New Jersey Band Creates American Anthem for Soldiers in Iraq

June 15, 2009 -- A power trio rock band in North Jersey called “Cookiehead” was heard in Baghdad over the weekend. It was the result of a chance meeting at a club in Clifton, NJ. While playing a gig at the club, the band was approached by Alan Krutchkoff, the president of a NJ 501 (c) (3) public charity known as Adopt-a-Soldier Platoon (AaSP).

“Alan really liked our set and asked if we would be interested in playing something like the national anthem rock style to open a Rock Band tournament in Iraq, said Doug Salomone, guitar player for Cookiehead. “My father is a Marine veteran so we jumped at it.”

Cookiehead played with the idea of an anthem-like song. Salomone, bass player Bob Koerner and drummer Jeff Prosetti created an instrumental montage called American Anthem and also added one of their songs called “Song for a Soldier.”

“Cookiehead is amazing and my wife and I were totally struck by their music,” said Krutchkoff. “We went to see another band at this club and walked away asking Cookiehead to represent Adopt-a-Soldier Platoon at an event we were working on in Baghdad!”

Adopt-a-Soldier Platoon partnered with Microsoft Xbox for the second year in a row to create a Rock Band Tournament known as I-Roq. Now he was asking Cookiehead to open the tournament with a rock anthem.

The project immediately took off but there wasn’t much time to get it all done. Intermedia Post studios in Paramus, NJ, offered to donate the use of their studio for the recording. An ad agency named The CSI Group, also from Paramus, offered to shoot and edit the video to enable AaSP to send it to Baghdad. It was all done in a very small window of time and the finished video was shipped to Iraq, where it was immediately well received.

“It took me an hour to download Cookiehead's video but man it was totally worth waiting for,” said Col. Ralph Romine, event Emcee and also a rock guitarist. “Those guys are amazing – they are WICKED CRAZY GOOD MUSICIANS!"

AaSP has been supporting the troops for more than six years. They provide a multitude of support through care cartons, special projects and outreach across the US they call Special Friends. Cookiehead is already a Special Friend.

“We want to help AaSP generate awareness and support for our troops,” said Salomone. “We love what they’re doing and as a Special Friend, we know we can drum up donations with our music to help the soldiers. They’re laying their lives on the line every day for us and it’s the least we can do. We’re already planning to put Song for a Soldier on the Internet to generate donations.”

The I-Roq Baghdad Rock Band 2 Tournament was held Sunday, June 14. A band called Hott Garbage won the event. For a few hours, the soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen attending the event could forget about the stress of war.

“Thank You! Thank You! Thank you for all that you and the team did to coordinate this event,” said MAJ Ernest Reinhart, one of the officers running the event at Camp Victory in Baghdad. “The troops had a GREAT time!!! You have no idea how much it means to all of us here to have the opportunity to kick back and just have fun. This event made it possible for everyone that participated to forget where they were for a couple of hours. These opportunities are more precious than gold and less than infrequent.”

This is only the beginning of supporting the troops for Cookiehead. They are already planning to play at a Family Day at the Riverdale Armory of the NJ Army National Guard on Sunday, September 13 to honor the soldiers of the 113th Infantry who just returned from a tour in Iraq.

“We can’t wait to do more,” said Jeff.

For more information on Adopt-a-Soldier Platoon, visit their website at: www.adoptasoldierplatoon.org. Cookiehead has a page in their Special Friends section where you can view videos, shout outs and hear the music. http://www.adoptasoldierplatoon.org/specialfriends/cookiehead.html.

For more information on Cookiehead, contact: TTombrink Media at 973-763-5978.

About *Adopt-a-Soldier Platoon, Inc.*

Adopt-a-Soldier Platoon, Inc. (AaSP) adopted its first soldier, a SGT in the 82d Airborne, in April 2003. Since then, tens of thousands of Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and Airmen have benefited from its support. Besides sending care cartons on a regular basis, AaSP

engages in special projects, all designed to improve the morale of military personnel deployed in harm's way.

Projects have included partnering with Microsoft Xbox and MTV Games to launch two Rock Band tournaments in Iraq (called "I-Roq," the first was on Camp Anaconda in March 2008 and the latest in Baghdad, June 14, 2009); sending 25,000 blank DVDs for soldiers to send videos home for the holidays in 2006; supplying Xboxes to military hospitals and other units in 2007; sending laptops and exercise mats to Ibn Sina Hospital, Baghdad; collecting NFL souvenirs for four Super Bowl parties; outfitting soccer teams for an Airborne Civil Affairs Unit; building a custom-made 80-inch screen and supplying entertainment equipment to a unit in Iraq after a MWR tent burned down; and a host of other projects.

AaSP currently supports U.S. military hospitals in Afghanistan, Germany, Iraq and Kuwait; K-9 units in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Morale Welfare Recreation unit at Joint Base Balad in Iraq; and local National Guard units from CT and NJ.

Adopt-a-Soldier Platoon just completed its Operation NJ Home Front to support the largest deployment of NJ Army troops since World War II. The NJ soldiers came home in June 2009. To learn more about AaSP visit www.AdoptaSoldierPlatoon.org or write to Adopt-a-Soldier Platoon, P.O. Box 1111, Fair Lawn, NJ 07410. Adopt-a-Soldier Platoon is a 501(c)(3) public charity.