

MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

Horsepasture fire department adopts local National Guard company



Lori Flippin (from left), wife of Staff Sgt. Darryl Flippin of Company E; Brenda Moorefield, fund-raising chairman for the Horsepasture Volunteer Fire Department, as well as a volunteer firefighter; and Fire Chief Charlie Bradshaw of the department make posters for the adopt Company E project.

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By PAUL COLLINS - Bulletin Staff Writer

The Horsepasture Volunteer Fire Department has "adopted" area Company E of the 29th Division of the Virginia Army National Guard and is collecting wish-list items to make life more bearable for the 170 men and women of the company.

The goal of organizers is to send these items to members of the company serving in Arifjan, Kuwait: international calling cards; movies (DVDs); magazines; local newspaper; writing supplies (paper, pens, envelopes, cards); personal hygiene items for women; toiletries (flushable wipes, soap, shampoo, deodorant, razors, etc.); Tylenol/Excedrin/antacids; lip balm, eyedrops and foot powder; trail mixes,

Propel singles, beef jerky, hard candy, etc.; sunblock, sunglasses; twin sheet sets (maybe a dozen or two for extras).

Wish-list items may be dropped off at the new building at the Horsepasture Volunteer Fire Department on the fourth Friday of each month from 5 to 8 p.m. The collections will continue through the last Friday in April 2008. In addition to those items, financial contributions are being sought to help cover the costs of shipping the items to Arifjan, a base from which Company E, a transportation company, services U.S. forces in Iraq. Checks may be made out to the Horsepasture Volunteer Fire Department (write "Adoption of Company E" in the notation section) and mailed to the fire department at 17815 A.L. Philpott Highway, Ridgeway, Va. 24148.

In addition, collection jars for financial donations will be placed at The Old Country Store, 18241 A.L. Philpott Highway (U.S. 58 West), Ridgeway; C&B Market, 870 Preston Road, Martinsville; Triangle Electric, 560 Bouldin Road, Ridgeway; and Talmadge Appliances, 518 W. Church St., Martinsville. In addition to the Horsepasture Volunteer Fire Department, Paul Shivley, of the Virginia Defense Force and the Martinsville/Henry County Honor Guard, and Curtis Millner, commander of the American Legion Homer Dillard Post 78, plan to participate in the project, organizers said.

Company E has members from Henry County, Martinsville, Patrick County, Chatham, Bowling Green and South Boston. The company (then known locally as company A) left home in May, went to Roanoke and joined some other Virginia units, and now is known as Company E. Company E underwent training in Indiana and was sent to Kuwait on July 24, according to

Lori Flippin, the wife of Staff Sgt. Darryl Flippin of Preston. Besides Darryl Flippin, other local Company E members in Kuwait include Sgt. Anthony Wood and Staff Sgt. Chuck Hairston, both of Martinsville, and Sgt. 1st Class Roy Harris of Axton, Lori Flippin said.

She said her husband is expected to return home in mid-June 2008. She said they keep in touch by e-mail and phone. Recently, she received good news in the form of an e-mail from the company commander saying that no soldiers had been seriously injured.

Lori Flippin said the temperatures and blowing sand in Kuwait are grueling. Recently the temperatures have ranged from 116 to 125 degrees, but they have been as high as 142. Soldiers have to keep their eyes and air passages covered to protect against the blowing sand, she said.

Lori Flippin can identify with the loneliness some of the soldiers in Company E might be feeling. "When I came home after my husband left on that bus" headed for his tour of duty, "it didn't feel like home much anymore," she said. And she feels sad for soldiers who might not be getting packages from home, even though the soldiers in Company E are "brothers" and share what they have. The military provides essential items, but soldiers may have to go to the PX to buy other things.

"It's not cheap. They can't go to Wal-Mart like we can," Lori Flippin said, adding that many soldiers have limited money because they send part of it home to their families.

Lori Flippin said she got a call from Brenda Pendleton of Preston saying she wanted to do something to help. Pendleton — whose son, now retired Staff Sgt. Talmadge Martin, served in Iraq for more than a year — then contacted officials with the Horsepasture Volunteer Fire Department, which embraced the adoption of Company E.

"We're hoping the community will come together to help us to help the soldiers," said Charlie Bradshaw, Horsepasture fire chief. He said the project is a way for the community to show appreciation and support for the soldiers. He added that it also is a way for the Horsepasture department to thank the local National Guard which, in 2005, sponsored a fund-raiser for about 10 area volunteer fire/EMS departments, including Horsepasture.

Brenda Moorefield, who is chairman of fund-raising for the Horsepasture Volunteer Fire Department and a volunteer firefighter, seems optimistic about the project. "The community has always supported us in everything we've ever done," she said.

Pendleton, an honorary member of the fire department, said she hopes people will "think about all the men and women fighting for our freedom," who often are taken for granted.

Lori Flippin said she is touched to know that people in this community care.

The project is being done in memory of some local military personnel who died serving the United States, including Lance Cpl. Demarkus Brown, Lance Cpl. Jonathan Bowling and Lt. Ryan Betton.

For more information about the project, interested people may attend the meeting of the Horsepasture Volunteer Fire Department at 7 p.m. Sept. 28.