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Market Watch



Index	Last Trade	Change
NASDAQ	2701.73	49.94+
SP 500	1547.70	28.94+
Russ 2000	855.18	15.21+
AMEX	2397.08	15.45+
NYSE	10197.69	183.01+
30 YR BOND	52.11	0.28+

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News

## Supporting the troops: Assisted living facility part of Red, White and Blue campaign

(Updated: Thursday, July 12, 2007 10:02 AM CDT)

Haley Aaron, Hartselle Enquirer

While the firecrackers have been extinguished and the grills are put away, residents at Sierra Springs are keeping the patriotic spirit of July 4th alive through Operation Red, White and Blue. As part of the program, they are collecting supplies and writing letters to send to troops currently serving overseas.

The program began with a Fourth of July celebration, and will end July 18 with a celebration at Sierra Springs for all of those who participated in the program.

"Operation Red, White and Blue is an effort that is being spearheaded by the residents at Sierra Springs in order to lend support to our troops that are fighting overseas," Marketing Director Mary Thomason said. "It was something that originated as an idea to get our residents involved in the community and they have been very enthusiastic about Operation Red, White, and Blue. They're very proud to have the opportunity to do something like this, that's going to have an impact."

Residents Irene Sullins and Walter Campbell know first hand the importance of supporting the military through projects such as Operation Red, White and Blue.

While her husband was serving in World War II, Sullins sent hundreds of letters overseas. "I wrote to him every day for two years," she said. "I remember his serial number yet and as old as I am, I still know his serial number that I put on his letters."

Although she wrote letters every day, the mail occasionally got backlogged, she recalled. "He said that they looked forward to them letters, and he said sometimes they'd get a stack that high," she said, holding her hands apart. "Sometimes he wouldn't



Sierra Springs staff members Brandy Ferguson, (L) and Penny Vest, activities director, took donations and handed out flyers at Wal-Mart two days last week

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get any, and he would think 'Why ain't she writing?'"

"He'd kind of get mad about it and I did the same thing too [when the mail was slow]," she said.

Sullins has also written to her grandson, who is currently serving in Iraq. "I sent him a big Valentine, and oh, I wish I had the letter to show you that he sent back," she said. "Thank you for that beautiful Valentine, Maw-maw," he had written.

Even when she is unable to write her grandson, she thinks of him often.

"I pray for him every night," she said. "Every night."

While Sullins was sending letters to her husband during World War II, Walter Campbell was receiving packages and letters from home while he was serving overseas.

Campbell, a highly decorated veteran, rarely had time to read his mail while in the line of fire, but occasionally he was able to take breaks and enjoy his mail. News from home was always greatly appreciated, Sullins said.

"When you're fighting you don't expect it, really. It's when you get a chance to relax a little bit that it helps you," he said. "When you're fighting, you've got your mind concentrated on that, you better have, but [when] you get a chance to break for a little while, letters help."

Although Campbell can not recall any particular letters he received, he does recall the feeling of having a package or a letter from home waiting at mail call.

"We looked forward to mail call. You know, it was nice to be able to relax a little bit and get mail from home. Those things we looked forward to," he said.

His advice for those currently serving? Stay focused on the task at hand. "Stay in there and shoot," he said.

According to Thomason, the program is especially important to the four Sierra Springs residents who served during World War II and other residents who either have served or currently have family members and loved ones serving overseas.

Sierra Springs residents are not the only ones excited about Operation Red, White and Blue. "As we get the word out, we are getting more and more people that have come forward to encourage us and to help us any way that they can," Thomason said. "It's growing into a community-wide effort." Senior Circle of Hartselle has also joined the effort and several businesses are providing financial support to offset shipping costs and donating supplies for the packages.

"I have been going out personally and handing flyers out to business owners. Some of them told me they don't normally post flyers in their stores but in our case they would make an exception because this is a community effort to support our troops," Thomason said.

"I think we all appreciate the situation that our soldiers are in, and we all feel a little bit helpless to do something for them, even if we don't have someone who is in our immediate family that's involved," she said.

Packages are being sent to troops through several non-profit organizations that have been endorsed by all branches of the military, including organizations such as Anysoldier.com.

Snack foods such as Slim Jims and Pringles are recommended, as well as any personal hygiene items except bars of soap. Donations can be dropped off at Sierra Springs, where residents will help package the supplies and write letters to be included in the care packages. For more information about the program, contact Mary Thomason at 751-4809.

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