 2010 I have 30 coins) and many other generous acknowledgements. Each recognition is very humbling and dear to me.



To Liann Meyer
With best wishes,

[Handwritten signature]



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 27, 2006

Ms. Liann Meyer
4330 Hart Lane
Helena, Montana 59602

Dear Liann:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me at the White House. On behalf of all Americans, I appreciate the good work you are doing to support our troops. Your efforts to provide comfort and encouragement to our men and women in uniform reflect the true spirit of America.

Laura and I send our best wishes.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

A large, stylized handwritten signature of George W. Bush, written in black ink, positioned over the printed name.

Thank You

I Just wanted to take this opportunity to say Thank-You for all the wonderful things you sent to me & my Soldiers. We really appreciate it.

Thankyou
CPT LEWIS
COMMANDER





DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AFFAIRS
STATE OF MONTANA
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE ADJUTANT GENERAL OF THE
STATE OF MONTANA HAS AWARDED

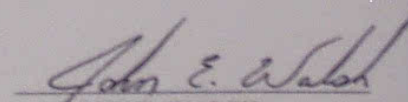
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S
DISTINGUISHED PATRIOT MEDAL

TO
MS. LIANN MEYER
FOR SIGNIFICANT PATRIOTIC CONTRIBUTIONS TO ALL BRANCHES OF THE ARMED FORCES.
MS. MEYER, AS THE FOUNDER AND STATE DIRECTOR OF "MONTANAN'S SUPPORTING
SOLDIER'S", HAS SENT THOUSANDS OF CARE PACKAGES TO DEPLOYED SOLDIERS. SHE IS
ALSO THE COORDINATOR FOR THE HOLTER MUSEUM OF FINE ART'S MILITARY/VETERAN
OUTREACH PROGRAM. MS. MEYER'S SIGNIFICANT AND IMMEASURABLE CONTRIBUTIONS
WILL HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT FOR YEARS TO COME.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND IN THE CITY OF HELENA

THIS FIFTEENTH DAY OF OCTOBER 20 10




JOHN E. WALSH
BG (MT), MTNG
Adjutant General





TAKING CARE OF OUR WOUNDED

One of my big concerns is PTSD and traumatic brain injuries (TBIs). They affect our troops when they're deployed and when they come home. There is an enormous lack of proper diagnosis, treatment, follow-up care, and understanding about these conditions.

Many of our older veterans were never properly diagnosed with PTSD when they returned home. A lot still haven't talked about things that happened, or problems they are having.

Families need to be educated at pre and post deployment trainings. That training helps them cope with their loved ones being gone. They also learn how to better understand the mood and personality changes in their loved one when she/he returns home.

Friends and employers also need to understand the reasons for mood swings, behavioral changes, and a variety of other issues veterans may have.

Visiting our wounded soldiers at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center is always a priority for me when I go to Washington, DC. I have been to the hospital 4 times. I also visited with some wounded Marines at the Bethesda Naval Medical Center.

I have so much respect and compassion for those men and women. Their strength and attitude is so impressive. They may suddenly become blind, an amputee, or have other serious injuries. But their attitude is that it happened, they will deal with it, learn how to adapt, and continue on with life. With the proper medical care, support from their families, friends and communities, they will be able to adjust and have a great life.

Before I go to DC, the MSS group and I fill packets with handwritten cards, magazines, socks, notepads, pens, puzzle books, and various other items. I send the packets to my friend, Colleen, in Virginia. The packets are delivered to Walter Reed, the Mologne House and the Fischer Houses for patients and their families. Myles goes with me to visit and deliver the packets.

In the next photo, Myles and I are delivering boxes of packets which we stacked in the wheelchair. We ask soldiers sign the flags. The yellow Patriot Guard Riders flag belongs to the Montana chapter. The other flag is MSS's. I have gotten signatures from NASCAR drivers, Air Force Thunderbirds pilots and maintenance officers; the Pro Bull Riders (PBR); generals, and several other patriotic folks.

