

## **JULY LETTERS FROM THE TROOPS**

Carol how is my good friend doing? It has been a long time sorry. I had some emergency leave my eight year old daughter was sick in the hospital so I had to go to nm to see her. Thanks for the pictures they are great. I will try to send you some pictures of the troopers soon.

Love ya  
Sgt Reeves

Carol, thank you for the kind word about my little girl she is great no damage she will be fine. I do not know where I will be in April hopeful home with my great family. If God's willing we will be there.  
Sean

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Thank you for the email and all of the support. Ill have to get with my guys and see what we might need. Ill write more later as soon i have the info u need. Ill send some pictures to so you can see who we are. Thank you and talk to ya soon.

SGT Rich Mullen

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Hello Carol

It is nice to hear from you. I am re-deploying this week but will talk to our replacements and the our Iraqi medical staff. Thanks so much for your support to the Iraqi people. It has been much appreciated.

Sincerely,  
CAPT Henderson *(he is the one we have worked with on the baby food project)*

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*We sent 2 corn-hole sets to cousins stationed at the same base in Iraq. Because one is active duty and stationed on the west coast and the other is reserves from this area their zip codes are different and one cost almost half again what the other cost to ship to I sent them both to the local Marine, Jake with the understanding he was to get it to his cousin on the other side of the base – well, that might have been a mistake. This is from Jake's mother. It is always nice to know what we do arrives and is appreciated. Jake's unit are MPs and work 72 hours on and 72 hours off. Their downtime could get very long because they did not have anything to fill their time.*

Jake called today to inform his dad that the cornhole sets arrived and they have been a HUGE hit.

I am going to have Mark write you his comments in a separate email -- he is just getting home from spending the last 2.5 days with the boy scout troop -- he needs time to decompress from that...

Apparently Jake says that he likes the bags that came with your sets --- the ones that I had sent him earlier apparently are lighter???? who knows --- I told him that he needs to go into the business over there --- using government wood, etc. and find a good seamstress -- corn won't be needed --- they have plenty of sand!!!

Apparently they had a grill out and a tournament this evening --- it was fun he said..

He said that after his guys played with both sets, Steve's guys might have to just come to their location to play --- Jake's guys won't want to give one set up..... NOT!

Thanks!!  
Terri Murray

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Everyone. I will be leaving Wednesday for 15 months and I will be using this email address from now on. I have added my mailing address although I will not be needing anything personally I

know some of you will want send things anyway so here is what I would want if you were to send anything.

cheap Dollar Store toys or old out grown toys.

pens

pencils

paper

coloring books

crayons

old baby or children's clothes that the kids may have grown out of but still in decent condition that you may be throwing out.

shoes girls or boys that no longer fit and in decent shape that you may be throwing out.

balls, jump ropes etc....

We will be out daily in the streets with the police and we pass these things out to the children.

Also I will celebrate my Birthday on the 20th of EVERY Month!!!! Just thought I'd let you know!

Here is my mailing address for down range.

1SG Stacy Ball

463rd Military Police Company

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As far as Operation Thank You I can be a point of contact. Anything sent is WILL BE GREATLY appreciated. I cannot pin point any one thing that Soldiers need. Basic hygiene items are big ones because I got Soldiers living away from base and they don't always get a whole lot of time to stock up on that stuff. ANYTHING will be nice though.

On that same note I just went out and handed a bunch of stuffed animals and some shoes to Iraqi kids during a walking patrol so if there is anyone who is throwing out kids clothes or kids shoes and they are still in decent condition I could use them over here. Those little dollar store flip flops for kids are the bomb over here.

1<sup>st</sup> Stacy Ball

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Good Morning to you all!!!

I just wanted to let my wonderful support team know that I along with the other half of my unit have made it home safely!!! We left Iraq on the 20th and went to Kuwait. Then we were there for about 24 hours, it was even more miserable in Kuwait than Iraq because its the same heat just more humidity!! After Kuwait we took a commercial style plane to Germany then to Maine. After that we went to Savannah GA to drop off an Army unit then to Wisconsin to drop off another Army unit then to San Diego. It was an extremely long trip but it was all worth it since we're back. We got back this past Thursday, rather late! We've had the weekend off and we'll go back to work on Monday! I get a week off and then I will be going to another hot desert, 29 Palms, for a 7 week school. At least I'm going while I'm still somewhat familiar with the heat!! Thanks again to all of you, you mean the world to me and the rest of the troops you take time to support! It's an amazing feeling having such a support team behind us!!! Thank you, Cassandra "Sgt Bleuer"

