

**MILITARY “CARE PACKAGES”:
SUPPORTING OUR TROOPS
by Brandie Neal**

Forward

Kevin James Gilbert

Brandie Neal, whose husband is a soldier deployed to the Middle East, assembled this list with input from many others—individuals and lists. Its value lies in its comprehensiveness, and because it includes many responses from the service men and women themselves to the questions like, “What do you need” and “What would be most encouraging to you?” Thank you, Brandie, for the heart of gold displayed by your effort. We pray that this list helps all who seek to make an encouraging connection with our service personnel so far from home: May the Lord bless your gracious efforts.

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Food items:

- Beef jerky
- Chips
- Dip in a can
- Pop Tarts
- Sunflower seeds
- Trail mix
- Instant coffee
- Ghardettos
- Cup O Noodle
- Protein Bars
- Pre-sweetened powdered juice mix (ex: Tang, Gatorade, Kool-aid)
- Nuts
- Rice Krispie treats (pre-packaged)
- Velveeta cheese (doesn't need to be refrigerated until its opened . . . send a plastic knife so they can spread it on crackers)
- Instant oatmeal
- Just-add-water soups
- Chex mix
- Restaurant size condiment packets (ketchup, mustard, mayo, bbq, salt, pepper, etc.)
- Granola bars
- Nutrigrain bars
- *Beef* summer sausage
- Cookies
- Fruit cups/applesauce cups (Motts has applesauce that comes with Pop Rocks that is really fun to eat)
- Flip top canned foods (soups, chili, etc.)
- Cracker Jacks
- Goldfish crackers

- Vienna sausages
- Pretzels
- Tuna snack kits
- Tea bags
- Powdered hot chocolate
- Bowl Appetite dinners
- Lunchables (many varieties do not need to be refrigerated)
- Candy
- Snack cakes
- M&Ms
- Graham crackers
- Chocolate-dipped pretzels
- Pre-packaged brownies (Lunchables makes a brownie kit that has icing and sprinkles that they can decorate their snack with)
- Licorice
- Bubble gum
- Nuts
- popcorn
- Hurricane or Typhoon mix for popcorn

Toiletries

- Soap
- Foot powder
- Deodorant (Solids tend to melt; gels are best)
- Toothpaste
- Razor refills
- Lotion
- Nasal spray
- Eye drops/wash
- Sunscreen
- Anti-bacterial hand soap
- Lever 2000 wipes
- Baby wipes
- Neosporin
- Mole skin (for blisters)
- Band Aids
- Tylenol
- Toilet paper
- Chap Stick
- Q-tips
- Aloe vera
- Contact lens cleaner (they shouldn't be wearing contacts in the field, but it's on one of the lists)
- Shampoo
- Conditioner
- After shave lotion
- Mouthwash
- Floss

- Shower shoes
- Insect repellent with DEET

Miscellaneous/Comfort Items

- Film for camera (or disposable camera)
- Zip-lock bags
- Laundry soap (individual powder packets or tablets)
- Fabric softener
- Deck of cards
- Dominoes
- Small electronic games
- CDs
- Hand operated can opener
- Calling cards
- Envelopes
- Notebook paper/stationery
- Sunglasses
- Clean, fresh socks & t-shirts
- Boot inserts
- Frisbees
- Clorox wipes
- Yo-yos
- Bubble wrap
- Gel insoles
- Underwear
- Glade stick-ups (or Yankee candle auto air fresheners)
- Blanket from home
- Big, fluffy towel
- Small battery operated fan
- Photos (of family, friends, home, etc.)
- Mixed tape of favorite songs
- Letters recorded on audio or video tape
- Key chain board games
- Magazines
- Toys (slinky, squirt guns, etc.)
- Mini scrapbook
- Dixie cups
- Small battery operated light
- Cordless electric razor
- Small sewing kit
- Stress ball
- Padded mailing envelopes (so they can send things back home)
- Eyeglass cleaner wipes
- Extra boot laces
- Fly bait and ant and mouse traps
- Zip ties
- 550 cord

