

The Full Battle Rattle

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Board Members

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Many thanks to these ladies for their selfless devotion to our troops overseas!



AdoptaPlatoon Mission Statement

The *AdoptaPlatoon Soldier Support Effort™* is a nonprofit 501C-3 organization managed nationwide by volunteer patriots to ensure that deployed United States Service Members are not forgotten and to promote patriotism in our schools and communities. To provide a better deployment quality of life, lift morale, and assist military families, the AAP creates projects that meet the need of military requests, established special projects for holidays, and assigns individual morale lifting mail support to deployed Service Members of all branches of the U.S. military serving their Nation around the world.



Thank You Soldier!

By Platoon Mom Dotti

I have a trucker friend named Dom, who I met from a phone interview. He and his wife adopted a couple of soldiers a while back. As he was fueling his semi today, he started chatting with the guy next to him who happened to be a soldier just returning from Iraq. Evidently he was picking his rig up and on his way to visit his family for the first time since hitting US soil. When Dom found out he was a soldier, He thanked him for his service and said, "It's guys like you who have made it possible for me to work where I want and have all that I have here in the states. I just want to Thank You!", and he shook his hand.

Dom told me the soldier became very emotional and stated that no one had ever said "thank you" before. Dom was embarrassed and told the kid to hit the road; his family was waiting. Just a good reminder to all of us that a little "thank you" means a lot!

WOW! Now that's why we are here!

Editor's Note:

I would like to add my two cents here. I attend night school after work and in my 8 to 10 classes is a young lady who just returned from Afghanistan. I know this because we all had to introduce ourselves and she sits right behind me. After class was over I turned to her and told her how happy I was that she made it home safe and how much I, also ex military, Air Force,

appreciated what she had done for her country. She told me thank you and that she doesn't really hear that. WOW, can it be that we really are not saying thank you? Let's all make sure these great folks know that we appreciate what they are doing. Remember, you don't have to support the war or a political cause, but let's ALWAYS support the brave men and women who are sacrificing so much for everyone here.



So how did *AdoptaPlatoon* start you might ask? It started because one woman had a big heart, love for her country and a determination believing that one person could make a difference. This woman is our very own Platoon Mom Ida Hägg.

Ida's son Chauncey Hägg was in the Army and deployed to the Balkans in 1998. Ida wrote to her son and sent him goodies almost on a daily basis. These letters and packages lifted her son's spirits but also made him sad because he noticed that some of his fellow battle buddies received nothing day in and day out. In the tradition of the military and its brotherhood, Chauncey shared his goodies and then wrote to MOM asking if she would send letters and care packages to those fellow soldiers who everyday stood for mail call

and everyday, nothing came for them. The soldiers requesting mail support grew from a handful to entire companies and with that, AdoptaPlatoon™ was born.

“The AdoptaPlatoon™ is my labor of love” says Hägg. “And it’s a joy knowing that so many Americans are experiencing the honor of standing behind our deployed troops and making a difference for those to whom we owe our freedoms.”

Now, meet this wonderful lady!

OUR VERY OWN ... Ida Hägg



Ida holding back tears at the first AdoptaPlatoon Picnic held in Berwick, PA



Current & Upcoming Campaigns

Thanks to Platoon Mom Dee Edsall, AAP Campaign Director and all her hard work organizing such wonderful campaigns to lift the spirits of those military members that can not be home with their family during the holidays. Here is what she has planned:

The Halloween Campaign -There is a flyer on the AAP website that can be downloaded and printed for the Halloween Campaign. AAP is asking supporters to send cards and bags of candy to a platoon. Please see the flyer for more information if you are interested in sending some goodies.

The Holiday Eagle – AAP is asking supporters to send a holiday card

and candy cane to each member of a platoon.

Stockings From Santa – AAP will be asking supporters to send a filled stocking to a platoon.

Chaplain Dan Knight Is Back Campaign

... Chaplain Dan Knight is now in a different location with his troops, and there is no PX available to these soldiers. If you would like to help them, the most requested items are DVDs, AA batteries, all kinds of snack foods, junk foods, beef jerky, baby-wipes, toiletries, powdered drink mixes and black socks. Of course, all and everything is welcomed.

