



## Scores of boxes packed with holiday treats heading to Iraq base from Texas

By John Connor  
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**TALLIL,** Iraq—The holiday season is upon us once again and many Soldiers and Sailors stationed on this base in southern Iraq will be getting boxes full of assorted goodies and supplies, thanks to volunteers at the East Texas Medical Center in Athens, Texas.

The volunteers are members of the ETMC Auxiliary, also known as the Pink Ladies. And one of their number, Ruth Lang, also is the mother of Cmdr. Mike Lang, a Navy Seabee serving in Iraq with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Lang is standing by to receive a lot of mail. At last count, about 100 packages had been shipped from Texas. Sgt 1st Class Chris Golden, who works with Lang, already has received a package. He said it was full of all sorts of good stuff, including cards from children. Contents of boxes range from candy to socks to cards, sometimes all of those things and more in a single box.

Included in one box was a card made by a 3rd grader in Eustace, Texas, saying simply "Thank you and Merry Christmas." Another from a child named Bodey at the Trinidad Elementary School in Trinidad, Texas, said, "I hope you have a wonderful Christmas." A letter enclosed in the boxes from the administrator of the medical center, Patrick Wallace, said in part that "we are so proud of you and humbled by your commitment and sacrifice."

Cmdr. Lang, who is officer in charge of the Adder Area office of the USACE Gulf Region South District, said he was told by a fellow officer of having received a box from a lady in Texas named Ruth Lang. The Commander said, "What a coincidence, that's my mother's name." At that point, the other officer put two and two together.

Mrs. Lang is the president of the Auxiliary. She enclosed with each box a note of greeting explaining the project and mentioning some of the people encountered



*Ruth Lang helps children in Texas prepare Holiday cards for military personnel in Iraq. (Courtesy photo)*

along the way, such as the man who walked up and handed her a \$100 bill asking for no recognition and all the children who made and sent cards.

"We hope that you can feel the love and admiration that is being sent to you and know that each and every one of you are in our thoughts and prayers," Mrs. Lang wrote.

Cmdr. Lang plans to distribute the boxes beyond the Corps of Engineers military personnel to other Soldiers and Sailors stationed at Tallil. Yes, Sailors and Naval Aviators. There is a Navy air unit here. "It looks like I'll be playing Santa," he said.

**Note:** John Connor is a Public Affairs Officer with the Gulf Region South district, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Iraq. For more information on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq, visit [www.grd.usace.army.mil](http://www.grd.usace.army.mil).