Theme Package Ideas and Item Lists

- **“Spiritual Journey”** devotional literature; encouraging studies; bulletins, notes, & recordings from congregation; books by favorite authors (to be shared with one another then donated to the chapel), etc.
- **“Surviving the Sandstorms”** eye wash, nasal spray, chap stick, bandana, etc.
- **“Laundry Load”** laundry soap (sample size), fabric softener sheets, cleans socks and t-shirts, etc.
- **“Lotta Java”** Tea, cocoa, coffee singles, creamer, sugar, international coffee tins, cookies, biscotti
- **“Thanks a Million!”** Things that “seem” expensive such as Grey Poupon, small amount of cash, electronic version of Who Wants to be a Millionaire?, and wrap items in green tissue paper
- **“Hang in There!”** Stuffed animal monkey, banana bread, banana chips, banana pudding, Monkeys in a Barrel game, card with a monkey on it
- **“A Day at the Beach”** sunscreen, beach towel, beach snacks, flip flop sandals (shower shoes), Aloe Vera gel
- **“Medicine Cabinet”** Aspirin, band-aids, Neosporin cream, A&D ointment, cold medicine, Alka Seltzer, Roloids, etc.
- **“Staying Healthy”** Nutrition/health bars, vitamins, nutri-grain bars, Gatorade or other sports drink
- **“MRE/Mess Hall Survival Kit”** Restaurant size condiments and snacks
- **“Correspondence Carton”** Notebook paper, stationery, pens, pencils, stickers, envelopes, address book (filled), camera with a note to send back once its filled
- **“Action Heroes”** Powerbars, squirt guns, Red Bull drinks, small Army figurines, comic books, etc.
- **“To Be a Kid Again”** silly string, bubbles, small bouncy balls, hacky sacks, brain teaser toys (Rubix Cube, etc.), deck of cards, dominoes
- **“Bathroom in a Box”** toilet paper, razor refills, foot powder, bars of soap, washcloths, travel size shampoo, conditioner, toothpaste, toothbrush
- **“Stress Reliever”** back scratcher, bubble wrap, yo-yos, bubbles, squeezey tension ball
- **“I’m Nuts about You”** peanuts, cashews, pistachios, peanut butter cookies, any candy with nuts
- **“Rocks On”** Pop rocks, CDs
- **“And this Little Piggie went to the Sandbox”** (foot care kit) foot powder, boot inserts, foot lotion, foot file, fresh socks, toe nail clippers
- **“Chili Today, Hot Tamale”** Hot Tamales (candy), small cans of chili, red pepper flakes, salsa flavored sunflower seeds, Cajun flavor Pringles, Spicy Chex mix, Boston Red Hots, peppered beef jerky, Taco Bell hot sauce packets, Extreme Doritos, chili powder, nacho cheese sauce in a can
- **“How do you eat your OREOS?”** regular Oreos, peanut butter Oreos, double stuff Oreos, chocolate filled Oreos, etc.
- **“Pick Nick Basket”** Line basket with linen napkin and fill with juice boxes, beef summer sausages, pre-packaged cheese, fruit roll ups, chips, nuts, cookies, candies, pickles, olives, etc. Throw in some plastic ants and photos of your pick nick back home
- **“Breakfast on the Go”** nutrigrain bars, instant oatmeal cups, boxes of cereal, pop tarts, powdered donuts, packaged muffins, cocoa, coffee, Tang, etc.

- **“Ruck Sack Snack Pack”** fill with loved one’s favorite snack items
- **“Sloppy Kisses”** chocolate melts there, so a package of Hershey’s kisses are bound to be “sloppy kisses”
- **“Congrats on your Promotion”** congratulations party favors, snack items, sparkling cider (wrapped in bubble wrap)
- **“Pamper Party”** (for females) feminine hygiene products, shampoo, conditioner, hair barrettes and scrunchies (same color as their hair), facial scrub or soap, facial mask, lotion, shower gel, razors, facial moisturizer, tweezers, nail care kit, toner, special facial products

(also see www.geocities.com/militarycarepackage)