To Afghanistan with Love™ Campaign

... U.S. soldiers serving in Afghanistan have a difficult task and need to know we support them! Support can be sent to our troops serving in this region via the following Chaplains.

Chaplain Mike Burgess has a wish list that consists of microwave popcorn, ping-pong balls, movies and ‘guy’ magazines such as *Popular Mechanics*, computer magazines, magazines about autos, and wrestling. Other items are: granola bars, soap, baby wipes, beef jerky, trail mix, powdered drink mixes and PRAYERS! Chaplain Burgess states that “the guys eat this stuff up and are so thankful for them” ~ He just received nine care packages and within one day, 75% of the items were gone. Also please send PENCILS, tablets of paper, kids coats and shoes for the native children. ~ Chaplain Burgess said, “You may not realize this but these items help in the war against terror.”

Chaplain David Shnarr – To Iraq with Love

... U.S. soldiers serving in Iraq have a very difficult task and need to know we support them! Support can be sent to our troops serving in this region via the following – BE

SURE TO READ suggestions after all the names:

These troops are in desperate need of items. As Chaplain Causey said “We occupy a number of forward operating bases that have little support in personal items, particularly toiletries. We have approximately 3500 soldiers and another 1000 in four smaller bases. None of these have government post exchanges (PXs) and almost entirely dependent upon mail form home (which only arrives every two weeks or so) to provide for such needs. So any help we can get from the States will be most greatly appreciated. Specifically, the soldiers need the following items: *bars of soap; shampoo, deodorant, toothpaste/tooth brushes; shaving cream; disposable razors; combs, hair brushes; skin lotion; sanitary napkins; facial tissue.* Other nice-to-have things include: *flashlight batteries* [aa particularly] and candy (chocolate only during the winter).

Chaplain Chris Conklin's wish list:

Devotional materials and religious books, snacks of all types, male/female toiletries, disposable cameras, cards and words of encouragement.

Please check the AAP website for all current information.



What Platoon Moms and Dads gained from their experience.

By Platoon Mom Karen
My soldier, a Marine, is finally coming home! We have been in close contact since our adoption and I can't thank AdoptaPlatoon enough for what you are doing. My soldier was so grateful for the letters, emails and packages and I feel blessed for having met this special young man. He emailed me and asked me for AdoptaPlatoon's email address so those who have arrived to relieve them can sign up as well. Please sign me up again to support another soldier.

My Soldier

By Platoon Mom Jenn

My name is Jenn and I am 23 years old. I adopted a soldier for my family about 3 months ago. His name is Rick and he is currently in Afghanistan. The poem below, was written especially for him.

My Soldier

My soldier is a guy that I have never met, because he's in another country fighting to keep us free.

My soldier is a young man who chose a different life, he wears a uniform to work each day and sacrifices his life.

My soldier is aware that his life is on the line, that any day situations could chance, and he could end up on dangerous enemy lines.

My soldier is my hero, and he's also my friend and I think him silently all the time for all that he has done.

My soldier means a lot to me, even though we've never met and I hope one day we can so I can look him in the eye and tell him thanks, we're glad your home.

Woman brightens day for soldiers

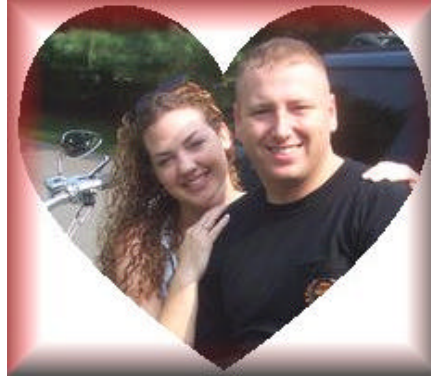
By Lisa Gentes / Daily News Staff
Thursday, September 29, 2005

SOUTHBOROUGH -- George Hubley sent 200 letters home when he was an Army medic stationed overseas during World War II. In nearly every letter during his three and a half years in the service, he asked his family to write soon, and to send candy and news.

