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Vacaville, CA

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## Many ways to thank our military personnel

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- So little can mean so much to our soldiers

By Catherine Moy

Jan Martinelli traveled in May with her mother from Solano County to Washington, D. C., for the dedication of the overdue World War II memorial. Her father was 86 years old and didn't want to travel across the United States, so Jan and her mother went instead.

Her father served in the Pacific during the war, and Jan is thankful for his and all of our veterans' service to our country. The memorial honors 16 million who fought for freedom in World War II and the more than 400,000 who gave their lives.

"I had promised God I would say 'thank you' to every soldier I met," she wrote to me in an e-mail. "Well, in our hotel one morning as my mom and I were eating breakfast, in comes a soldier; up I jump 'thank you' ... then in comes another couple of soldiers, again I'm on the rise."

Jan spent a lot of time on her feet, thanking our soldiers. She and her mother had chosen to eat at a spot that was one-half mile from the Pentagon.

Her visit to the memorial touched Jan, and she hasn't stopped thanking the men and women who continue to fight tyranny and hate on our behalf. She wrote to me after reading last week's column, as did many local people who want to send socks and other goods to our soldiers serving overseas in the war on terror.

Though the whiners and haters in our society get the most play in news headlines, along the stories of car bombs and death in Iraq, soldiers, Marines and other warriors are making the world a better, safer place.

We do not work hard enough to let our soldiers know how thankful we are for their work. Paul Wiese wrote to me and offered a Web site that can help us show our thanks.

"It lists requests from over 700 service members in Iraq and Afghanistan for letters and other things they could use," Wiese wrote to me. "It often tells their story, and has some photos as well. Those listed are points of contact for other members in their unit as well. What a great way to feel connected with our service members."

Paul and his wife have sent packages to soldiers. Thank you, Paul. The site is www. anysoldier.us.

Meanwhile, the women of the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 165, Vacaville, are sending packages to soldiers.

"Many of those we adopt are from Vacaville or have ties to our veterans' community," said Kelli Germeraad, project coordinator.

The women plan to send more in January and they are collecting items now. Please call Kelli at 446-8505, Donna Sooter, president American Legion Auxiliary Unit 165 at

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449-8091, or Kathleen Heeren at 447-3702.

Kelli has been the best friend and advocate for our soldiers. I want to thank her and everybody who remembers our fighting men and women.

*The author, a lifelong Fairfield resident, can be reached at [Poohdo@aol.com](mailto:Poohdo@aol.com).*

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