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Cedaredge woman honored for sending letters to soldiers

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BY CRYSTAL COSTA



A Cedaredge woman has been sending thousands of letters to American troops for years now. And Saturday, she finally got the recognition she deserves.

Cathy Meskel is known by thousands of soldiers as the woman who sent them their very first letter while serving overseas. She's dedicated her life to boosting the morale of American troops and has been writing letters

to the troops since the Vietnam War, when she 11 years old.

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In the last five years since the Iraq War began, she's sent out 25,000 letters. They thank the soldiers for their sacrifice and tell them that Cathy is thinking and praying for them.

Saturday in Rifle, Meskel was honored by an Iraq War Veteran who received her letters while overseas. Staff Sergeant Sean Rash presented her with an "outstanding volunteer" certificate, a medal, and an "honorary soldier" plaque.

Meskel has also sent off harmonicas, and medallions to soldiers in Iraq. Sergeant Sean Rash said he saw them everywhere. "It was neat to see her medallions hanging from the inside of the humvees, and hanging around soldier's necks on individual chains."

Many soldiers have even contacted Cathy after they received her letters or paid her a visit. Meskel said, "It's just so important, they need to know they are not forgotten, they are important, and that someone cares."

Meskel called this honor "one of the most memorable moments" of her life. She said being recognized by the people she cares so much about is unforgettable.

Meskel is urging everyone to send letters to troops. You can get names of soldiers off anysoldier.com. Or you can contact Cathy to help, or give her the names of your loved ones who are serving.



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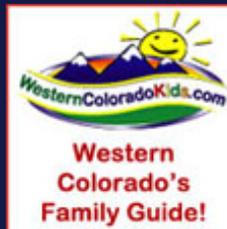
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