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Chicago suburb 'adopts' Guard unit

By *DAVE CLARKE* Of *The Star Courier*

GLENCOE -- The residents of a northern Chicago suburb have adopted the Galva National Guard unit after efforts to find soldiers from their own community fighting in Iraq proved unsuccessful.

Katie Sweeney, whose aunt, Irma Krantz, and cousins Linda and Rick Mack, live in Galva, posted a letter on the city's website, Galva.Com, congratulating the community on its support of Battery F, 202nd Air Defense Artillery, currently serving with the 1st Cavalry in Baghdad.

"Over the summer had the pleasure of coming for a visit during your anniversary celebration and was overcome with the sense of devotion and patriotism you have regarding the Galva National Guard -- Battery F, 202nd," Sweeney said. "The community I work for is located about 25 miles north of Chicago. We asked the residents through our local paper, and could find no family who has a member fighting in Iraq...so the Village of Glencoe will be sponsoring Battery F," she said.

Sweeney said it occurred to her while visiting Galva last summer that everyone should be supporting the brave men and women "who are fighting for the very thing we hold dear -- our freedom."

Sweeney contacted SSG Martin Gibson, the unit's rear detachment officer at the Galva Armory, and came up with a list of needed items and an address where they can be sent.

Letters from children in the community will be

included in each package.

She is also asking for photos of members of the Galva unit to post at the village hall, police and fire departments where drop-off bins will be located to collect items donated to be sent to Iraq.

"Operation Glencoe Cares," will begin Saturday, Oct. 16.

"Our hope is to make a small difference in their lives and let them know that a village three hours northeast of their hometowns appreciates their dedication to our freedom," Sweeney said.

She said the Chicago Tribune has agreed to run a story on the project in its Sunday, Oct. 3 issue. The Galva American Legion post is also making efforts to contact Sweeney, as well as the Legion post in that area.

Sweeney's letter and e-mail address can be found in the guestbook of the Galva.Com website.

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