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Resident goes all out for troops

Trina Kleist, trinak@theunion.com

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12:01 a.m. PT May 1, 2007

While her Navy son-in-law was on board the USS Ronald Reagan, Nevada County resident Deni Dax sent him monthly care packages.

But after Navy yeoman Paul McCallum returned home recently, Dax found herself looking for another, bigger mission as a way to support American troops. She found it in MALS-29, a Marine Corps avionics group of 185 men and women based in Al Asad, Iraq, with personnel out of North Carolina, California, Hawaii and Japan.

"I just wanted to show more support than what I was doing," said Dax, a resident of the Blue Tent area.

Having expanded her mission, Dax, 51, is trying to recruit others. Last week, she talked to sixth-graders at Seven Hills School in Nevada City about writing to the Marines.

"The kids were well receiving of the idea," Dax said. "I took card stock to create cards. They'll write letters and draw pictures on the cards."

Dax also attends packing meetings of the Friends of Nevada County Military, a group that assembles and ships monthly care packages to local service people stationed abroad - now 64 people, mostly in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"I'm looking for anyone else who wants to write a letter or make a card" to send to the Marines, Dax said.

Dax made the connection to the MALS-29 avionics group on the Web page www.anysoldier.com. In August 2003, military parents Marty and Sue Horn (no relation to Nevada County's District 2 supervisor) started the AnySoldier Web page to extend their support of their son, Army Sgt. Brian Horn, to his comrades.

Dax found Capt. John F. Reynolds Jr., whose MALS-29 group supports aircraft from all branches of the service. The group includes 10 women.

She secured donations from Raley's in Grass Valley consisting of foot lotion, foot powder, shampoo, trail bars, playing cards, poker chips, beanies, snacks and paperback books.

"They appreciate anything they can get," Dax said.

In his most recent e-mail posted on the site, Reynolds wrote: "Please keep the packages coming. The Marines gather like vultures every mail day, but we make sure the runts in the group get their share, as well. Absolutely nothing goes to waste."

Letters are the items soldiers ask for most often, according to the Web site.

"I'm going to be hanging in there with (Reynolds) until January, when they come back home," Dax said.

Dax can be reached at bluetent@cwnet.com or 265-8166.

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To contact City Editor Trina Kleist, e-mail trinak@theunion.com or call 477-4230.

For more information on how to support American service men and women:

• Contact Deni Dax at bluetent@cwnet.com or 265-8166.



ARTICLE TOOLS



- Contact Friends of Nevada County Military at Fred Buhler, 265-4878.
 - Visit www.anysoldier.com.
- Trina Kleist

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