Do NOT Disturb
Please see nurse before entering
Thank You!



FIRE



5731

Walter Reed Army Medical Center

Patient Rights and Responsibilities

RIGHTS:

- 1. To be treated with respect and dignity.
- 2. To be informed of the nature and purpose of the care being provided.
- 3. To give or refuse consent to the care being provided.
- 4. To be informed of the risks and benefits of the care being provided.
- 5. To be informed of the costs of the care being provided.
- 6. To be informed of the availability of other services.
- 7. To be informed of the availability of financial assistance.
- 8. To be informed of the availability of grievance procedures.
- 9. To be informed of the availability of patient education materials.
- 10. To be informed of the availability of patient support services.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- 1. To provide accurate and complete information about their health and medical history.
- 2. To follow the instructions of the healthcare provider.
- 3. To pay for the care being provided.
- 4. To be honest about their use of alcohol and drugs.
- 5. To be honest about their sexual history.
- 6. To be honest about their mental health.
- 7. To be honest about their current medications.
- 8. To be honest about their current health status.
- 9. To be honest about their current living situation.
- 10. To be honest about their current employment status.

"Home of Warrior Care"

Mission
"We provide care to past, present, and future warriors and to all those entrusted to our care."

Vision
"A culture of excellence in healthcare, medical education, readiness, and research in an integrated health care system based on the legacy of Walter Reed."

Legacy
"Walter Reed was an Army leader, physician, teacher and investigator who was able to connect clinical science at the bedside through the laboratory to benefit all mankind."

WHEN IT'S NOT JUST A DRILL!

RACE

When we choose a few, we leave people in need behind. It's a big priority.

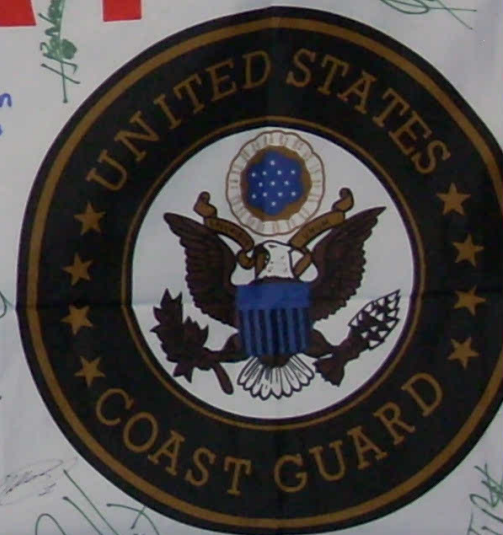
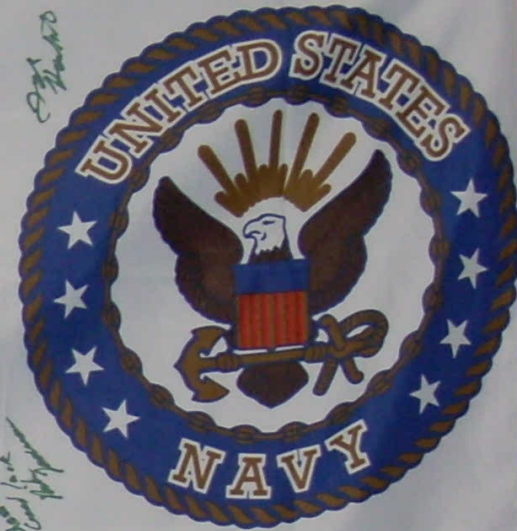
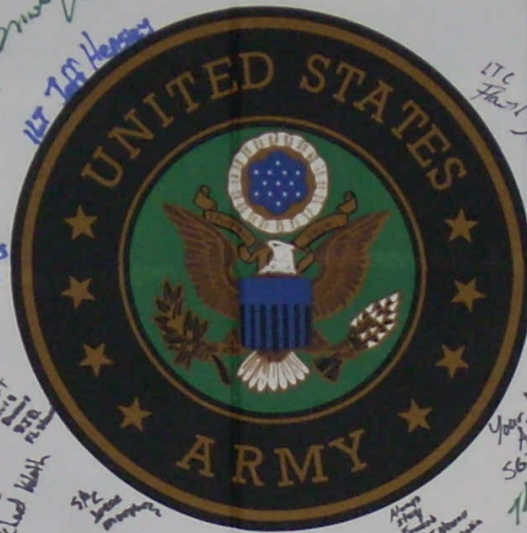
Send the storm and call your emergency response center with the precise location of the fire.