To read the rest of this story, go to the following link:

<http://www.metrowestdailynews.com/localRegional/view.bg?articleid=110152>

She Said ... He Said ... Now they're going to say I Do



She Said:

My name is Amanda and I first heard about your organization on the radio. I had thought for a long time about how I could support the US troops who were deployed. I got goose bumps when I heard your ad and quickly searched for a pen and something to write on. I jotted the website down and started on my letter to you that night. I wrote to you about why I wanted to participate in your organization and how I felt I could help. It was about a month before I received a phone call from AdoptaPlatoon. I was told by the lady on the phone that she had a Captain in the Army and she would try to get him for me as my pen pal. Not really knowing much about the Army, I gladly accepted. I was so excited to find out about my new pen pal. After a couple of weeks I received a letter from you that had his name and address. So I wrote my letter and after another month, I received a letter back from him. After numerous letters, photos, and e-mails we realized just how much we had in common. We were both previously engaged to be married but that was changed by a series of events. As our previous relationships deteriorated we found comfort in one another, not realizing it was that which would bring us together in the end. We continued to speak after he was redeployed to

the United States through letters as well as the telephone. This July, we decided it was time for us to finally meet in person. He was stationed in Ft. Lee, VA. and I lived in San Diego, you can imagine it was quite an event. Many nerves and mixed feelings went into this but we knew how important it was to see each other face to face after all that time. We are certainly glad we did. Since then, we have made numerous plans for the future and we have spoken over the phone every night. Needless to say, we have fallen very deep in love and we couldn't go on without extending our gratitude. Although AdoptaPlatoon focuses on supporting our deployed soldiers, it has become much more than a patriotic deed for us.

I know how successful your organization has become and I look forward to watching the civilian world become more involved. Because of you and the many other support groups in the U.S. we are able to help, and understand exactly what goes into being an American soldier. Again, we thank you for all you have done, and for the continuous support of our soldiers. It has proven to us that we CAN make a difference.

He Said:

I'm sorry to say that at the time of my deployment I had not heard of your organization nor did I know that my name was on your list! My first experience with your program, and Mandi, came as I returned from dinner one night in Afghanistan. Being in a section of the world where "normal" is hard to come by it was the highlight of my day to learn that I had mail. I picked up my letter and my friends gathered around to find out who it was from. I was surprised and a bit confused to find a letter from Amanda. In her letter she explained who she was and how she got my name. I was totally taken off guard by the kind and loving heart of this beautiful stranger.

I can tell you that those around me were jealous that they had not gotten a pen pal. I told them then

that they stood little chance of getting a pen pal as pretty and sweet as mine! Mandi and I continued to write whenever it was possible. As Mandi said, I was engaged at the time she and I started communicating. To make a long story short, my plans to get married fell apart as my Fiancé left me while I was deployed. At a time in my life where I was faced with tough issues and fears I never felt more alone. I credit your organization and more importantly Mandi for giving me hope for the future and a reason to hurry home and start my life over again.

Mandi and I grew closer with every letter we wrote and some of the happiest memories I have today are of the first time I heard her voice and the first time I held her hand. What started as an innocent desire to reach out to a soldier has grown into a love so strong and so deep that it has changed our lives immensely.

When I look at Mandi today I realize that I have truly found the love of my life and I owe it all to your organization and all the people of America who care enough about those of us in uniform to take time out of their day to simply say hello and thank you. I find myself not being able to say thank you enough to you and all the people who operate AdoptaPlatoon. I am slated to take command of a company in Ft. Bragg sometime in the next year and should my company be called to deploy I will see that each and every soldier's name is sent to you so that they might experience the joy that I have experienced. Thank you so very much for all that you have done for Mandi and I and for all you have done for all of my brothers and sisters in the Armed Forces. God Bless America!



Troops Wait for Body Armor Reimbursements

By LOLITA C. BALDOR, AP
 WASHINGTON (Sept. 29) - Nearly a year after Congress demanded action, the Pentagon has still failed to figure out a way to reimburse soldiers for body armor and equipment they purchased to better protect themselves while serving in Iraq.

For the full story:
<http://aolsvc.news.aol.com/news/article.adp?id=20050929081409990001&ccc=2&cid=842>



Wear RED On Friday's

You will soon see a lot of people wearing Red on Fridays. Here's why:
 The Americans, who support our troops, are the silent majority. We are not "organized" to reflect who we are, or to reflect what our opinions are.
 Many Americans, like yourself, and all their friends, simply want to recognize that Americans support our troops.

