

Guard soldiers are making their mark in Iraq

Congratulations to the members of F Battery 202nd Air Defense Artillery comprised of personnel from the Dixon, Kewanee and Galva National Guard units.

The unit was the first to be named a hero of the 1st Cavalry Division because of its efforts during the Battle of Holy Week April 7-11.

Two F/202nd ADA soldiers, staff Sgt. David Jensen of Albany and Sgt. Bruce Hartman of Galva, were the first to be awarded medals for action during Holy Week.

The unit arrived on scene in Baghdad in April. During a recent mission Jensen decided to check out a vehicle. His squad put up a perimeter for security while Jensen and two others checked out the vehicle.

"We were looking at it through the (binoculars)" Jensen said. "We got closer and closer, and were checking every angle of it. I walked up, saw there was a cell phone on the dash and a package on the driver's side and yelled 'get the heck out of here' and ran back over."

A call was put in for an explosive ordinance disposal (EOD) crew and when they arrived, they noticed Hartman had an M-14 sniper rifle and asked him for a favor.

"Hartman was the sniper who took out the detonation device. The interesting thing is, he's trained as a cook. It took him two shots, one to knock out the windows and the second to knock out the detonation device (the cell phone)," said Major Michael Kessel, the Fox 202nd ADA commander.

With the detonation device destroyed, the EOD blew up the vehicle in place.

The men were awarded Army Commendation Medals by Maj. Gen. Peter Chiarelli, commander of the 1st Cavalry Division.

Three Fox 202nd ADA soldiers were recently awarded Purple Hearts for being injured in battle. They included Sgt. Jon Arneson of Sterling.

Meanwhile, Mark Stach of Dixon reported on May 4 that things had been quiet in his area following the heavy fighting during Holy Week.

"It's been quiet for about three weeks. I'm hanging in there just praying we don't go through the fighting again we saw on Holy Week. Please tell everyone I said hello."

The Dixon American Legion had sent a phone card to Stach and he received it last week.

Stach sent a photo of the guys with Chicago Cubs shirts and a Cubs flag while taking a break from training in Baghdad.

When a soldier is far from home, items that help pass the time are messages from friends and loved ones to let them know their work is not forgotten.

The father of one soldier who is stationed in Iraq submitted a partial list of items the guys would like to receive.

The list includes phone cards. Please be generous with the amount of minutes because a lot of those minutes are used up waiting for connections.

Word is that the ATT calling cards are useable. Other items include one called a bore snake, for cleaning rifles/pistols. Natchez Shooters supply will ship direct (natchezss.com). Also some type of dry weapons spray lube could be handy to carry.

Other suggestions include things to mix with water, like powdered Gatorade, Kool Aid; photos, e-mail addresses (if they have opportunity to access Internet), baby wipes or similar. There are several kinds of camping wash towels, baby wipes. They have lots of uses.

Sandwich bags, Girl Scout cookies, metal bowls, (large doggy dish type), replacements for things you already sent before, underwear, socks, batteries, AA's probably, depending on what gadgets were taken along.

Also, a personal item such as from shieldsofstrength.com or religious medallions, as appropriate. Package things in gallon freezer bags to keep the sand, etc., out during shipping and for use to store stuff after it gets there.

If you love freedom, remember our soldiers and veterans, particularly this time of year. Saturday was Armed Forces Day.

Send the items to:

Name of soldier

1 CAV, 4-5 ADA

ATTN: F 202 ADA

APO AE 09379

Or contact Denise Steffens of Operation Support.

© Copyright 2004 Sauk Valley Newspapers. All rights reserved.

You can read this story online at <http://www.saukvalley.com//search/285424284480676.bsp>

Subscribe to the Telegraph of Daily Gazette today!

Get the entire story 7 days a week. Call (815) 625-3600 ext. 301 or subscribe online at

<http://www.saukvalley.com/formmail/subscribe.php>