



Frank Nerwinski, Dick Graja and Dick McKeever of Lawrenceville (N.J.) Council 7000 address care packages to U.S. troops stationed overseas. Knights and local volunteers packed boxes full of candy, DVDs and toiletries for soldiers serving around the world.

Slain Knight Honored

Schuylkill Council 431 in Pottsville, Pa., awarded a posthumous God & Country Award to Capt. David A. Boris, a member of Msgr. Cornelius George O'Keefe Council 8250 at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., who was killed in action Nov. 12, 2007, while serving in Afghanistan. Prior to the anniversary Mass at which the award was presented, Knights held a First Degree exemplification in Boris' honor. Twenty-one men joined the Order, including David's father, Albin Boris.

Knight Presented with Flag

Michigan State Treasurer Michael Malinowski and his wife, Maureen, were presented with two "Blue Star" flags (also known as Service flags) in honor of their two sons, Matthew and Mitchell. Both men serve in the U.S. Marines. The Service Flag was created by Capt. Robert B. Quesser of the Ohio National Guard in 1916 and is an official banner authorized by the Department of Defense for display by families who have members serving in the Armed Forces during any period of war or hostilities.



Sweats for Vets

Knights from northern Virginia participated in the Sweats for Vets program to benefit the Martinsburg (W. Va.) VA Medical Center. On Dec. 20, Knights from St.

Elizabeth Bayley Seton Assembly in Sterling, Pope John Paul II Assembly in Potomac Falls and Father Robert O. Hickman Assembly in Winchester distributed 198 sets of sweat suits to the veterans.

First Degree for Seamen

Our Lady of Hope Council 12048 in Baltimore held a special First Degree exemplification for the crew of the *M.V. Snowbird*, a cargo vessel out of Cypress. Council members came to know the crew through their work with of the Apostleship of the Sea (AOS), which caters to Catholic seamen docked in Baltimore and with which the council is heavily involved.

Movies for Veterans

After learning that the Alvin C. York VA Center hospice unit wanted to expand its video library and replace outdated equipment, Marian Council 4563 in Murfreesboro, Tenn., held a breakfast to raise funds and collect DVDs. Knights collected more than 40 movies and \$350 at the breakfast, all of which was donated to the hospital.

Tuition Assistance

Fort Belvoir (Va.) Council 11170 sponsored a spaghetti dinner to benefit Archbishop John Carroll High School. The event raised \$3,800, which will be used to provide tuition assistance to students who want to attend a Catholic high school.



U.S. Air Force Maj. Alphonse Veerkamp (center) and Father Dave Reeson of the Baghdad International Zone (IZ) Round Table speak with Archbishop Francis Assisi Chullikatt, apostolic nuncio to Iraq and Jordan. The round table donated \$3,500 to Archbishop Chullikatt, which will support three groups of religious sisters who work in and around Baghdad. The Baghdad IZ Round Table is sponsored by St. Mary of the Grove Council 11138 in Tampa, Fla. (See also story on page 2.)



Members of Abram J. Ryan Assembly in Dallas accept a framed print from the 345th Psychological Operations Company of the U.S. Army. The picture was presented in honor of the Knights' ongoing assistance to the company during its deployment and return.



Leonard Spadavecchia and Paul Pinkman of Mary Immaculate Council 12769 in Secaucus, N.J., fill duffel bags as part of Operation Chill-Out. Each bag contains a blanket, hat, gloves, sweater and toiletries. Operation Chill-Out was founded in 2000 to aid a group of homeless Vietnam War veterans who live under a railroad trestle in northern New Jersey.

Marine's Death Sad Reminder of War

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Most of what I do here in Iraq is fun. Besides the normal parish ministry, I am able to give candy to lots of Iraqi children whose parents are in the Embassy applying for visas to come to the United States.

Sadly, however, a few days ago a young Marine corporal was flown by helicopter to our hospital with serious injuries sustained when an improvised explosive device (IED) went off near his vehicle. While I arrived in time to perform the sacrament of the anointing of the sick, he died soon after. I am grateful that the others in the convoy will all survive.

The Marine's death was a serious reminder that we are in a combat zone and, as Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman said during the American Civil War in 1865, "War is hell."

Here in Baghdad's International Zone (IZ), I am able to meet a wide variety of people from many different nationalities each week. It's an eye opener and an education.

The enthusiasm and deep faith of the Iraqi people makes me optimistic.

I had lunch with a Catholic from Lebanon last week. When he was a young man, he arrived late for Mass at his home parish. He saw a person leaving the church with a rifle in hand. When he went inside, he discovered that his mother, two uncles and the priest had been shot to death. Later, the killer was killed. My Lebanese friend reminded me that the Scriptures tell us, "Those who live by the sword will die by the sword" (see Mt 26:52). He prays that when we learn to follow the example of Jesus' compassion and forgiveness, we will end the cycle of violence.



Father Dave Reeson



[Above] Father Reeson and an unnamed Iraqi religious sister present rosaries to Ryan Feagan, a civilian who is working with the U.S. Armed Forces in Iraq. [Right] Father Reeson (far left) stands with members of the Knights of Columbus Baghdad International Zone (IZ) Round Table and some of the materials they distributed to orphans in Iraq. Also pictured is Archbishop Francis Assisi Chullikatt (center), apostolic nuncio to Iraq and Jordan.



A Chaldean Rite Catholic attends our Roman Rite Mass each week. He grew up in Baghdad and is a widely published author. After he was sentenced to death by Saddam Hussein, he and his family escaped to the United States in 1992. He has now returned to Baghdad and has high hopes for the future of Iraq. His enthusiasm and deep faith makes me optimistic.

I celebrate one Mass in Spanish each week, which is attended by people from Peru, El Salvador, Italy, Puerto Rico, Mexico and a variety of others who are U.S. citizens but for whom Spanish is their first language. Mass in Spanish is a real challenge for me since I do not speak Spanish. The songs, Apostles' Creed, Gloria, readings and petitions are all in Spanish. The eucharistic prayer and my

homily are both in English with someone translating for me. I try to learn one phrase in Spanish each week. Sometimes when I say something in Spanish I get a strange look or laugh that indicates I have a lot to learn.

This time of year, the high temperature in Baghdad is 75 degrees and the low is 55. While I am enjoying the weather, I pray for a mild winter for those home in Nebraska.

Let us all continue to pray for world peace. ■

Father Dave Reeson is a priest for the Archdiocese of Omaha, Neb., and serves as a U.S. Air Force chaplain in Iraq. He is a member of both Christ the King Council 5045 in Omaha and the Baghdad International Zone (IZ) Round Table in Iraq.

PHOTO COURTESY OF FATHER DAVE REESON VIA THE CATHOLIC VOICE