Our idea of showing our solidarity and support for our troops is starting Friday and continuing on each and every Friday, until this is over, that every red-blooded American who supports our young men and women, WEAR SOMETHING RED. Word of

mouth, press, TV -- let's see if we can make the United States, on any given Friday, a sea of red much like a home football game at a University.

If every one of our membership shares this with other acquaintances, fellow workers, friends, and neighbors, I guarantee that it will not be long before the USA will be covered in RED - and make our troops know there are many people thinking of their well-being. You will feel better all day Friday when you wear Red! So let's get the word out and lead by example: Wear RED on Fridays.

SUPPORT OUR TROOPS! WE LIVE IN THE LAND OF THE FREE, BECAUSE OF THE BRAVE. FOR US, THEIR BLOOD RUNS RED!! GOD BLESS AMERICA!!!

Wear Red on Fridays



So you think this support doesn't matter, I mean ... what if you don't always hear back from your adopted soldier!

I received a card yesterday from my only female troop. I have had her since early May.

In the beginning you could set the clock by her letters - one every seven days!!! Then summer came and week after week there was nothing. She had already been home on leave so I knew that was not it. I worried that she may have been injured but wrote every Sunday regardless figuring that the letters would catch up with her eventually.

So, last weekend I got a letter and was so relieved to hear that she had just been very busy running missions all summer. (She is in a Transportation unit.) When I got her card yesterday it brought tears to my eyes... **She thanked me again**

for the boxes I had sent this summer. She also said, "I just wanted to thank you, because you have been the only supporter who never stopped writing to me, especially when I wasn't able to write to you as much."

I know it can be hard to support a soldier who is not a writer. Please, please, please, keep writing regardless! These kiddos appreciate the letters, cards and packages even if they never write to tell us that. Just as our daily lives get busy, so do our troops... times a million... Please do not leave them when they need you most!!!

Babs from Maine



Want To Do More ...

AdoptaPlatoon has a company of soldiers deployed to a very remote region who desperately needs your support. If you would like to lend these soldiers a hand to improve their quality of life and lift their morale, please let us know via the AAP application on the website. If you are a current AAP supporter, please add "CURRENT SUPPORTER" within the application.

www.AdoptaPlatoon.org



**Brook Park Memorial Wall
The 3/25 Comes Home**

Tonight I attended the homecoming from the 3/25. I volunteered to help raise the American Flag between the two hook and ladder fire trucks and to hear the crowd cheer when the flag was being raised was so incredible.

When the buses pulled up in front of the rec center, and the marines started to come out one by one - to see their faces some so sad because they left as a group and came home missing so many. I saw fathers that were seeing their babies for the first time, I saw mothers hugging their sons and being afraid to let go. I had the opportunity to shake a marine's hand and say "welcome home and thank you."



The turn out from my community was incredible and I was so proud to see the turn out.

Platoon Mom Danielle



Tribute at Fort Stewart:
Thought you would like to see these pictures of 'Warrior's Walk' at Ft Stewart. Each 3ID soldier (and those attached) who were killed in Operation Iraqi Freedom has been honored with a tree & stone engraved with their name. Currently the walkways go down both sides of

the parade field. Soon, they will start the trees down Bundy Ave along the golf course (for those of you who know Ft Stewart) because sadly, they are running out of room. It's very humbling to see all those trees and to remember the sacrifices that have been made. Signed,

A Proud Army Wife



SOLDIER'S FUNERAL (TEXAS STYLE)



James M. Kiehl
December 22, 1980-March 23, 2003
Comfort, Texas - Nasariyah, Iraq

What follows is a message from Vicki Pierce about her nephew James' funeral (he was serving our country in Iraq):

"I'm back, it was certainly a quick trip, but I have to also say it was one of the most amazing experiences of my life. There is a lot to be said for growing up in a small town in Texas. The service itself was impressive with wonderful flowers and sprays, a portrait of James, his uniform and boots, his awards and ribbons. There was lots of military brass and an eloquent Baptist preacher. There were easily 1000 people at the service, filling the church sanctuary as well as the fellowship hall and spilling out into the parking lot. However, the most incredible thing was what happened following the service on the way to the cemetery.

We went to our cars and drove to the cemetery escorted by at least 10

police cars with lights flashing and some other emergency vehicles, with Texas Rangers handling traffic. Everyone on the road who was not in the procession, pulled over, got out of their cars, and stood silently and respectfully, some put their hands over their hearts.

