

2010 Celebrate Scouting Stamp

Sending a Care Package

Sending a care package to deployed soldiers is a great way to show men and women in the military that you appreciate their service to our country. Overseas troops are far from family, friends, and home. Receiving a thoughtful package can mean a great deal.

New safety regulations no longer allow packages to be addressed to “Any Soldier” or to an entire camp in general. Instead, we suggest locating troops through your family and friends — or those of your fellow Scouts — to show your gratitude and support.

Remember, if you are under the age of 18, make sure to get your parents involved too! Share the package you are sending – this is a fun project you can do together.

Here are some suggestions for creating your care packages.

What to Include

The United States Postal Service, Operation Military Pride, and former Scout soldiers have shared ideas for putting together well-liked and useful care packages.

Practical Necessities

Even some of the most basic of items can make a big difference in a soldier’s quality of life while he or she is deployed. Soldiers can always use practical things such as:

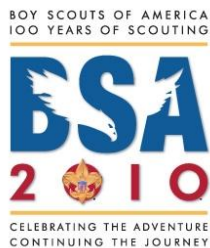
- baby wipes
- towels
- sun block
- lip balm
- aloe vera gel
- eye drops
- bars of soap
- aspirin
- dental floss
- hairbrushes
- gloves
- phone cards
- hand sanitizers
- non-lithium batteries

Food Items

Deployed soldiers often welcome a break from standard fare with gifts of food items. “I love getting homemade treats from friends back home,” says Specialist Paul Vendt, an Eagle Scout currently deployed in Iraq. But remember, desert temperatures can exceed 100 degrees. Include nonperishable items that won’t melt.

Here are some edible ideas:

- hard candy
- cookies
- breakfast bars
- crackers
- nuts
- pretzels
- cereal
- powdered drinks like lemonade or Gatorade
- jerky
- coffee
- Jell-o mix
- canned soup
- gum



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Games

Fun and creative things are always appreciated, especially for soldiers who may be in remote areas of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Suggestions include:

- Sudoku
- crossword puzzle books
- playing cards
- small board games
- foam footballs
- soccer balls
- disposable cameras
- miniature fans

Personalized Gifts

Receiving personal notes, photos, or mementos are always special and appreciated when you are far from home. "I would love to get updates and keepsakes from the Scouts," says SPC Vendt, "As an Eagle Scout myself, I'd love to hear from the organization that was so important to me growing up!"

Some ideas for personalized crafts include:

- a letter about your pack, troop, or crew's recent activities
- hand-made decorations for holidays
- your hometown newspaper
- pictures you've drawn
- t-shirts or bandanas your unit has decorated
- scrapbooks of your pack, troop, or crew showing favorite activities
- photos of the city and state where your troop is located

Important Considerations

Mail addressed to military and diplomatic post offices overseas is subject to certain conditions and restrictions. There are items to avoid when creating your care package. For more information, visit the USPS Web site at

www.usps.com/supportingourtroops/mailingrestrictions.htm.

Care packages can encounter a variety of conditions during the long journey overseas. It is important to correctly pack care packages so they arrive in good condition. USPS has tips to help you ensure your package arrives intact, here:

www.usps.com/supportingourtroops/packagingtips.htm

You've put so much care into your package, so make sure it's properly addressed! To make sure the troops get your packages, be sure to read these addressing guidelines:

www.usps.com/supportingourtroops/addressingtips.htm.