



# AN EXCHANGE OF GRATITUDE

## SOLDIERS THANK COLLEGIATE INDUSTRY FOR DONATED GOODS

When Sheree Porter-Thomas registered as a CAMEX exhibitor earlier this year, her purpose was to gain exposure for her company, Go Team Spirit—a wholesale company providing customized jewels, pom-poms, and other spirit items to universities across the nation. Sheree and her mother recently launched Go Team Spirit in order to raise money for the rebuilding of Peace Chapel, a replica of the original Peace Chapel that her father, Chaplain John Porter and his men (all paratroopers in the 173d Airborne Brigade), helped build in Vietnam during the war.

In early February, prior to the show, Sheree received a phone call from Jim Bradley, another member of the 173d, who served in Vietnam and is currently a member of the 173d Assoc. in Florida. Bradley had received a request from a fellow 173d member, SFC Marcus A. McClain, who was stationed in Afghanistan. SFC McClain explained to Jim that he and his men had just completed a new mess hall, and they wanted to give it a "sports bar" look. He humbly asked for old jerseys, pennants, or stickers—anything that might help make the soldiers feel closer to home. Having made it through the holiday season (note the tiny Christmas tree adorned with small U.S. flags in the group photo above), SFC McClain acknowledged that a few of his soldiers, who had been deployed for almost 15 months, were beginning to show signs of homesickness, and he hoped that the sports memorabilia might help boost morale.

So, Sheree's CAMEX mission became two-fold: gain exposure for Go Team Spirit and ask fellow industry associates for help with donations. Not only did Sheree leave San Antonio with new customers, but she left with a bag full of samples and a truckload of industry support.

The donations were shipped and received in Afghanistan with open, gracious arms by some of our school's biggest fans. SFC McClain immediately responded with an unnecessary note of thanks, for we should be saluting him and all of the men of the 173d Airborne Brigade, who have served, and who are currently serving in order to allow all of us the comforts of freedom. We also salute those of you in our industry who answered the call and donated items to these men, allowing them to have a small taste of the comfort they are providing for the rest of us.

(Please turn to page 12 for additional photos.)

By Brooke Walker



Hi Sheree,

First and foremost let me thank you, for all your support and dedication to helping us make our project a reality. Upon completion of the project it has become a staple of Soldiers well being. I am very thankful to you and Mr Bradley. His undying commitment to us, I will never be able to show enough gratitude. I did receive everything in great shape and we were able to use all of it... We are currently on month 13 and looks like we will get to go home soon. Our men have worked so hard not only in order to improve their fire base, but stability and security for the people of Afghanistan. They have embodied the true American Paratrooper, they assumed a Fire Base that was nothing more than 8 tents. At this time, we have approximately 12 hard structures to include a wonderful Mess Hall. The guys just finished their last and final project, these amazing Soldiers put their heads together and built a Gazebo. The men through their hard work and the support of fine Americans as yourself, have turned a fire base that no one wanted, to a highly regarded and sometimes spited fire base in our sector. The temperatures are starting to rise well above 100 degrees, and the guys enjoy so much to go to the Mess Hall, and as the current sport of interest is basketball, relax and watch the NBA Finals. The men of this Platoon are small in numbers but have tremendous heart. There were many times, due to our remote location that the men would start to feel left out, and/or forgotten about. Then would come the many packages from the 173d Airborne Chapter from Florida, and it was an immediate morale boost. When your stuff came, the men were so taken by the amount of stuff we received. You and Mr Bradley have more than filled your patriotic roles in the War on Terrorism. We are slowly but surely preparing to return to Germany. The new Soldiers will start to arrive soon, and that is a good thing. The 15 month deployment is more than likely a bit to long for these Soldiers to be away from home. Most the Soldiers here are on deployment 3 or 4, so they are ready to go home. The Mess Hall is just the standard at which the guys work at, and their dedication and hard work are front page headlines, but it is instrumental in our survival, just as your support and continued efforts to take care of Soldiers down range. I again thank you so much for your support, and Mr Bradley sorry I have not wrote here of late. My apologies. You are the best and hope to see you in Europe this fall.

SFC MARCUS A. McCLAIN  
Aco 173D ABCT STB  
PSG 2ND PLT "ROCKSTARS"





**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON GO TEAM SPIRIT,  
THE 173D AIRBORNE, OR THE PEACE CHAPEL  
PROJECT, PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE  
AT [WWW.CAMPUSCHRONICLE.COM](http://WWW.CAMPUSCHRONICLE.COM).**