

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA COLLEGE IS SEEN AROUND THE WORLD
Southwest Florida College's students, faculty and staff stay in touch with their men in Iraq



Red Platoon Alpha Battery of the I-77th Field Artillery consists of 16 front line combat soldiers and include: Platoon Leader, 1st Lieutenant William "Brooks" Allen, 25; Sergeant Nathan Allen, 28 of PA; Sergeant First Class James Crawford; Staff Sergeant John Englund, 27 of IL; Private Thomas Evans, 21 of AK; Private First Class John Ferguson, 29 of GA; Private First Class Steven Fornicola, 25 of VA; Sergeant Aaron Garcia, 25 of CA; Private Brian Huckeba, 21 of GA; Private First Class Kevin Miles; Specialist Richard Morris, 27; Specialist Alexander Ortega, 21 of CA; Specialist Brandon Patterson, 24 of MI; Private First Class Cody Penning, 24 of MI; Specialist Wesley Suer, 32 of MI; and Sergeant Ryan Swann, 30 of CA.

Fort Myers, Estero, Port Charlotte and Tampa: (February 23, 2009) – Southwest Florida College adopted Red Platoon Alpha Battery of the I-77th Field Artillery in January as a way to demonstrate support to all men and women serving in Iraq. As a result, the college's familiar blue T-shirts, emblazoned "XXL Property of Southwest Florida College," have been spotted on the makeshift gridirons and playing fields of Red Platoon Alpha Battery in Iraq.

Since January the students, faculty and staff of Southwest Florida College have supplied the men with monthly "care packages" of DVDs, magazines, playing cards, homemade cookies, sunscreen, personal-care products – and of course, Southwest Florida College T-shirts.

"Our boys were ecstatic to receive the shirts and wear them during physical training," said Executive Vice President of Southwest Florida College, Dr. Stephen Calabro, who speaks to the men regularly via email.

“The men wear their Southwest Florida College T-shirts as a way to distinguish them from other soldiers when they play flag football. There were a few extras in the box and those were given to their Iraqi interpreter and a couple of Iraqi kids to wear in town,” he said.

Southwest Florida College adopted Red Platoon Alpha Battery with a goal of boosting the men’s spirits and letting them know they are making a difference.

The Business Club and Allied Health Club of SWFC have been hosting fundraisers to supply the men with a Wii game console. In conjunction with fulfilling that wish list, the club is actively seeking donations of Wii games and accessories, new or used. “Donations of any working Wii components are greatly appreciated,” Calabro said.