

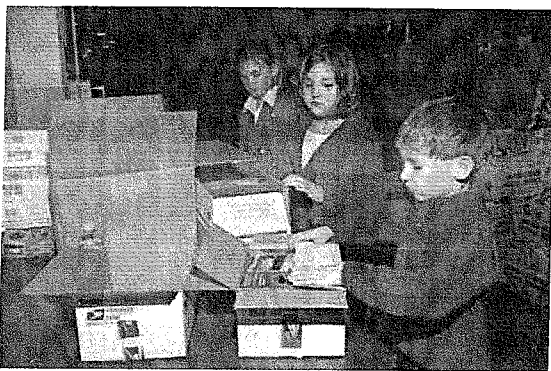
## **YPO Wisconsin Holiday Newsletter: Care Package for the Troops Drive – December 8<sup>th</sup> 2007**

### **How It All Began -**

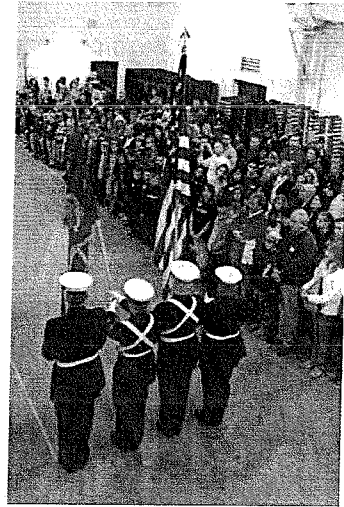
Fritz Merizon, the YPO Wisconsin Chapter Vice Chairman/Education Chairman for the 2007-08 education year, and a member for 12 years, made the decision to change the format of the Holiday Party. Typically YPO spends \$25-\$40,000 on dinner and a party for members and spouses at one of Wisconsin's Private Country Clubs. But this change to the event's format had its start at the beginning of the year. Through advice from two of his Forum members, Fritz Merizon was advised to pick a theme that would keep him motivated for the whole year.

Fritz chose "the Value of a New Perspective" for the topic of the education year. One previous event this year included hearing Nando Parrado speak about surviving in the Andes after he and his rugby team survived their plane's crash.

The purpose of the 2007 YPO holiday event was to take the money members would spend on themselves, and provide value to others. It was a chance to "put our good fortune in perspective" says Fritz. YPO members value family events, and there is no better way to bring a family together than to have them work together for the benefit of others.



idea that we could do so much good, in one day. I am thrilled with the outcome." – Fritz Merizon



The initial goal was to build and mail 500 packages to troops overseas and provide them some of the comforts of home while they are away from their families, in harms way.

When the dust settled, YPO members, families and friends, assembled and mailed more than 3,443 packages to United States Soldiers stationed in Iraq. "I had no

Members and families also had a chance to meet and learn from active soldiers and veterans while they made their rotations all day. Because the work force was 350+ strong for the day, packing boxes happened in shifts. When they were not busy assembling boxes, they tried on night-vision goggles, sat in Military vehicles, tried on armor and equipment and even had a chance to test some military firepower out on the combat simulator.

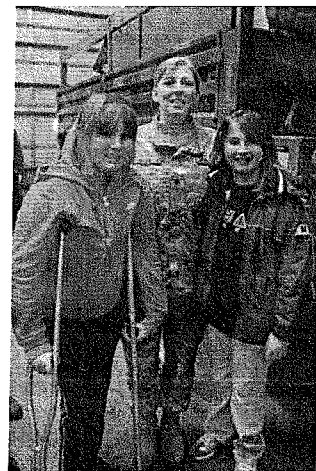


The event was educational and philanthropic for all in attendance. It is not every day that you get to sit behind the wheel of a military HumVee, or eat an MRE. Fritz Merizon questioned, "After an event like this, I wonder if we can ever go back to just a holiday party?" The soldiers hope that you never do.

### **Help From the Inside -**

When he heard about the plan for the Holiday party, Jon Schoenheider, President of Regency Investments, called his brother in-law, who was then stationed in the Green Zone of Baghdad and had previously served in Desert Storm. He called to get his help and advice on how to organize this event. Bob Rauchle enlisted the help of fellow soldiers and took care of many of the logistics to pull this event off. Bob opened the doors to the U.S. Army Reserve Complex located in Milwaukee, and coordinated the assistance of many active duty soldiers, who had previously been deployed, to help out in the event.

"We appreciate that there are people out there to support the soldiers in a non-political way," said Lt. Col Bob Rauchle, Deputy Commander of the 646th regional Support Group in the US Army. "When you're on the frontlines, the care packages are often the only way to stay connected with home." "Thanks for making a difference in the daily lives of a soldier or marine who is deployed overseas... It's the little things that count."



### **Logistics to the Rescue -**

A key to the logistics of mailing 3,443 packages out of the country is enlisting the help of the United States Postal Service. After being recruited by Lt. Col Bob Rauchle at another army event, Chris Baltz, Manager of Consumer Affairs and Claims at the USPS, was on the project. Little did he know, he would be helping with most likely the largest ever 1 day package drive for troops in USPS history. Chris and the USPS committed early on to doing customs forms for the packages. This was a huge help, because typical packages, shipped overseas, take 6 labels per

box to clear customs. This was taken care of by the capable staff at the USPS. All said and done, the USPS kept 4 employees busy for 3.5 weeks to take care of all the paper work to make this a smooth operation. USPS supplied boxes and tape, and took care of the paperwork, leaving YPO Wisconsin with the task of paying for postage and gathering and packaging the goods.

