

By Janie Blankenship

Movies Provide Welcome Relief

When Air Force Tech. Sgt. Kevin Johnson was stationed in Tikrit, Iraq, last summer, he saw the need for a relaxing distraction for troops. The Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Center had a television and DVD player, but the news it aired was usually not relaxing, according to Johnson. And the few movies available had been viewed dozens of times by most airmen.

Serving with a truck company (Alaska Air National Guard) attached to the 1058th Air and Space Expeditionary Force, Johnson requested that VFW Posts back home send DVDs, videos and CDs. In no time at all, the items started arriving at Forward Operating Base Speicher.

"I'd pick up three or four boxes every day," said Johnson, a member of Post 9785 in Eagle River, Alaska.

He said containers of entertainment items also arrived from Maine, New York, Maryland and Colorado. Johnson

You Can Help

New or used DVDs are wanted. No pornographic material will be accepted. Here are the types of movies troops are requesting:

Westerns	Drama
Military	Comedy
Oldies	Television Series
Romance	

If you'd rather send a music CD, here are the top five requests:

Blues	Oldies
Classical	Rap
Country	Books on CD/tape

started a movie "armory," which now has nearly 1,000 titles.

"You can't put a price on recreation," Johnson said. "You do high-intensity work, so you need something to relax. During the off hours you need some-

thing to do and there's not much."

Now that Johnson is back home in Alaska, he started a Web site, www.DVDs4troops.org, where visitors can log on to find out how to donate movies and music. In Eagle River, Post 9785 is a drop-off location. Johnson continues to maintain the project, and even created a database catalog. He said four more MWR facilities in Iraq now have movie armories.

"Everybody sends candy and snack foods," he said. "It's great and I loved it, but there aren't many things to keep your mind busy."

For more information on how you can help get movies to the troops in Iraq, contact Kevin Johnson at (907) 622-4456; VFW Post 9785, Attn.: DVDs4Troops, P.O. Box 770266, Eagle River, AK 99577; or e-mail kevin_alaska@hotmail.com.

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