Close all doors, windows and doors that keep smoke and heat from spreading.

Evacuate a small fire with the appropriate fire extinguisher or smother it.

Your facility's guidelines vary differ as to the order of these steps - but it is vitally important that you follow orders when the heat is on!





**WE SUPPORT
OUR
TROOPS**

James Ivise
Sen. Jon Tester

CPL. ADAM
POPPENHOUSE

Sgt. MARCO Robledo

Andrew Person
Senator Coates

Brent Mand
Rep. Rahmberg
Dale Ch

An organization I am proud to be a member of is the Patriot Guard Riders. This nationwide organization stands in flag lines at funerals for our veterans and servicemembers. The group also comforts the families.

We show up at airport send-offs when troops deploy, and when they come home. It is important that they have a hero's welcome.

PGR chapters sponsor events for veterans in their communities. Several chapters also work with organizations such as the Wounded Warrior Project, and the Healing Waters Project.

This week alone there are three funerals for veterans around Montana. Two weeks ago, we lost two of our own Patriot Guard Riders from Montana.



SEASON'S GREETINGS

FELIZ NAVIDAD



HAPPY HOLIDAYS

MSS is part of the DoD "America Supports You" program. They held several meetings at the Pentagon. Here, we networked and shared with each other all the good work that's being done around the country to provide vital services to troops and their families.

After one meeting three of women who I had come to know well drove to Walter Reed Hospital with me and visited with wounded soldiers. Then we had dinner at the hotel. On the preceeding pages is a photo of us.

One of the women in the photo, Donna, goes to the Dallas airport almost every day to greet troops coming home from deployment. She helps them with their connecting flights, hotel rooms if they have to stay overnight, gets phones for them to call their families, etc. She also has a troop support organization and, seperately, takes care of the wounded by helping them navitate the system. What a remarkable lady!

When Clint came home from Germany, he called and said he was in the Dallas airport. Donna happened to be there too! So I connected them. Clint was very surprised.



MY FAMILY

I am very proud of Clint and all that he has accomplished so far in his Air Force career in aircraft structural maintenance. Currently, he is a Staff Sergeant. He has already lived in five states and deploy to four countries. Though I miss having him close by, I want him to get all he can out of life.

Mark and I have been married since 1977. Both of us have always been very involved in our community. We were livestock superintendents while Clint was in 4-H. Mark was a volunteer fireman for over 35 years. That took a lot of his time. Occasionally our holidays, special events and dinners were interrupted, but we accepted it. He often helps me with MSS, which I greatly appreciate. Sometimes that's the only way he gets to see me!

This photo is of our family: Clint's wife Tiffany, Clint, me, and my husband Mark.





MEYER

U.S. AIR FORCE

I owe my dedication and compassion to my wonderful parents, Boyd and Marion Iverson. I was raised on a ranch. My dad taught me early that we worked until the work was done. We ate after the animals were taken care of. Mark, my husband, learned right away that you don't wear good clothes to the ranch on holidays. Even on Christmas, we might be out feeding, getting cattle back in, fixing fence, or pulling a newborn calf. Sadly, my dad passed away in April 2010 from Parkinson's Disease. He was 92 years old. He work on the ranch until he was 91.