When we turned off the highway suddenly there were teenage boys along both sides of the street about every 20 feet or so, all holding large American flags on long flag poles, and again with their hands on their hearts. We thought at first it was the Boy Scouts or 4H club or something, but it continued for two and a half miles. Hundreds of young people, standing silently on the side of the road with flags. At one point we passed an elementary school, and all the children were outside, shoulder to shoulder holding flags kindergartners, handicapped, teachers, staff, everyone. Some held signs of love and support. Then came the teenage girls and younger boys, all holding flags then adults, then families, all standing silently on the side of the road. No one spoke, not even the very young children.

The military presence included at least two generals, a fist full of colonels, and representatives from every branch of the service, plus the color guard which attended James, and some who served with him. It was very impressive and respectful, but the love and pride from this community who had lost one of their own was the most amazing thing I've ever been privileged to witness.



Editors Note:

This is a WONDERFUL Site to Visit. It brings tears to my eyes to see all the love we have and show for our brave Men & Women fighting to preserve our Freedom.

To see more wonderful photos and to read more, visit Vicki's site at:

<http://www.iwvpa.net/piercev/>

or

<http://home.comcast.net/~cytdad/index.html>

To see all the pictures

<http://home.comcast.net/~cytdad/images/all/index.html>



Major Dan's Glossary of Terms

I occasionally slip into milspeak, so to help my loyal readers out. I offer this glossary of terms I've used. I will bring you a few in each newsletter. Hope this helps some of you.

Today, the number **1** and letter **B**

1SG: First sergeant. The senior enlisted soldier in a company-sized unit; has pay grade of E-8.

"BC" glasses Army-issue glasses that are so ugly that they are an effective form of birth control.

BDUs: Battle dress uniform. A uniform introduced in the 1980's with green, black, and brown blotches.

BG: Brigadier general. The most junior general officer rank; has a pay grade of O-7.



See you next time, M.D.



TODAY'S LESSON WHAT IS A FIRE BASE

A fire base is a much smaller military post. They are much like the old forts out in the Wild West and look remarkably a lot like them too. They are off by themselves and scattered around the country and serve as a place where our smaller scale missions originate. Their presence and locations help to keep the surrounding areas stable and spread our influence. Since they are smaller and out in the country, they are more susceptible to rocket or mortar attack by anti-coalition militants (ACMs). Each firebase has an aid station were we treat military and local civilians alike. If the wounds or sickness is bad enough we transport them to larger facilities for treatment. As a result of our helping the locals, they in turn report to us any suspicious activity or persons in the area. That pretty much covers what firebases are all about.



Katrina's Effects Extend to Service Members in Germany

By Senior Airman Amaani Lyle,
USAF
Special to American Forces Press Service

SPANGDAHLEM AIR BASE, Germany, Sept. 9, 2005 – Nineteen years of growing up around the capricious hurricanes of Pascagoula, Miss., kept an Air Force staff sergeant here relatively calm upon hearing the news that a surge in the Gulf of Mexico was on the way.

But the reality of Hurricane Katrina's wrath soon set in. To read the rest of this great article, go to:

http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Sep2005/20050909_2660.html



Iraqi Soldiers Make Donation for Katrina Victims

American Forces Press Service TAJI, Iraq, Sept. 9, 2005 – Iraqi soldiers serving at the military base here collected 1 million Iraqi dinars for victims of Hurricane Katrina.

Iraqi Col. Abbas Fadhil, Iraqi base commander, presented the money to U.S. Army Col. Paul D. Linkenhoker, Taji's coalition base commander, at a Sept. 5 staff meeting.

"We are all brothers," said Abbas. "When one suffers tragedy, we all suffer their pain."

http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Sept2005/20050909_2664.html



How You Can Help The Victims Of Hurricanes

You too can help with the relief efforts. There are many wonderful organizations that you can donate to, but be wise in your choices. Check out "How you can help the victims of hurricanes." At:

<http://www.charitynavigator.org/index.cfm/bay/content.view/catid/68/cpid/310.htm>

Remember, they still need our help!



