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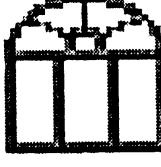
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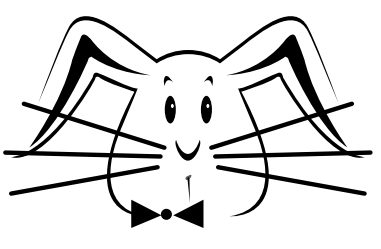
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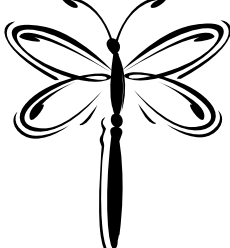
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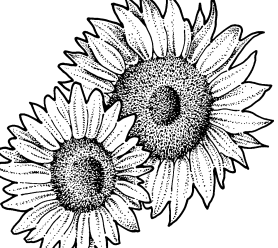












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Saluting the 4-H Junior Leaders for supporting the troops



Sherman County 4-H Junior Leaders (top) Aaron Duell, Devin Mangus, Kali Reitcheck, Chelsie Gausman, Brennen Clouse, Jason Krayca, Courtney Sheldon and sponsor Dana Belshe were honored at the 4-H Talent Night in March.

Special flag thanks club for gift box

By Tom Betz
The Goodland Star-News
The Sherman County 4-H Junior Leaders decided in June to send a care package to support the troops in Iraq and honor Goodland's fallen hero, Sgt. Derrick Lutters.

The gesture was returned at the opening of the 4-H Talent Night in March when Sgt. Mark Reasoner of the Goodland National Guard armory presented Devin Mangus and other Junior Leaders a special flag and certificate sent by Kansas troops in Iraq. Mangus said after Lutters died in May, he asked the Junior Leaders if they would be interested in honoring the fallen soldier by sending a care box to his unit in Iraq. "I was vice-president," he said, "and I was running the meeting in May when I asked if they would make a motion to send a box in honor of Derrick."

The club voted to spend \$300 on supplies, and Mangus said, they talked to Lutter's sister Genevieve about what soldiers need.

"She said they need lotion, toothpaste and lots of deodorant," Mangus said. "I guess it is very hot over there, and I know what they are doing is hard."

"Lisa Varney told us about the neck wraps that you soak in water to help keep you cool, and we bought some from Goodland Greenline and some from Wal-Mart."

"We bought lots of stuff and sent the box in the middle of June."

The other members of the club who helped, he said, included Aaron Duell, Kali Reitcheck, Chelsie Gausman, Brennen Clouse, Jason Krayca and Courtney Sheldon.

Mangus said he was outside working on a tractor on a Sunday in September when his mom said he had a phone call.

It was Lt. Col. Lee E. Tafanelli, a battalion commander with the National Guard, calling from Iraq to thank Mangus for the box and tell him the troops in Lutters' unit



4-H Junior Leader Devin Mangus accepted the special flag and certificate from Sgt. Mark Reasoner of the Goodland Kansas National Guard. The flag was sent to the 4-H club to thank them for a gift box sent to Iraq in June to honor Sgt. Derrick Lutters of Goodland who died in a bomb blast in May.

appreciated the gifts.

"I was surprised to get a call from Iraq," Mangus said. "I did not know who he was, but we had a nice conversation."

"He talked about what they are doing over there. We talked about the gas prices, and he said the fuel price there was 18 cents. I asked him to bottle some up and ship it back here."

"He told me they were grateful for the box, and that they were going to send the 4-H Junior Leaders a flag that was flown over the base on July 4, and a certificate thanking the people at home for their support."

Mangus said he was interested in learning more about Tafanelli.

"I looked him up," Mangus said, "and found that he has been a Kansas state representative from Ozwakie."

Mangus said he talked to extension agent Dana Belshe about the flag, which arrived in December. They decided to have it presented at the 4-H Talent Night in March.

Sgt. Reasoner read the certificate that

Tafanelli sent with the flag and presented individual flags to each of the Junior Leaders present that night from Headquarters, 891st Engineer Battalion:

"Let it be known that this flag of the United States of America was flown over Camp Sapper II, Ali Air Base, Tallil, Iraq this Fourth Day of July, 2005."

"This flag was displayed not as a symbol of occupation or oppression but as a sign to all who saw it, that there are Americans here, in brotherhood with, and in support of the Iraqi people."

"We came not to conquer but to foster and build a new democracy. We came to restore basic freedoms where once there was only terror and tyranny"

"This moment has been captured to remember the heroes that came here and with their blood and sacrifice made freedom and democracy not only possible, but made them flourish."

"May the democracy planted here spread throughout the region and bring peace to the Middle East in our time and forever."



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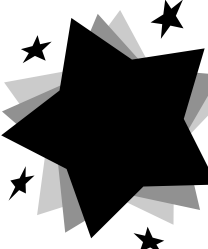
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