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Kate Fratti

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Help a soldier, any soldier

Marc Carr, husband of Sherri Carr of Holland, is a physician with the Army Reserves in Mosul, Iraq, working in a mobile surgical hospital.

She e-mailed, "Although we are hoping our soldier will be returning soon, should Mrs. Barrington address her package or letter to "Any U.S. Soldier" and use the mailing address provided below, the mail will be distributed as needed.

"[My husband] treats soldiers for both combat and noncombat-related health problems. Many soldiers are brought in without their personal gear and end up in the hospital with no toiletries or clean underwear (a mother's worst nightmare) ... When packages arrive from the U.S., the soldier it is addressed to uses what he needs and then the box is placed in a common area for others to share. Marc says nothing goes to waste.

"When Marc first arrived in Mosul, there was a lag before our mail started to arrive. The mail clerk was very attentive to my husband and others who were not receiving mail at all and would divide up the letters and cards addressed to "Any Soldier." In fact, we have a trunk in the basement of all the letters and cards Marc has received during all his many deployments. I can tell you the cards and well wishes mean everything to those guys and gals serving us all over the world. Tell Mrs. Barrington to keep trying and don't stop writing. For now: Col. Marcus Carr (or Any Soldier), 28th CSH, Mosul, APO, AE 09334"

Several readers, including a Marine's mom named Christine, suggested the Web site anysoldier.com.

Jack Anderson in Middletown offered two other Web sites.

"Two excellent organizations are Help Hospitalized Veterans, HHV.org, which provides craft kits and gift cards to wounded veterans, and the Web site caringbridge.org, which allows wounded veterans to stay in contact with friends, family and others through postings on a wounded individual's Web site. You may also leave messages for them to read."

From Liz Peter,
formerly of Bucks,



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BUCKS COUNTY
Courier Times
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now living in New Jersey:

"There is an organization booksforsoldiers.com that you have to sign up for to become a member for security reasons — sign-up involves filling out a document, notarizing it and returning it. Ruth would have her choice of soldiers to

cheer up with a letter only or she could expand it to books, candy, whatever she'd like. Wounded soldiers are listed there so she would reach who she sounded like she was hoping for.

"She also could reach soldiers whose commanding officers have noticed get no mail. My husband did this and got letters back that simply make you want to do more."

A reader named Suzanne supports troops from Bucks by networking with friends.

"A friend's son is leaving for boot camp at Parris Island next Monday. I plan to write to him to give him any support I can. I have a soldier's address in Iraq from a friend at the USO. I have never met her. I write her letters filled with mundane things such as 'I went to the movies today' or 'I had dinner with some friends last night.' I tell her these things so she knows that I am enjoying the freedoms that she is fighting for and that I do not take them for granted. I am thankful."

Kate Fratti, whose column appears on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, reminds letter writers to keep the tone of messages upbeat and encouraging.

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