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Top Stories

Web site gets messages to troops in Iraq

By: Bob Audette, Staff Reporter 03/24/2005

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Many Americans want to know how they can help troops stationed in Iraq. One family, concerned about this issue, started an organization to do just that.

"I did 20 years in the army, and a lot of that in the field," said Marty Horn, of La Plata, Md. "I know what it's like to have your name not called at mail call," he said.

Horn said his son, Brian, was one of 1,000 paratroopers dropped into northern Iraq at the start of the war.

"We got pictures back and he was sleeping on the ground, no tents - nothing," said Horn. "We thought that this was a little carried away, so we seriously started turning on the support for him."

Horn said their effort was so successful that they expanded it for other soldiers.

They created a Web site, called [anysoldier.com](#), to assist people who wanted to send gear, reading material, supplies and food to any of the troops in Iraq.

"The troops treasure letters from little kids," said Horn. "They can really put a smile on someone's face after a tough day."

Horn said he doesn't know how many packages have gone out because of [anysoldier.com](#).

"If you want something done, you do it yourself," said Horn. "I don't care how much is going over there. We need people to send their support. We are more about support, not just 'stuff.'"

Horn said the packages are not so much about what the troops are getting from the Department of Defense, but the quality of the materials.

"The Department of Defense has to buy from the lowest bidder," said Horn.

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"If you have to buy toilet paper from the lowest bidder, sending them anything from a local store has to be better than what these guys are getting now," he said.

"If you're having a bad day, even bottom dollar toilet paper is bound to impact your morale," he said.

Horn said the most popular item for the troops is letters, even from strangers.

Horn said DVDs are also popular because many of the troops have portable DVD players and laptop computers that can play movies.

He said the troops also enjoy reading materials.

"Anything current, magazines and newspapers, especially headlines from home town papers," said Horn.

"All they get is 'Stars and Stripes,'" said Horn, referring to the official newspaper of the Department of Defense.

"Anysoldier.com has been amazingly successful," said Horn.

"We're glad it's growing. We try to get people to read the Web site. The more they read, the more they get hooked and pay attention to our troops' conditions," he said.

"Anysoldier.com is absolutely great," said Clay Martin of Susquehanna, Penn.

Martin developed a Web site, called martinworks.com, that has links to troop support organizations around the country.

"Months before, I was looking for ways to support the troops, but I couldn't find any," said Martin.

The result was a comprehensive Web site, making it easier for people and organizations to find information, he said.

"I felt people might have different ways to help," said Martin. "Some might want to send directly to the troops and others might want to contribute to the USO."

Martinworks.com is a clearinghouse of organizations to give people ideas and help to support the troops.

"If someone arrives at my page, they can quickly get to a Web site that can give them an idea of how to help," said Martin.

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