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## HOW TO HELP "BUILD" MORALE OF OUR TROOPS THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

12/09/2004

Being on the front lines is no easy to place to be, especially when the holidays roll around, so you can literally make a U.S. soldier's whole day (or week or month) by choosing to connect with them in even the smallest way.



This past week, BuildingOnline, along with our families and friends, kicked off the Holiday Season by sending care packages to American Troops in the Middle East. Many of the soldiers serving in the Middle East are getting homesick and could use a little something to make things a more comfortable and to help left their spirits.

After about a month of organization and collections, BuildingOnline sent 7 packages, totaling 173 lbs, 7.3 oz. of toiletries, snacks, entertainment, and clothing items, including letters of support, encouragement, and appreciation. We used Priority Post and the shipping cost us less than \$1.00 a pound on average.

If you would like to send your own care package, visit [www.AnySoldier.com](http://www.AnySoldier.com). Click on the [Where to Send](#) page to find a list of Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, and Airmen who have volunteered to distribute care packages to the soldiers in their unit who get little if any mail. Read through the names and select the unit you wish to support. The unit volunteer lists what their unit needs and wants. There is even a search capability so you can easily find a unit based on their needs.

Next, visit the [What to Send](#) page for a list of ideas that these brave young men and women would most appreciate. If you are interested, please see the [winter ideas list](#) we put together for distribution to our friends and family. Keep in mind that your packages be en route for about a month (depending on the shipping method you choose), so the items should be non perishable. Also, the packages get pretty beat up by the time they get there so as few liquids a possible and nothing fragile. Most soldiers have access to microwaves, many have access to DVD players, and some even have game consoles. Temperatures





right now are between 65°F-30°F and it's often raining, so warm clothing items are welcomed.

Finally, read the **How to Send** page to help you properly send letters and packages. In addition, you may want to revisit the volunteer page you chose earlier and click on the "Restrictions to this address" link for restrictions and customs forms needed specific to that particular address. Don't forget to visit the **FAQ** page for answers to questions like "Doesn't the government give the soldiers everything they need?" and "What am I not allowed to send?" Also, the US Postal Service now has **Priority Mail Flat Rate Boxes** that cost \$7.70 to ship no matter how much you stuff into them. You can order these new Priority Mail Flat Rate Boxes free on the USPS Web site - [here for the shoe box style](#) and [here for the garment box style](#).

Packages sent after December 11, 2004 will not make it in time for Christmas, but the soldiers stationed in the Middle East will appreciate your support and thoughtfulness no matter what time of the year it is.

In addition to sending care packages, there are many other ways you can build a soldier's morale -- all it takes is a few minutes.

How? Write an email. Donate a few bucks. Donate your expertise and labor for a family member left behind to cope with home upkeep (contractors--this means you). There's a whole list of great ways you can help at: <http://homesforourtroops.org/>

You'll find that even the smallest act of charity can make people on both ends feel good about themselves. We sure did!

Thanks for reading!

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