

SOLDIERS THANK LYONS, PIPES & COOK



1st Lt. Lindsey Gerheim folds an American flag with the help of her father, John, on Tuesday at the offices of the law firm Lyons, Pipes & Cook in downtown Mobile. The flag flew over her platoon's headquarters in Iraq.



1st Lt. Lindsey Gerheim talks to employees with the law firm Lyons, Pipes & Cook on Tuesday at the firm's offices in downtown Mobile. The firm adopted Gerheim's platoon and sent them care packages during the holidays, including a projector and some DVDs. Gerheim's brother, Jordan, is an attorney at the firm.

Platoon leader stops by Lyons, Pipes & Cook, which sent the 'Scorpions' the equipment they needed for their own movie shack in Iraq.

When the 42 soldiers of the 2nd Platoon "Scorpions" opened their movie shack in Baiji, Iraq, they dedicated it to Lyons, Pipes & Cook in Mobile. That's because the law firm provided the movie projector, speakers and more than 150 movie and music discs and Xbox games, plus popcorn and snacks.

On Tuesday, the platoon's leader, 1st Lt. Lindsey Gerheim, was in Mobile to say thanks, bringing along a worn but intact American flag that once flew over the Army platoon's command post in Iraq.

Gerheim, a 23-year-old West Point graduate, is home on an 18-day leave. She and her parents, John and Wendy Gerheim of Dahlonga, Ga., made the trip both to say thanks and to visit family: Gerheim's brother, Jordan, is a lawyer with Lyons, Pipes & Cook.

It was that connection that prompted law firm personnel to adopt the 2nd Platoon, part of the 561st Military Police Company based in Fort Campbell, Ky., for the Christmas holiday. When asked what the soldiers would like, Gerheim "puts the soldiers before herself, and she came up with something that everybody could do as a group," said her brother.

At the time, the troops could watch a TV in the chow hall or try to share Gerheim's single laptop to watch movies.

Once word got out about the movie gift idea, the response was explosive, said Jordan Gerheim, 27. The gifts were eventually shipped in five big boxes, according to Jebbie Austin, a paralegal at the law firm, which also shipped along some donations from the Willis insurance firm.

The movie shack was open to all of the 160 soldiers serving in the military police unit, Lindsey Gerheim said.

"We call it Scorpion-Buster instead of Blockbuster," she said of the soldiers' movie rental system. "The projector has been checked out since it arrived."

Gerheim, a petite, 5-foot-tall brunette, said the soldiers in her platoon are "very appreciative" and "good about taking the time to send thank-you notes." Also sent to the law firm was a picture of the platoon with their gifts, including a bonus of a couple of T-shirts, one with a UMS Bulldog logo.

The group's mission is to train Iraqi police, Gerheim said. She is one of three women in her platoon, whose members range from 19-year-olds fresh out of high school to a 42-year-old medic, who joined the Army with his 21-year-old son. "He's like the grandpa for the platoon," she said.

Gerheim's father also sent a thank-you to the Mobile companies for supporting the troops, describing their lives in this way: "They swing daily on a pendulum from life-at-risk conditions to consistent boredom in plywood shacks surrounded by sand and razor-wired barricades, with very little to break the monotony." The gifts help ease their considerable challenges, he said.

Article by Kathy Jumper, Staff Reporter and photos by Bill Starling, Staff Photographer, *Mobile Press-Register*