

OPERATION BANDANAS

December 2009



Andrew, Christmas in Afghanistan, 2007

When my youngest son, Andrew, was in Afghanistan during Christmas '07, I told him I would send him a Christmas tree and decorations. I thought he would be excited, but he told me it would just make it harder for him as it would be a reminder to him of how far from "home for Christmas" he really was. But, with his blessing, I sent it hoping to spread a little cheer in a remote, desolate, hostile environment. It was well received, and it ended up being on the front of their Battalion newsletter that was sent to the families of those serving with Andrew.

I understood what he was saying, though. I reflected on another Christmas in 1970 when my husband was in Viet Nam. I would hear the song, "I'll Be Home for Christmas," and would just sob. Christmas always brings thoughts of home and family. When we are away from our loved ones during this season, we miss them more than ever. As we celebrate the birth of our Savior, remember those extraordinary, brave, selfless young patriots serving in uniform who will be wishing they could be home for Christmas. Keep them and their families close in your hearts and prayers during this season of Christmas and always.

I heard Toby Keith's song "An American Soldier" recently, and thought I would share some of the lyrics with you:

"I can't call in sick on Mondays when the weekend's been too strong. I just work straight through the holidays, and sometimes all night long.

You can bet that I stand ready, when the wolf growls at the door; I'm solid, I'm steady, I'm true down to the core. And I will always do my duty no matter what the price; I've counted up the cost, I know the sacrifice.

I don't want to die for you, but if dyin's asked of me, I'll bear that cross with honor, cause freedom don't come free.

I'm an American Soldier, an American; beside my brothers and my sisters, I will proudly take a stand.

When liberty's in jeopardy, I will always do what's right; I'm here on the front line, sleep in peace tonight."

When I think about the lyrics to another song so popular this time of year, "Silent Night, Holy Night," it talks about sleeping in peace also, "sleep in heavenly peace." As I sleep in peace tonight and every night, I will give thanks to a Savior, Jesus Christ, born into this world to give me everlasting peace; and I will give thanks for all those serving in uniform keeping watch for me, my home, my family, and my country, so that I (we) can sleep in peace.



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Operation Bandanas is a 501(c)3
tax-deductible organization
EIN #260284959

This year, Operation Bandanas is happy to report that 24,577 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines received Psalm 91 bandanas through our organization from grateful, generous citizens, churches and friends and families of our military. That brings a total of 99,002 Psalm 91 bandanas provided through Operation Bandanas since we began in November, 2006.

I think we will be making our goal of 100,000 bandanas by the end of 2009! We are indeed grateful for the donations made on behalf of our troops, sending them a tangible, useful, spiritual item of encouragement and a simple, yet powerful tool for reminding them of God's presence with them and His protection over them.

2009 isn't over yet! Please consider supporting our ministry with a tax-deductible gift to enable us to

meet the requests we have in continuing to send Psalm 91 bandanas to our Chaplains and troops. And as we move into a new year and 30,000 more of our troops are being deployed to Afghanistan, I hope you will personally pledge to support Operation Bandanas throughout 2010.

Pray for our ministry, visit our website, pass it along to other churches in your community and beyond and tell friends and families of our mission of serving those who serve us.

As we usher in 2010, may God be in the center of all that you are, all that you do, and all that you experience. God bless and protect our military and their families and may His presence be revealed to them.

Mary Gray *Executive Director of Operation Bandanas*

THANK YOU NOTES:

SEE OTHERS AT WWW.OPERATIONBANDANAS.ORG

"As a new Christian deploying to a hot zone this promise from God is very comforting. If your organization has any bandanas, I know that my battalion would love to have them for our upcoming deployment. Thanks for everything you do."

"I am in need of about 600 bandanas for our troops that are deploying soon. I think it will be of great benefit if each of them have a bandana to assure them of God's presence and love towards them. Your help will be greatly appreciated."

"I just wanted to take a minute of your time to say thank you for the Psalm 91 Bandana. I am a civilian "contractor" who is embedded with the 82nd

Airborne in SW Afghanistan. I went to my first service in several months tonight, and as I laid the Bible down after the service, I noticed the bandana. It will be washed and carried in my pocket!"

"My husband is currently touring in Korea, we are expecting a baby boy Dec. 26! This will be his first Christmas without his family, and he is also struggling with missing out on the pregnancy and birth. Our son will be 4 months old before his tour is through. I think a bandana and a prayer would help bring home to him this year, and help him find the strength to get through these trying times for us. I really believe the spiritual support is just what he needs! Thank you for supporting our troops!"

"Thank you for this wonderful ministry. I use it to witness to soldiers that I know do not attend church. My son folded his and wore it next to him in his flak jacket. I had it framed for him for Christmas. He cried when he opened it! Now, he can hang it in his new home. God is truly using this ministry!"

"Could you be kind enough to send me 1,000 Psalms 91 bandanas for my Battalion Marines/Sailors? Thank you."



"He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.'"
- Psalm 91:1-2