Most everyone who knows my mom calls her Grammy. She is still busy on the ranch. She is very talented and caring. My mom taught me to see the positive in everything and everyone and to care for others. For years, we have all enjoyed her delicious, homemade cooking. For example, she ground her own wheat to make bread. She has made lots and lots of yummy carmel corn for out troops.

Thank you both for all you have taught and done for me!



COLOPHON

A PROJECT BY
Monica Haller

BOOK BY
Liann Meyer

PHOTOS
Liann Meyer, U.S. Air Force, Montana National Guard,
White House, Soldiers with their permission

TEXT
Liann Meyer, text from troops sited in the book
based on correspondence with them, text from
acknowledgements, thank-you cards

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Clare Beer

TEMPLATE DESIGN
Matthew Rezac
Monica Haller

SOFTWARE DESIGN
Mark Fox

PRINTING
Lulu.com

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT
Bush Foundation
John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation
McKnight Foundation



This book is the result of the author's courage and focus at the Veterans Book Workshop, where we work to make manageable and material personal archives of images, words and memories from the current wars.

This book is one of many made in the Veterans Book Workshop. Each emerged from different circumstances and each finds its own unique use. One veteran may reference this book regularly, while another may set it aside in order to move on.

Regardless of the ways they are used, no dust settles on these archives. This book contains a powerful living collection of data, memory, and experience that is so relevant it trembles. You must pay very close attention to hear its call.

We made this book for listening. Please accept our invitation. We made this book for deployment. Please pass it along and invite someone else to listen.

Thank you,
Monica Haller

If you would like to purchase your own copy of this book please order online at lulu.com.

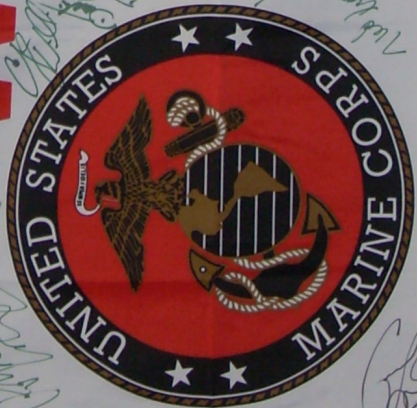
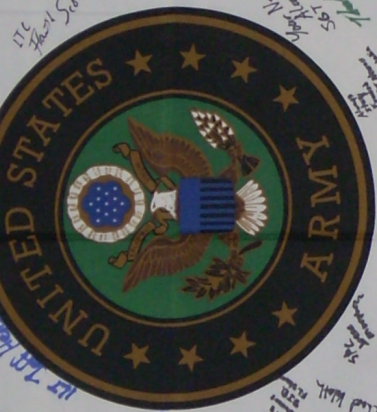
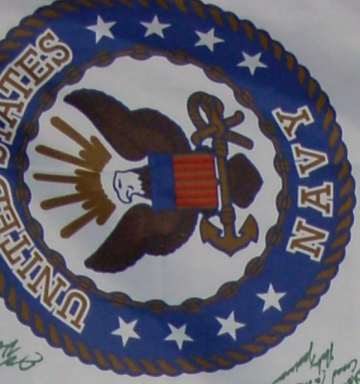
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Liann Meyer lives in Helena, Montana with her husband Mark. They are very proud of their son, SSgt. Clint Meyer. Liann is the founder and president of Montana Supporting Soldiers. She is dedicated to supporting our troops, wounded warriors, veterans and their families. If you would like more information about Montana Supporting Soldiers, including how to become involved, go to <http://www.mtsupportingsoldiers.com>.



WE SUPPORT OUR TROOPS

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CPL. MARCO Robledo

James Wise
Sgt. Tim Tester

Adrian Person
James Jones

Beck Munk
Rep. OLI

17c
Hans Scott

Sgt. Dan Remy
Army Corps

CPL. LUIS Wherry

All City Heroes