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Thursday August 25, 2005

News

'Any Soldier' project sends cards to soldiers in Iraq, Afghanistan

By Gene Bering -- Brownwood Bulletin

Hallmark and 4 Corners Gifts are making it easier for area residents to boost the spirits of American service personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan.

It's called the "Any Soldier" project, and it allows anyone to send one of Hallmark's "American Heroes" series of cards to enlisted men and women in the two regions, explained Judy Ehrke, owner of 4 Corners Gifts.

"We're providing free cards for the public to come in and sign to the soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan," Ehrke said. "We give the cards, and once someone has signed the card or written a message, Hallmark furnishes the postage to send it."

The project is being carried out in conjunction with Anysoldier.com, a Web site that can connect well-wishers to service personnel serving in the two countries -- especially those who might not receive much mail, Ehrke said.

Through Anysoldier.com, cards, letters and packages are sent to a military contact -- with the notation "Attn: Any Soldier" on the second line of the address. The contact in turn passes the the correspondence to a soldier. According to Anysoldier.com, "If there is 'any soldier' who is not receiving a lot of mail from home, that soldier will be the first person to receive the letter."

Ehrke said Hallmark is testing the "Any Soldier" program in Brownwood. "We're like the kickoff program," she said. "And so far, the response has been very good. The word's getting out."



Photo by Gene Deason -- Judy Ehrke, right, and Shirley Cline of 4 Corners in downtown Brownwood show some of the cards area residents may send to American soldiers overseas. The Hallmark program is designed to provide mail for military personnel who don't receive any on a regular basis.



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The "America's Heroes" line of cards features several designs including humorous, light-hearted and serious cards, as well as blank-inside cards for personal messages.

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