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Dear Carol,

On behalf of the 18th Iraqi Army Brigade Military Transition Team, I would like to thank you for your unwavering support not only for us but all of the troops that you are support with Operation: Thank You. Your generosity and kindness have overwhelmed our team. We have also received boxes from Loretta Cooper that also resides in Morrow. Your organization is first class and we greatly appreciate all of the time and effort that went into collecting, boxing and shipping the boxes to our team here at the Kirkush Military Training Base (KMTB).

We are a military transition team consisting of 10 Active Duty Army officers and non-commissioned officers with the mission to coach, teach and mentor an Iraqi light infantry brigade headquarters. It is a very demanding and time consuming job that has its own unique challenges. We live on KMTB with our Iraqi counterparts just 15 miles from the Iranian border. We do not have access to a PX or even local national stores. Our team has been here since 9 March and we have been receiving mail from our loved ones. Most of the basic needs have been taken care of but the team has come up with a couple of requests that we are having difficulty with. All of the team members have their own rooms with their own air-conditioners, which is a true blessing in itself. Some of the team members have sheets some have old blankets or cheap blankets that they've purchased when traveling to other coalition bases. I think each team member would love to receive a nice throw blanket from the "States" I'm thinking the microfiber or micro fleece kind so it would be easy to store/pack and it would also keep the soldiers warm. They would not need anything bigger than a twin or single size.

The other request may not be possible and we understand but the military's Morale Welfare and Recreation department donated a Xbox 360 to the team a few months ago. Our team does not have access to purchase any games for our system. We currently have two games that were sent to us by one of the team member's family. We would like to ask Operation: Thank You for a couple of games so our team can enjoy their time off a little more. The team would like any sports games, racing games or action games. The team currently has Just Cause and Lego Star Wars II the original Trilogy. I know that these can be expensive and I do not want to put that burden on anyone. We're just asking for donated games or used games anything that the guys can have so they can better enjoy their off time.

Thanks again for your support and generosity. Your organization has had a profound effect on our team just by acknowledging our service to this great country. I look forward to talking with you and your wonderful team of volunteers. I would like to send you photos once we distribute the stuffed animals you sent us to local Iraqi children. Thanks again and God Bless all of you!!

Sincerely,  
Tim

TIMOTHY J. DILEY  
MAJ, FA

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Carol,

Just yesterday I got a load of stuff from you in the mail. Thank you so much for sending and thinking of our soldiers. It means a lot to get stuff from the rear and this helps morale. Again, thank you and whatever you send is good and we will get it to the troops.

CH(CPT)Doug Henley  
Battalion Chaplain  
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This one came via the mother of Jake Murray:

I was working last night and all of a sudden Jake "popped" up on my AIM instant messaging.

"hey ma"

"wanted to tell you that we have been playing cornhole since 8 p.m. and it is now 4 a.m."

"we are loving these things"

"the bosses even love 'em"

"gotta go back out n play"

"see ya ma"

It is nice to know that there are many guys taking advantage of these gifts!

Terri Murray

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Dear Carol,

This is Melinda Clagett stationed in Iraq. I received the package from you today and thank you so very much! It was nice to get a box full of female goodies!! Luckily, there aren't that many females here, so I didn't have to share too much! Haha!

The box did draw attention though and all the females and I decided we had to thank you right away! Some info on us here...obviously we do have internet, but we do not have a PX or any type of store on the COP. We rely a lot on family and friends back home, but we know our "orders" can get expensive. We have all definitely learned to live without a lot of things, which I think is a blessing in some ways! There are about 7 females on the COP, but I work in the Aid Station with 3 other females from my unit. None of us have any specifics when it comes to items for women, but I can tell you that the body wash and hair spritzer were some favorites as we like to smell good when possible and our hair is taking a beating! Everything in the box was very much appreciated! We were very excited!

We thank you for what you are doing for us! It's nice to know that we are not only being supported by folks at home through prayers, but we are being supported out here as well! We love getting mail!

Just so you know, I have a lot of family in the Cincinnati area and I believe my Aunt added my name to the list. I did also receive the box from Mr. Nobbe and his wife, and again, the box was perfect!! Snack foods and entertainment are always good! I really made out like a bandit today!

