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Tuesday 19 September, 2006

  
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## SENDING CARE ... OVER THERE

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by JAMES JOHNSON, Up &amp; Coming Weekly, September 20-26, 2006

September 18, 2006

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**An unavoidable truth about life in a military town is that eventually everyone knows someone who is sent overseas to help with the war efforts in Iraq. While we may not be able to bring them home just yet, we can at least make life in an unfamiliar country feel that much closer to home.**



With the help of Hay Street based military supply store, Future Warrior and Google, Up & Coming Weekly has compiled a list of dos and don'ts for anyone struggling to come up with the perfect care package for that special soldier.

## WHAT TO SEND

**\*Health And Hygiene:**

While body odor is a valuable weapon in any war, it is one our soldiers would happily do without. Sun block, sponges, hand sanitizer, soap, lip balm, toothbrushes, and shaving cream can all help in the war against bad hygiene. "I've been doing this for so long," said sales assistant Karla Carter. "I see many of these guys come in here and you can tell they have been sitting in the desert for so long without washing their hands... Let me tell you, those little bottles of sanitizer come in handy."

Advertisement **\*Correspondence Kit:**

Here is a not-so-subtle way of telling your soldier that you'd like him or her to write home a little more frequently. A correspondence kit can carry some blank spiral bound notebooks, pens, pictures, and even some greeting cards. These are especially good during the holidays. "We chose a group of soldiers who were just leaving Fort Bragg, and I went to my son's school, and I asked their class to write some greeting letters," said Carter. "They made some pretty cards for them, and they really cherish those things. They're like, 'Wow, a card

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from a child I don't even know, who is thinking about me,' you know?"

**\*Combat Bath:**

This is an item best for those soldiers who are constantly on the go. The product is an antibacterial bath cloth, containing a solution used for full body cleaning. It is odorless, and uses water as its main ingredient. "The soldiers love towels," said Future Warrior manager Sharon Tucker. "We get them in here all the time asking for our microfiber towels, because they dry so fast." They're \$9.99 for a set of three. To order, call (770) 530-4149.

**\*Beef Jerky:**

All our sources seem to agree, there is a desperate need for beef jerky overseas. "You can put that stuff anywhere and it won't go bad," said Sean Locklear, a regular customer of Future Warrior and avid beef jerky fan. "You'd have to be pretty rough on that stuff to make it go bad. It's good stuff."

**\*Wonder Wash:**

5.5 lbs of instant popularity within your soldier's unit. This portable laundry alternative gives our troops a way to keep those uniforms looking fit for inspection without the need of electricity, or even batteries. The Wonder Wash is powered by a hand crank, and can wash a 5-lb. load in just a couple of minutes. It has a patented pressure system that forces detergent into the fabric at high speed for a fast efficient wash. Plus, the \$45.25 machine uses 90% less water and detergent than your conventional wash machine. Beats the heck out of trying to fit a 400-lb. Maytag into the mailbox. To order, just go to [www.laundry-alternative.com](http://www.laundry-alternative.com).

**\*Beanie Babies:**

Remember these? According to Anysoldier.com, the Beanie Baby craze is alive and well in Iraq. They suggest sending one in every package to all units, as they are really easy for soldiers to carry in their backpacks and give to local children. In the web site's own words, "There is no more effective ambassador for our country than a soldier helping the local folks."

**\*Helmet Band:**

Helmets aren't exactly made with comfort in mind, so if your soldier has to spend a lot of his time sporting head gear, this might be an ideal gift. The helmet band is fairly self explanatory. It is a soft band which can go on under the helmet, and provide much needed comfort, while at the same time catching bothersome sweat. "These are really good, as are bandanas," said Tucker, who noted that many soldiers purchase these from Future Warrior just before deployment.

## WHAT NOT TO SEND

**\*Anything Illegal:**

Remember, your soldier may not be the only one who sees the contents of your care package. The last thing you want is for your good intentions to end in your soldier getting a strongly worded lecture from their superior, or a not-so-friendly visit from the Military Police.

**\*Chocolate:**

You may send a box of chocolates, but what they may get is a box of brown mush. Granted, tasty brown mush, but mush none the less. "We can't ship to A.P. O. addresses," said an M & M repersentive. "Even with the cooling gel packs, which last only two days, anything we ship to Iraq would have a possible two to three week delay."

**\*Home-cooked Meals:**

Not only will this stuff suffer much the same fate as the brown mush mentioned above, but according to Anysoldier.com, the soldiers are asked to throw away anything not in a factory package. Sorry, but some people's cooking can easily be counted as biological warfare.

## HOW TO SEND

Just ask your overseas soldier for his unit's mailing address. However, if you don't have a specific soldier in mind, head over to [www.Anysoldier.com](http://www.Anysoldier.com) for a listing of literally thousands of military men and women in need of helpful supplies. You'll be glad you did.

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