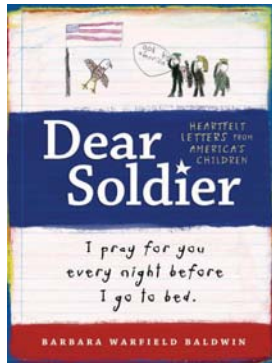


*For Immediate Release*

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## **Children Cheer America's Troops in *Dear Soldier***

*Portion of proceeds from book sales to aid severely wounded veterans*



**Dallas/Ft. Worth, TX**—As combat in Afghanistan continues and the war in Iraq enters its fifth year, America's children are saluting U.S. troops with a unique compilation of loving tributes in *Dear Soldier: Heartfelt Letters from America's Children*. In turn, the troops are expressing what a difference the book has made in their morale and spirits.

A collection of moving, poignant and funny handwritten letters, *Dear Soldier* was compiled and created by Barbara Warfield Baldwin and her daughters Amber Baldwin D'Amico and Dr. Heather Baldwin Duff. The mother/daughter trio believes this book is critically important for our soldiers, particularly during a time when the nation is divided about our strategy in Iraq.

"I believe Americans have made a tremendous effort not to repeat what we experienced during the Vietnam War when divided opinions resulted in a loss of support for our troops," said Barbara. "The power of *Dear Soldier* lies in the fact that the letters are pure and from the heart. Children don't talk about being 'for or against' the war but what they do express is their unconditional support for those serving on our behalf and appreciation of the tremendous sacrifices being made."

Barbara, an artist, and Heather, a chaplain, live in Pontotoc, Mississippi, and Amber practices public relations in Dallas. The mother/daughter team, whose family has a rich background of Department of Defense and Veterans Affairs service, was inspired to create *Dear Soldier* when their son/brother was serving in Afghanistan and Barbara regularly assembled care packages for the troops.

"Each package included a letter from a child, and the letters were so moving and so funny that we decided they should be captured for all Americans and for our military to enjoy," Barbara explained.



*Authors (from left): Amber Baldwin D'Amico, Barbara Warfield Baldwin and Dr. Heather Baldwin Duff*

Released by Thomas Nelson Publishers six months ago, *Dear Soldier* has now found its way into the hands of soldiers, veterans and their families and is generating incredible feedback. "We're thrilled to know that *Dear Soldier* is having a positive impact," Barbara said.

Some of the responses include:

*I bought the book Dear Soldier the other day to send to my husband who is currently deployed in Iraq. I read it first and was filled with a feeling I could not describe. After my husband received it he said it put him back home for a bit and he has started passing it around his unit for others to read and share in his*

*comfort. Thank you again for taking the time to put a book together that shows both those young and old care. – Caitlyn, wife of deployed soldier*

*Thank you for reaffirming my resolve through the compelling and precious visions that these innocent children portray... After 24 years and two tours in Afghanistan, my military service is drawing to a close. Thanks for putting the pride and passion back into my soul. – Joseph, Afghanistan*

A portion of the proceeds from each book will be donated to the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes, a non-profit, non-partisan 501(c)(3) organization, founded to provide a meaningful way for individuals, corporations and others to help our severely wounded and disabled Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom veterans and their families rebuild their lives.

For more information on *Dear Soldier* and its authors, visit [www.mydearsoldier.com](http://www.mydearsoldier.com). To learn more about the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes, visit [www.saluteheroes.org](http://www.saluteheroes.org).

### **SAMPLE COMMENTS FROM CHILDREN:**

“Dear Soider, I wish I could be over there with you, because I want to be a solider when I grow up. I have a cousin named John over there with you, if you see him tell him hi.”

“Dear Soldiers, How are you? I hope you are not getting hert. I hope you can read my hand writing because I'm doing the best I can. I like apple pie. My mom has got me to liking it.”

“Thank you for going to Iraq for our country. Because of your bravery I am able to live in a free country. A free country where red, white and blue are our colors and God watches over us.”

### **FEEDBACK FROM SOLDIERS AND THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS:**

“As a military chaplain, I will have the honor of caring for America's most severely wounded warriors. When I saw your *Dear Soldier* book, I knew I needed to have something from a child's perspective! Thank you having the vision to publish this book.” – *Brian, military chaplain, Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Germany*

“I am stationed in Baghdad and just found your book in our office. We have received letters from children before, and it is a very moving almost spiritual reading. The children's letters in your book are beautiful. I hope the USO can buy some of these books and place them around the world.” – *Scott, U.S. Embassy, Baghdad, Iraq*

“I bought the book *Dear Soldier* the other day to send to my husband who is currently deployed in Iraq. I read it first and was filled with a feeling I could not describe. After my husband received it he said it put him back home for a bit and reminded him he is doing good. He has started passing it around his unit for others to read and share in his comfort. Thank you again for taking the time to put a book together that shows both those young and old care.” – *Caitlyn, wife of deployed soldier*

“Thank you for reaffirming my resolve through the compelling and precious visions that these innocent children portray... After 24 years and two tours in Afghanistan, my military service is drawing to a close. Thanks for putting the pride and passion back into my soul.” – *Joseph, Afghanistan*

“Thank you for compiling this book. The letters from the children make me feel a little less scared about my son-in-law going on missions.” – *Cindy, mother-in-law of deployed soldier, Galva, Iowa*

“I am currently serving my second tour in Iraq. Today I received your *Dear Soldier* book in a Christmas package sent to me by my mother. I think this is such a wonderful book and it brought a big smile to my face as I flipped from page to page. I want you to know this book is such a good thing and as I read the letters I can just imagine the small children sitting and writing them out, with their small hands and so much innocence inside of them. Just to know the support of a small child is stretching across the world to us is such a wonderful feeling. Your book is appreciated. Thank you!” – *Erin, Kirkuk Regional Air Base*

“I am retired from VA Regional Office in Arkansas. I help veterans and widows from WWII to present. THANKS so much for doing this book.” – *Samuel, Department of Veterans Affairs retiree, veterans service officer*

“Shortly before my last mission, I received a care package from a friend from high school. I finally got around to opening it after a safe return back inside the wire. In it was a copy of your book. I just want to say that your compilation is great! I have been an infantryman in the Iowa Army National Guard for ten years. I have been deployed twice since then. For reasons of posterity, I have been keeping all of the letters and children’s drawings from various care packages. They really put a smile on my face. My unit gets care packages from around the USA, and I have to tell you that what you are doing is very important to us, especially with the news of an extension. Please keep up everything you are doing. I look forward to another volume.”

– *Brandon, deployed soldier, CENTCOM*

## **MILITARY FACTS:**

### **24.4 million**

The number of living military veterans in the United States

[http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/facts\\_for\\_features\\_special\\_editions/005696.html](http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/005696.html) and <http://www1.va.gov/opa/fact/amwars.asp>

### **1.4 million**

The number of active duty military

<http://siadapp.dior.whs.mil/personnel/MILITARY/ms0.pdf>

### **138,000**

The number of troops currently serving in Iraq & Afghanistan (as of Jan. 2006)

<http://www1.va.gov/opa/fact/amwars.asp>

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