

Adopt-A-Platoon

Suggested Items for Care Packages

Keep package size reasonable, 10" x 10" x 18" or smaller is best, but not a requirement. Maximum allowed by the USPS is "girth (measure all the way around) plus length equals less than 70 inches. Smaller than that is better, make an effort not to overwhelm the military mail service.

Always include postcards addressed back to you in each package, so that your soldiers can communicate back to you and inform you of their needs and wants.

Mail generally takes 3-5 weeks to get to the Persian Gulf, if you want, try to send something every week, don't expect to hear from your platoon until enough time has passed. Keep sending!! You will get to know your soldiers, they will write.

This is to be considered a starting place -

Food Items

Coffee and teas, all kinds Powdered Gatorade mix

Powdered hot chocolate

Kool-Aid (presweetened)

Life-Savers

Slim Jim's

Crackers and cheese. Triscuits and Ritz crackers are great.

Single servings of bagged chips. (The small bags stay fresh longer.)

Candy, of course. (M & M's are great, hard candy-anything that won't melt.)

Snack cakes

Gum

Rice Krispie Treats

Dry cereal. (Small individual boxes are great.)

Kraft Mac & Cheese

Microwave popcorn

Beef jerky - A MOST REQUESTED ITEM

Granola bars

Power bars

Dried fruit

Chex mix

Canned soup

Tuna (pouches are cheaper to mail, cans are also fine)

Spices (Onion powder, garlic powder, all spice, any)

Summer sausage
Oatmeal
Salsa
Lollipops
Marshmallows
Bubble Gum
Chips (crush proof them!)
Canned sandwich spread
Canned chicken
Salad dressing
Instant soup
Fast food condiments (Hot sauce, ketchup, mustard, salt and pepper packets, relish, Mayo - like you get at fast food restaurants. Save them every time you go)

Practical Items

Baby wipes/body wipes - A MOST REQUESTED ITEM in hot seasons. Often unable to bathe, soldiers use these to clean up!!!!

Razors, shaving cream
Shampoo, conditioner
After shave lotion
Soap or body wash
Mouth wash
Deodorant
T-shirts, underwear and socks. *often!*
A big fluffy towel
Eye drops, helpful during sand storms
Chapstick
Lip balm
Sun block
Skin so soft (Avon, works as insect repellent)
Lotion
Dental floss
Baby powder
Foot powder
Combs & brushes
Cotton balls
Liquid hand sanitizer
Breath mints
Contact lens cleaner
Eye drops
Nail files
Insect repellent
Socks
Blankets (in cold months)

For Fun

Frisbees
Squirt guns
Playing cards
AA and AAA batteries
Any kind of toy
Stamps not needed - they get free postage
Paper and envelopes with a nice writing pen might inspire a few more letters home.
Phone cards (ask if there is a brand they can use!)
Paperback books - A MOST REQUESTED ITEM Dig around 2nd hand stores.
Magazines - A MOST REQUESTED ITEM (age doesn't matter) Get them free from waiting rooms.... ASK doctors and dentist!
Disposable cameras.... ask them to take pictures and send them to you.
Puzzles
Film (ask)
Newspapers (sports sections)
Yo Yo's
Super Soak squirt guns
Go through the kids toys at Wal-Mart... you'll find some fun things to send.
Dart boards
Small flash lights
Hackie sacks
Jump ropes
Electronic hand held games
Post cards from your home state
Hand made items
Bandanas
Portable CD players
Battery powered fans
Jokes and comics
Balloons
Baseball caps
Birthday decorations
Blankets (in cold months)
Banners
Board games (ransack your closets - they don't have to be new. You're not using them.)
Go to second hand stores or pawn shops and get movie DVDs. Most units have a portable player.
If there is a holiday 6-weeks away, make up one box with just holiday goodies.... Be creative!
With a CD burner, make mixes of favorite songs.
Always write letters, but addition you might record letters onto a tape.

Send a few toys. Slinky, chalk, squirt guns...anything silly.
Make a scrapbook. Send photos of you and your group, kids and pets.
Foam footballs and basketballs

If you have female soldiers in your platoon

Nail polish
Nail clippers
Q-tips
Mirror
Body sprays
Candles
Hair spray (non-aerosol)
Hair gel
Perfume
Feminine hygiene products
Hair bands
Hair clips

Most of all, have fun with your packages!

Involve kids any way you can. Recruit scout troops, grade school classes or Sunday School groups in drawing and writing short notes.

Use any excuse for a *THEME* package. Any holiday imaginable... post a suggestion list for your group 2 months ahead. Make a movie night box, gag-gift box.... Invent a theme, cook something up!

Pack boxes for the worst handling possible

Never send glass containers. No pressurized items (no sprays or shaving cream in pressurized cans) Nothing that will melt (soft milk chocolate, etc.) Put anything that might spill or come open in zip-lock bags. They will be re-used. Use real popcorn as packing material (it will probably get eaten even if stale) Pack some things in tins you have around the house - soldiers can use them for storage.
Pack all boxes as if they must pass "the gorilla stomp test". Expect them to be abused.

Mailing Restrictions

DO NOT SEND:

Pork
Liquor
Pornographic material
Religious items offensive to the Islamic faith