



## **SUGGESTED CARE PACKAGE ITEMS**

**If you're making your own care package to send to the troops,  
consider this list a starting place.**

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.

Please note: stamps are not needed - soldiers get free postage!

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### **PACKING TIPS**

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 the packages to be abused.

## ASSEMBLY TIPS

Have fun with your packages!

Involve Kids (any way you can) - recruit boy scout and girl scout troops, grade school classes, or Sunday school groups in drawing & writing short notes.

Theme Packages - use any excuse for a theme. Any holiday imaginable! Post a suggestion list for your group two months ahead. Ideas: movie night box, gag-gift box, invent a theme or cook something up!

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## MAILING RESTRICTIONS (DO NOT SEND)

Pork

Liquor

Pornographic Material

Religious Items offensive to the Islamic faith

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## FOOD ITEMS

Coffee & teas (all kinds)

Powdered Gatorade Mix

Powdered Hot Chocolate

Kool-Aid (presweetened)

Life-Savers

Slim Jim's

Crackers & Cheese

Triscuits & Ritz crackers

Single servings of bagged chips (small bags stay fresh longer - crush proof them!)

Candy (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 also fine)

Spices (onion/garlic powder, all spice, etc.)

Summer Sausage

Oatmeal

Salsa

Lollipops

Marshmallows

Canned Sandwich Spread

Canned Chicken

Salad Dressing

Instant Soup

Fast Food Condiments (Hot sauce, ketchup, mustard, salt & pepper packets, relish, mayo, etc.)

*Tip: Save your condiment packets every time you get fast food!*

## “FOR FUN” ITEMS

- Frisbees
- Squirt Guns
- Playing Cards
- AA & AAA batteries
- Any Kind of Toy
- Paper, Envelopes & a Nice Writing Pen (might inspire a few more letters home)
- Phone cards (ask if they need a certain brand)
- 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 dentists!)
- 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
- Dart Boards
- Small Flash Lights
- Hackie Sacks
- Jump Ropes
- Electronic Handheld Games
- Post Cards (from your home state)
- Handmade items
- Bandanas
- Portable CD Players
- Battery Powered Fans
- Jokes & Comics
- Balloons
- Baseball Caps
- Birthday Decorations
- Blankets (in cold months)
- Banners
- Board games (Check your closets - they don't have to be new)
- Foam footballs and basketballs
- Slinky
- Chalk
- Make a scrapbook & send photos of you and your group, kids and pets!
- Movie DVDs (Go to second hand stores or pawn shops - most units have a portable player)
- Tip: Go through the kids toys at Wal-Mart...you'll find some fun things to send!

If there's a holiday 6-weeks away, make up one box with just holiday goodies....be creative!

Use a CD burner, make mixes of favorite songs.

Always write letters, but additionally you could record letters onto a tape!

## PRACTICAL ITEMS

Baby wipes/ Body Wipes (A MOST REQUESTED ITEM - in hot seasons soldiers are unable to bathe and use wipes to clean up)

Razors & shaving cream

Shampoo & Conditioner

After Shave Lotion

Soap or Body Wash

Mouth Wash

Deodorant

T-shirts

Underwear & Socks (often!)

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)

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## FEMALE SOLDIER ITEMS

Nail Polish

Nail Clippers

Q-Tips

Mirror

Body Sprays

Candles

Hair Spray (non-aerosol)

Hair Gel

Perfume

Feminine Hygiene Products

Hair Bands

Hair Clips