The World of Music Leaves its Mark & Helps AdoptaPlatoon



Guide Review - Lonestar - Coming Home

(Lonestar – Proud Supporters of AAP)

Review: OK, let's just get to the point. This CD is nothing short of awesome! Usually with most CD's you buy these days, you'll find a handful of great songs that you love to listen to over and over again, and the others are more or less just filler. This is not the case with Lonestar's latest CD 'Coming Home.' This CD is a joy to listen to from start to finish. Every song on this CD is fantastic!

Check out the rest of this review and to purchase their new CD.

REMEMBER Lonestar is a PROUD Supporter of AdoptaPlatoon.

<http://countrymusic.about.com/od/cdreviewsal/gr/blcominghome.htm>



The Story Behind "American By God's Amazing Grace"

Writers: Luke Stricklin/JR Shultz (FOB Warrior, Baghdad, Iraq December 5 th, 2004)

This song is a reminder to all of us that there are many things worse than what we experience in any given day. It is a soldier's

interpretation of his experiences and what he viewed through his own eyes while in Iraq. It didn't take long for him to realize just how good the quality of life the average American has.

Responding to the first question that he was asked when he emailed or called home, Luke Stricklin replied with a song.

Visit Luke's site to read more and to hear a part of this wonderful song.

<http://www.lukestricklin.com/>

Don't Forget ... Check out the AAP Store.



The AAP Store offers a variety of items for both the supporter and the Men and women we support. We have T-Shirts, Hero coins to Our Own AAP Hero's Bear. We have a wide variety of items and hope to add more in the future. You can visit the store through our Website www.adoptaplatoon.org and click on the link AAP Store. Hope to see you there. Bo



And if you would like to contribute directly to AdoptaPlatoon:

Please Assist AAP with Funding Needs!

The AAP welcomes your tax deductible gifts. Your financial support ensures that we can

continue this patriotic effort. Thanks! Ida Hägg - Chairman of the Board.

Please send your tax-deductible gift to:

**AdoptaPlatoon
P.O. Box 234
Lozano, TX 78568**



Did You Know ...



I Pledge Allegiance to the Flag

I pledge Allegiance to the Flag, of the United States of America, and to the Republic, for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with Liberty, and Justice for all.

The Pledge of Allegiance received official recognition by Congress in an Act approved on June 22, 1942. However, the pledge was first published in 1892 in the Youth's Companion magazine in Boston, Massachusetts to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America, and was first used in public schools to celebrate Columbus Day on October 12, 1892.

In its original version, the pledge read "my flag" instead of "the flag of the United States." The change in the wording was adopted by the National Flag Conference in 1923. The rationale for the change was that

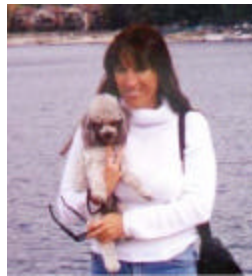
it prevented ambiguity among foreign-born children and adults who might have the flag of their native land in mind when reciting the pledge.

The phrase "under God" was added to the pledge by a Congressional act approved on June 14, 1954. At that time, President Eisenhower said:

"In this way we are reaffirming the transcendence of religious faith in America's heritage and future; in this way we shall constantly strengthen those spiritual weapons which forever will be our country's most powerful resource in peace and war."



A Word from your Editor



I was asked (yeah, asked, more like ordered by Ida, ☺) to tell you all a little about myself, so here goes.

I live in California with my two daughters Sheena and Samantha. I work as an accounting supervisor and I am a veteran (Air Force, 5 years). I have been with AdoptaPlatoon for over four years now and have enjoyed every minute of it. When it was brought up that the group really wanted our newsletter started up again, I jumped at the opportunity to help. I have supported four small platoons so far and felt like I needed to do more. Well, the powers that be (that would be Ida again, and Joyce and Fran) gave me a chance to show my stuff. I sure hope you enjoyed this edition and know there are plenty

more to come. I am honored that I have been given this chance, so everyone, please send me your articles and letters from your troops. Let's let everyone know how SPECIAL and IMPORTANT these men and women are that put it all on the line for freedom. I will leave you with this picture of my cousin Mark, who is in Iraq for a second tour, with my daughters Samantha and Sheena. May he and all the troops return home safely.



Well, it is time to close. I have had a wonderful time talking with all the great people that helped my by contributing to my first edition of the AAP Full Battle Rattle. Got the Scoop? Email me the details.

Bindy@AdoptaPlatoon.org

