

**A Great Rate**  
and a gift when you subscribe using Easypay

Only \$14.99 per month!  
That's less than \$.50 a paper for convenient home delivery

**NEWS-LEADER**  
www.news-leader.com  
[Subscribe now.](#)

**News-Leader.com**  
Springfield, MO

Search past 7 days:

• Or visit our archive

**ozarks Local News**

Published Wednesday, September 20, 2006

- E-mail this story
- Comment on story
- Printer-friendly page
- Subscribe now

## Family sends soldiers packages filled with thought and thanks

Phyllis Beger knows some of the packages she sends to soldiers in Afghanistan and Iraq go to those who hear and receive things from folks back home.

And she knows some go to those who never hear from anyone.



**Gene Beger** (left), his wife, Phyllis, and their granddaughter Sarah Stoll pack their 112th box to send to a soldier in Iraq or Afghanistan. Sometimes, Sarah adds her artwork to the packages.

Jess Heugel / News-Leader

### TODAY'S COVERAGE

- [Family sends soldiers packages filled with thought and thanks](#)
- [Town struggles with growth](#)
- [Lucky text message wins woman \\$200,000](#)
- [McCaskill, Talent speak of differences on security](#)
- [Judge doubles bail in assault case](#)
- [Project size lures Heer's hopefuls](#)
- [Missouri sees rising rabies rates](#)
- [Volunteers sought for task force on city's sign ordinance](#)

She and her husband, Gene, a retired railroad conductor, had been sending packages to two young relatives until they came back to the states. The men told her about those who never get a mail call.

A friend suggested she call up the AnySoldier.com Web site and view the names of soldiers who signed up at the site, wanting mail and small items such as toiletries, coffee and snacks.

She read through the soldiers' comments and short autobiographies and chose her first recipient.

"The reason I wrote to this particular soldier was because he wrote something like, 'Happy Valentine's Day, everyone,' and said he

**COLDWELL BANKER** Your Real Estate Partners for Life!  
**springfieldmove.com**

**VANGUARD REALTORS**

**Have you asked your real estate agent the four questions?**

**Q4: What is your list-price to sales-price ratio?**

**Click here to see how we answer these questions.**

**CELEBRATING 100 YEARS**

wasn't having a very good Valentine's Day locked up in a room with a bunch of other smelly men," Beger said. "I wrote him a letter telling him I hope next Valentine's Day is better."

Since early 2005, the couple has sent 112 packages to soldiers they chose from the Web site list.

Each package is the same outside — one of two styles of "flat rate" boxes picked up for free at the post office and mailed for \$8.10 a box, no matter how heavy.

But the inside of every box is different — customized for each soldier according to what he or she asked for and

based on what the unit has.

"Some of them don't have microwaves, some of them do," Beger said.

She uses small items such as Jolly Rancher candies and small bags of peanuts as packing material for the small spaces.

Sometimes even the couple's grandchildren, who live in Marshfield, get involved. Charlie Stoll, 8, loves to fish, so he responded to a soldier who requested fishing gear for their makeshift poles. "He sent him a Bass Pro cap, too," Beger added.

When Beger wrote about how brave her granddaughter Emily Stoll was through seven surgeries from September to December, Emily received Marine and Air Force camouflage hats to add to her large hat collection.

"He wrote her a long letter and told her why he thought God meant her to have those hats," Beger said. "He sent a list of all the places his hat had been."

Another soldier and his wife put the 15-year-old on their prayer lists.

Each package has a personalized letter from Beger, including photos of the family, something about them, interesting happenings in Springfield.

Sometimes she sends artwork done by her 13-year-old granddaughter, Sarah.

"I think the main thing is to write a letter with (the package), thank them for what they're doing, let them know you appreciate them," she said.

If Phyllis and the soldier end up corresponding back and forth, the letters become just like any two sent by friends. Sometimes the Begers don't receive a response.

- [Board buys land to move Hickory Hills](#)
- [Another member quits MOHELA board](#)

### [MORE FROM THIS SECTION](#)

- [Red tape one thing this barber can't cut](#)

### [RELATED NEWS FROM THE WEB](#)

Latest headlines by topic:

- [Life](#)
- [Candy](#)
- [Food](#)

Powered by [Topix.net](#)



[General Employment](#)

[Healthcare Expanding Continuum](#)

[Finance Mortgage Brokerage Hiring Exp](#)

[Education CHILD CARE PROFESSIONALS](#)

[Clerical Assistant](#)

[All Top Jobs](#)

[About Top Jobs](#)

"But that doesn't make any difference," she said. "We're concerned about all of them."

The AnySoldier.com site forbids copying soldiers' e-mails, letter excerpts or names, but even paraphrased, the comments tell how much the packages mean.

One says the packages are great, but the "support, thanks and kind words" are the most special part of the box. Another said Iraqis who "aren't trying to kill us" are really "pretty cool."

Some are flat-out funny. One soldier talked about sitting around in a room with buddies belching and otherwise letting loose of bodily gas. He wanted some air freshener. Another said they had enough hair color for the one female soldier in the unit, but she could sure use some hair spray and gel.

Beger says every trip to the post office she and Gene make is filled with anticipation of the soldier stepping out for mail call, opening the box of surprises and reading their letter.

"I think a lot of them feel forgotten. They just want us to know they're out there," she said.

---

Contact News-Leader columnist Sarah Overstreet at [soverstreet@News-Leader.com](mailto:soverstreet@News-Leader.com).

---

[Customer Service](#) | [Feedback](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Work for the News-Leader](#) | [Terms of Service](#)

[USA Today](#) | [USA Weekend](#) | [Gannett](#) | [Gannett Foundation](#) | [NIE](#) | [Parent and Family](#)

**Partners:** [Jobs: CareerBuilder.com](#) | [Cars: cars.com](#) | [Apartments: apartments.com](#) | [Shopping: ShopLocal.com](#)

© 2006 Springfield News-Leader. Use of this site indicates your agreement to the [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy](#), updated June 7, 2005

