

# MO Guard Honors St. Louis Company For Support

By Tim Davidson  
Public Affairs Representative



Sgt. 1st Class Darrin Anderson recently presented Dave Harster, owner of Harster Heating & Air Conditioning, with a Certificate of Appreciation for his outstanding support of the units of the 70th Troop Command and the Missouri Army National Guard. Headquartered at Jefferson Barracks, the 70th Troop Command is Missouri National Guard's largest senior brigade with five full battalions and nearly 3,000 Citizen-Soldiers.

**D**avid F. Harster, owner of Harster Heating & Air Conditioning, was recently honored with a Certificate of Appreciation for his outstanding support of Citizen-Soldiers in the 70th Troop Command, headquartered at Jefferson Barracks.

Harster earned this distinguished recognition for his generosity in sending dozens of care packages to deployed Soldiers in Iraq on a regular basis. He began sending care packages to military troops in Iraq when he heard about his friend's deployment. "We were both building the same kind of airplane. We shared different ideas during the entire process. When he finished his plane, my friend told me he couldn't fly it because he had to go to Qatar. After arriving there, he sent word back that his unit really needed some stuff so that's how it all began," said Harster.

Over the summer, Harster started sending out care packages every two weeks. Each box weighed about 20 pounds. "The Soldiers would send us requests for the items they needed and our employees worked together as a team assembling the care packages," said Harster. "Some of them brought in the latest issues of Sports Illustrated, Field & Stream and Time magazine. Others gathered new CDs, clothes and video games. Whatever the Soldiers needed, we tried to send it to them."

Beef jerky is a popular item requested by Soldiers. Harster also learned not to send any chocolate because everything melts over in Iraq. But he sent them lots of other candy for Halloween. As for DVDs, Harster says Soldiers trade them like money. "We try to send them the latest DVD releases so they can watch something new for a change," added Harster.

Although one of the Soldiers getting care packages has returned home, Harster has picked up another Soldier to support through Soldier.com. She is a young woman with five men and

five women on her team. Harster recently sent her a care package for the holidays.

Harster recalls a story one Soldier told him about his daughter's reaction to his return from Iraq. She wouldn't let go of his leg for two days because she missed him so much. "It's heart breaking when you hear these stories, but our Soldiers need to go over there and do what they've got to do to stabilize things in Iraq and prevent terrorism from coming here. They deserve our gratitude for the sacrifices they're making to protect our country. By sending care packages, we're just showing our appreciation and letting them know that the people back home haven't forgotten them."

Housed in an Affton historical building built in 1910, Harster Heating & Air Conditioning has been a long-time St. Louis tradition. Harster's father, Emil F. Hartster, started the company in 1950 as a one man, one truck operation. Harster bought the company from his father in 1988 and has transformed it into a successful business with 20 employees and 18 trucks. This mobile force now services over 17,000 local residents and businesses with efficient heating and cooling systems installed by friendly, dependable technicians.

The 70th Troop Command is the senior headquarters for the 175th Military Police Battalion, Fulton, the 135th Rear Operations Center, St. Louis, the 835th Combat Support and Sustainment Battalion, Jefferson City, the 205th Military Police Battalion, Popular Bluff, and the 229th Multifunctional Medical Battalion, Jefferson City. Serving under the command of Col. Michele Melton and Command Sgt. Maj. Charles E. Jones, the 70th Troop Command is Missouri Guard's largest senior brigade with five full battalions and nearly 3,000 Citizen-Soldiers.

