

SEANC 'Support Our Troops Project' Reaches Children, Military Personnel during the Holidays

BY CARRI DERRICK AND ERICA BALDWIN

Hundreds of children in Iraq cradled new teddy bears thanks to the success of SEANC's Support Our Troops Christmas Project. SEANC members donated more than 2,000 teddy bears during the SEANC annual convention in September to kick-off the project.

Support Our Troops was spearheaded by First Vice President Linda Rouse Sutton and Shirley Grice, wife of SEANC staff member Spillman Grice, who is stationed in Iraq. The project, which was proposed and approved at the July SEANC Board of Governors meeting in Raleigh, was created to reach out to servicemen and women, and their families who have active military stationed away from home.

Chaplain Dennis Goodwin, a member of the 30th Brigade Combat Team where the teddy bears were shipped, sent a letter of appreciation regarding the donation. They gave the teddy bears to Iraqi children in schools and those who lived in a brick factory community.

"When we would stop and open our bags full of teddy bears, the adults and children would suddenly appear from places unknown," wrote CH (LTC) Goodwin. "Every father or mother wanted their child to have one."

The 230th Support Battalion of the NC National Guard recognized SEANC's efforts as well, presenting Sutton and Grice a certificate of recognition for the teddy bear donation. The teddy bear effort was only a portion of the Support Our Troops project, however. Numerous districts collected and sent items overseas or to military families left at home (see District News for district-led efforts).

Sutton encourages members to continue the project throughout and beyond the holiday season. "Our members need to take this one step further and host some activities for the families here which could include anything from baby-sitting for those parents who need to do Christmas shopping to having a dinner together at Christmas," said Sutton.

"Other ideas include 'adopting' a soldier's child or children and spending some quality time with them. There are all kinds of creative things that can be done to relieve some of the pressure and the sadness for the spouses and children during these holidays."

SEANC applauds all of its members and districts that reached out to military families this holiday season. Thank you for taking part in the SEANC Support Our Troops project.

"Every father or mother wanted their child to have one."

— Chaplain Dennis Goodwin



Children in Iraq receive teddy bears sent from SEANC members across the globe. The stuffed animals were sent as part of SEANC's Support Our Troops Christmas Project.



Shirley Grice, left, and Linda Rouse Sutton, right, present more than 2,000 teddy bears to Capt. Doyal Whippo of the 230th Support Battalion of the N.C. National Guard in Goldsboro.



During the November Board of Governors meeting, Linda Rouse Sutton, right, presents a plaque of recognition given by the National Guard to District 66 Chairwoman Faye Davis, left. District 66 is the district of SEANC staff member Spillman Grice, who is currently stationed in Iraq. Also pictured are SEANC President Cliff Brown, back left, and SEANC Membership/District Relations Director Mitch Leonard.

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