



Members of Msgr. John F. Callahan Council 3600 in West Hartford, Conn., stand with volunteers in front of the 23 boxes they packed for U.S. troops serving overseas. Knights — along with representative from the VFW, the confirmation class and women's club at St. Thomas the Apostle Church, and West Hartford Girl Scouts — packed the boxes full of toys, snacks and letters that were sent to recipients in Iraq and Afghanistan.



Jere Hartnett, Paul Waters, Pat Guay and Steve Germann of Bishop Paul F. Reding Assembly in Oakville, Ont., admire some of the 2,000 valentines prepared by students at area elementary schools. For the past three years, with the cooperation of the Halton School District, Knights have sent out more than 6,000 valentines to veterans in nursing homes and long-term care facilities.

Least of my Brethren

St. Thomas More Council 8488 in Manhattan, Kan., responded to a request for shoes, jackets and blankets for the Kuchis people of Afghanistan. The Kuchis are a nomadic and semi-nomadic people that live in and around Iraq, Pakistan and Afghanistan. The care packages were mailed to a U.S. military unit stationed in Afghanistan and distributed to the Kuchis there.

Reading for the Troops

St. Anthony Council 9770 in Frankfort, Ill., held its annual golf tournament to benefit Father John Hannigan, a U.S. Marine Corps chaplain who ships Christian reading materials to troops stationed in Iraq. Over four years, Council 9770 has contributed approximately \$4,000 to Father Hannigan, who is a member of Harry G. Johansing Council 4482 in Twenty Nine Palms, Calif.

Care Packages Sent

Christ the King-Father Anthony J. Foley Council 11163 in Commack, N.Y., regularly ships care packages to two platoons of U.S. soldiers stationed in Iraq. The program was spearheaded by council member Anthony Bubolo, and each package contains games, care items, phone cards and letters from local students.

Memorial Garden

Owensboro (Ky.) Council 817 donated \$1,000 toward the creation of a memorial garden to honor are soldiers who died during the U.S. Civil War.

Steak for Veterans

Members of Corpus Christi Council 10958 in Carol Stream, Ill., visited the Edward Hines Jr. VA Hospital to cook a steak dinner for patients there. Knights cooked out in the snow, while nurses delivered the meals to those in the handicapped cafeteria as well as patients confined to their rooms.

Helping Wounded Warriors

Bishop Denis J. O'Connell Council 12366 in Fort Mill, S.C., hosted a charity dinner and theater show to benefit an area wounded warrior fund. The event raised \$3,600 for the organization, which helps wounded veterans transition back into civilian life.

Donation for Veterans

Msgr. Clement H. Kern Assembly in Lincoln Park, Mich., donated \$1,600 to assist local veterans. Knights donated \$1,100 to the Detroit VA Hospital to purchase books and other care items, and \$500 to Veteran Stand-Down, an assistance program.

Helping A Soldier

Bishop O'Connor Assembly in Bergen County, N.J., donated \$2,330 to U.S. Army Sgt. Shane Ugliono, who was wounded while serving in Iraq. Sgt. Ugliono, who has a wife and three children, cannot work and must attend rigorous physical therapy sessions each week. The funds will help Sgt. Ugliono and his family stay up to date with their mortgage payments.

Base Donation

St. Paul the Apostle Council 9352 in Alliston, Ont., donated \$1,740 to Canadian Forces Base Borden. The funds were directed to the base's "comfort fund," which provides aid to soldiers wounded in the line of duty and their families.

Regular Volunteers

St. Louis (Mo.) Assembly and its ladies' auxiliary regularly volunteer at St. Louis-area VA hospitals as part of the Order's Serving Those Who Served program. The ladies' auxiliary also sews flannel bedrolls for homeless veterans in the community.

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To order, fax a completed requisition (form #1) to 1-800-266-6340. For more information about ordering, e-mail supply@kofc.org.

Web Site Aims to Help Military Families Cope

Judy McCloskey has learned a lot about surviving in a military family.

by Katie Bahr,
Catholic News
Service

A parishioner at St. John the Baptist Church in Front Royal, Va., McCloskey is both a Navy wife and a mother of six. She also has firsthand knowledge of the sacrifices and struggles of faith that go along with a life spent serving one's country.

Although she grew up Catholic in California, McCloskey remembers her family becoming very confused about the faith after the Second Vatican Council. This confusion led McCloskey and her family to drift away from the Church. It was only after she became the wife of a Navy officer that McCloskey started to come back to the faith. She was finally able to find the answers to her questions through the Navy's chaplain program and the local Catholic community.

In 2000, McCloskey realized she wanted to help other Catholic military families try to live out their faith, so she went looking for an organization that would help her do so.

"I served as a sleuth determined to find an already existing lay apostolate focused on the spiritual edification of Catholics serving in the U.S. military — some place I could volunteer and get this out of my system," McCloskey said.

When she realized there was no such organization, McCloskey decided it was up to her to establish one herself.

That was when she started the Web-based apostolate CatholicMil.org, which was launched in 2001. McCloskey now works full time using her own experiences to offer guidance and comfort to other military families trying to stay balanced, whether they're stationed overseas or at home waiting for their loved ones to return.

"I wanted to share what I had discovered with other military families and that's exactly what I've done," McCloskey said.

According to the site's mission, CatholicMil.org works to "spiritually edify" military families who have immediate family members serving on active duty. It also encourages priests and those entering the priesthood to consider becoming a military chaplain and serving the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA.

In addition, the site is working on the sainthood cause of Father Vincent Capodanno, a chaplain who was killed while performing last rites for dying soldiers in Vietnam.

While McCloskey is pleased with the results of the Web site, she admits it has been a huge challenge.



[Above] Judy McCloskey, founder of CatholicMil.org, a Web-based apostolate dedicated to the spiritual support of military families. [Right] A screen grab from the Web site's home page.

"If I knew then what I know now, would I have still started it? I'm not so sure," McCloskey said. "It's been exceptionally challenging, absolutely."

The hardest part of starting the organization, according to McCloskey, has been trying to juggle the demands of CatholicMil.org while raising her children — sometimes by herself while her husband was deployed. She attributes the site's success to the entire team of people who have worked on it and, of course, to God.

"It's one of those things where it was going to happen," McCloskey said. "God put a lot of the right people in my path and it was just like everything started to fall into place."

Today, CatholicMil.org works nationally and is recognized by the Department of

Defense. It is also supported by U.S. Army, Navy and Air Force chaplains.

Additionally, the apostolate has developed partnerships with organizations such as the Fulton Sheen Foundation and Catholic Answers, and has donated more than \$1.16 million in supplies to troops stationed around the world. Care packages include Bibles, rosaries and other Catholic items.

"CatholicMil is doing what we can to help the too few priests we have ministering to those who serve," said McCloskey. "Team CatholicMil does our part, and God truly blesses our efforts. God makes the impossible a reality." ■

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