A little bit about me. I joined the Army 3 years ago after looking for a career change from teaching elementary school! Yes, definitely a change, but I love my job. I am a mental health specialist and I volunteered to go to Iraq. I didn't expect to be moved out to a COP, but I love it here. We are a very small, close community and honestly, I laugh more now than I have in a long time! Of course, there are stressful days, but for the most part, I have no complaints! I am 27 years old and while I will be getting out of the service shortly after this deployment and returning to teaching, I will never regret my decision to do this job and I will always carry a sense of pride that can't be described for what we are doing! I also hope to be a volunteer who gets to send troops packages one day...it really does make a difference!

Thank you so much again for all that you are doing and for sending me a package! It really brightened up my day! I hope that we can stay in touch and like I said, no one here has any "special orders", we just enjoy knowing we are thought of! We are easy to please!

A special thank you from CPT Marshall (P.A.), SPC Moore (Medic), and SPC TQ (Medic) for asking about them and being interested in including them as well!

Thanks so very much and I hope to hear from you!

Melinda

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Well lucky for us we go out and come back in everyday. However there have been just a few times that we have had to stay overnight. Usually we work between 5-6 days and then we have a maintenance day to make sure our vehicles get checked on/ fixed if needed. When I was in Afghanistan we would go out for 21-28 days at a time usually to really remote areas to help train the Afghan Police. So, it's a relief to be able to come back and sleep in my own bed every night. I tell the guys here that are on their first deployment not to take for granted what we have because it could be a lot worse as far as living conditions.

Yes we do have women in our unit, 3 so far but we have more coming in the next month or two. I've been told that they have just arrived at the unit in Ft Polk, LA and will be coming out here soon. Since we are Military Police(Army) we are able to have both genders working close together. It's especially important if we have any female detainees.

We do have a microwave but no freezer. The mess hall is open all the time however when they stop serving meals all that's provided is stuff for sandwiches. That's okay if you miss lunch but sandwiches for breakfast just doesn't sit right in the stomach.

This is my second deployment. My first one was to Afghanistan in 2006, then we came back to Ft Polk for a year, and then got sent here back in November. Our living conditions are fairly good compared to what I've had before(tent, mud hut, truck, ground). We live in an actual building here in Baghdad. I'll make sure I pass this along to the women I work with. I'll also pass your info along to my wife. She is back at Ft Polk. We have two kids and also shoes taking college classes. But I'll definitely let her know.

Talk to ya soon.

Rich

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*What we do get around. It was nice to have a friend contact us:*

A friend has a son in Iraq who received a corn hole set from you. She emailed to say he and his buddy's played from 8pm to 4am! What a great gift that was!

Just wanted to say thank you for your wonderful efforts.

God will not be outdone in generosity... May you receive what you have given a hundred times over!

Blessings to you for the vessel you are to our Lord,  
Sue

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*This a thank you card I received addressed to:*

Dear Operation: Thank You, July 15, 2008

Thank you for your unwavering support to us serving overseas. The boxes of stuffed animals will make a lot of Iraqi children very happy. We often conduct civil military operations where we focus on providing essential services to small towns and villages. Giving things to the children plays a big role in this because they are the future and many of the families are very poor so receiving toys goes a long way to support us.

Thanks again for everything!

Maj. Tim Diley

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*This next note is from Lt.C Eric Roberts. He is talking about a coin that he sent to OTY in appreciation for our helping his unit. He has just returned from Iraq. This coin will be displayed with the other awards OTY has received in appreciation.*

Carol, glad you liked the coin. Our team call sign was 'Buffalo' so we thought it would be neat to model the coin after the Buffalo Nickel. The flip side of the coin shows the three American units that we were associated with as well as the Iraqi Division we worked with.

The new job isn't nearly as exciting as my last one, in fact, there are many days that I'd prefer to be back in Iraq. However, this job ensures I'm home everyday by 1800 and I've been able to help my two daughters, aged 22 and 20, get back on track.

I'll send a message to my replacement and provide him with your contact information.

Thanks for everything. Hopefully I can soon thank you in person for all of your support.

Eric

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Carol,

Thank you for your continued support. I'm guessing the reason that the package was returned to you is because I just recently returned home. I would like to thank you for your support and efforts to making the soldiers feel appreciated.

Thanks again,  
Blake Stock

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