Initially, YPO planned to fill around 500 boxes, but as support grew, the goal leaped to 2,100. In the end, 3,443 packages were assembled in 3.5 hours. "This has surpassed all previous drives I, or this district has ever been a part of." Said Chris Baltz. "I think the previous record was 100 packages per hour, and this blew that out of the water." The drive filled one and a half 53' semi trailers.

Partnering with the USPS was a great fit both for the cause, and logistics. Nearly 25% of USPS employees are veterans, or active duty military. "I am honored to have been a part of the event. (YPO) Could have chosen to go with any carrier, but we are honored that you choose USPS" thanks Chris Baltz. Chris said, having served 6 years in Marine core, (he served in Operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield.) and 14 years in postal service, "Receiving a care package is one of the only things (soldiers) look forward to when away from their families over the holidays."



### **Who Benefits -**

The recipients of these packages are active duty soldiers. Lt. Col Bob Rauchle personally knows of 9 Sergeant Majors who would disperse packages to their troops overseas, and there is also a list of 600 troops who replaced Lt. Col Rauchle's company that will be receiving these packages. There are also a couple of hospitals, which will distribute packages to injured soldiers.



### **The Goods -**

These soldiers will be getting some of the conveniences of home sent to them over the holidays. beef jerky, personal DVD players, magazines and MP3 players are some of the conveniences of home that were in the packages. There were also some highly requested daily items like clean wipes and resealable plastic bags to keep the sand out of

electronics to name a few. There were also toys and games for soldiers who might have their family at a base near by.

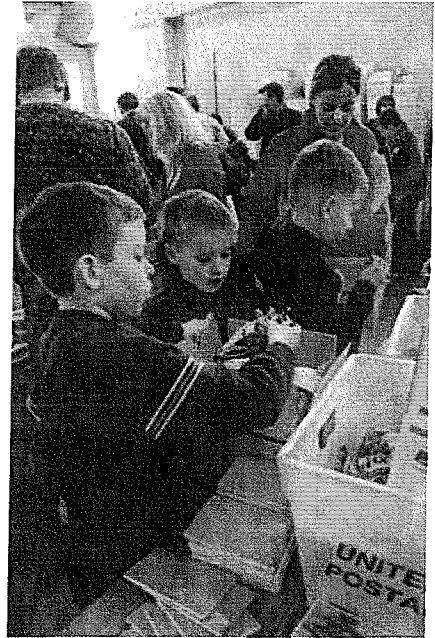
Not only did the soldiers benefit, but so did those able to help out. "Thanks and credit goes to YPO. You have no idea how many lives you have touched. My Daughter (age 7) commented that she wanted to give up her Christmas presents and give them to troops after seeing what happened at the YPO Holiday Party" – Chris Baltz

### **You Can Help! –**

If you are interested in sending a package to a soldier this holiday, the USPS makes it easy.

1. Call (414) 287-2530 or 1(800) 610-8734 and ask for a flat rate class box to be delivered to your house
2. Fill a package
3. Go to [usps.com](http://usps.com) and fill out the customs form, and arrange for pickup.
4. Feel good knowing that you made a difference in the life of those fighting for your freedom.

Or call Chris Direct at (414) 287-2582 if you would like to organize your own drive.



### **Who made this possible –**

There is a need to thank all of the people and businesses that made this event an overwhelming success. Below is a list of the overly generous people and businesses that gave time, money, products or even hand written letters. They are all to be thanked for their great service and generosity.

### **Monetary Donations:**

Charlie DuBois  
Rob Cowen  
Roger Thrun  
Kathy Kobza  
Jim O'Rourke  
Andrew Schwartz  
Mike Michels  
Scott Seefeld  
Dave Bolland  
Tom Goris  
Hupy & Associates  
Scott Naze  
Randy Perry



W.G. Rhodee Excavating  
American Legion Post #71  
Patrick Hietpas  
Tim Wallen  
Lisa Lammert's spousal Forum  
Linda & Walter Gauger  
Susan Marriott  
VFW Pewaukee #9537  
Regency Builders  
Arrowhead Booster Club  
Mara Darrow Bake Sale  
Michael Urban  
ERMED SC  
Marion Body Works

**Product Donations:**

Swiss Colony - kool-aid, fruit cake, nuts, coffee, hard candy, etc.  
Boelter Companies - hats & bottle openers  
JX Enterprises - t-shirts  
Sullivan Schein - dental products  
Holzhauer - dental products  
Doral Dental - dental products  
Quad Graphics - magazines/newspapers  
Potawatomi - playing cards  
Monterey - blankets for the marines  
Exacto Spring - misc items (crayons, dvds, etc.)  
SC Johnson - ziplock bags  
Wild Impact Marketing - sweatshirts for committee  
Coakley Bros. - accepting deliveries  
Many schools did a writing campaign w/ lots of letters from children  
Pat White - 25 Digital cameras and Wet Whipes  
Ellison Technologies - Beef Jerky  
Colders - discounted prices on dvds and mp3 players  
USPS - flat rate boxes and tape  
Joe Wilde Company  
Floor 360  
Kitchen Kraft  
Shorewest Realtors  
Metropolitan Builders Assoc.  
Terra Tec Landscaping  
Alpine Plumbing  
Verhalen - Pella Windows  
Arwin Windows  
Kennedy & Hahn



**Letters from Children to Troops:**

Divine Redeemer  
St Anthony's The Legend  
Swallow School  
Donges Bay Elementary

**YPO Committee:**

Stuart Banghart

Peggy Coakley

Mara Darrow

Mike Dowling

Holly Jensen

Craig Jorgensen

Rob Keefe

Lisa Lammert

Mike Natalizio

Jim O'Rourke

Bob Rauchle

Jon Schoenheider

Wendy Schoenheider

Andrew Schwartz

Terrie Stangl

Kay Sullivan