

Annual Blankets for Soldiers Drive and now Cards for Soldiers too

Blankets

It is time once again for the annual Christmas Blanket Drive for Soldiers. Touch a soldier in a real way by making or buying them a blanket for warmth and comfort. Blankets will be donated to Packages From Home who will mail them to our soldiers. It is important for our soldiers all over the world to know that we believe in them and support them.

We are directed by Packages From Home that homemade blankets be 7 feet long and 5 feet wide. They can accommodate store bought blankets of any standard size too. It would just depend on who they would go to. A soldier overseas would most likely prefer a twin size, as sleeping arrangements are usually tight. In addition to their main/primary mission of sending food, hygiene, and entertainment items to US Servicemembers stationed or deployed overseas, they also have a program (Packages For Hope) to benefit transitioning, at-risk, and homeless veterans! They could use a full or perhaps even a queen size since they might have more room than a deployed Servicemember. It's up to you! Whatever size blankets you give, they will ensure it makes it to a Servicemember or veteran who needs it!

Because the blankets need to travel a long way, they will be collected after all Masses the 1st weekend of October and will be delivered to our soldiers by Christmas.

Cards

New this year - we are asking for handmade cards from the children of St Mary Magdalene. Soldiers love receiving notes and cards from the community, and especially children. If any adults want to write a note include their contact information (email or physical address). Some soldiers write back to people. Please see **Packages from Home letter writing guidelines** on the other side of this page.

Last year our parish members donated 67 blankets. And this year we will be sending them a box of cards too. If you need any other information, contact Beverly Beattie at 480-282-3518 or bev_beattie@cox.net

Blankets and cards due October 6th and 7th

Thank you again for your continued support of PFH organization and our great nation's heroes!



Packages From Home Letter Writing Guidelines

- Address each letter "Dear Hero," "Dear Serviceperson," "Dear Defender of Freedom," etc., avoiding titles that would limit who we can send the letter to (for instance, if it says Dear Marine, we cannot send it to an Airman, or if it says Dear Soldier, we cannot send it to a Sailor).
- Thank them for their service to our great country and tell them why you are thanking them. For instance, one gentleman wrote that the selflessness of our men and women in uniform inspired him to become a better husband and father. A schoolchild wrote that she admired the bravery of the soldiers and wanted to join the Service when she grew up. A mother wrote a note of thanks for helping her to sleep better at night because she knew her children were safe in America, and America is safe because of our Heroes willing to defend it. Troops also like hearing about your day-to-day life (your work, school, family, hobbies, interests, etc.), as it reminds them of the comforts and simplicity of home even when they are in harm's way.
- If there's a holiday coming up, such as Valentine's Day, Halloween, Passover, Christmas, etc., it's perfectly fine to wish them a happy holiday. For example, "Happy Valentine's Day to you. You are my hero. America loves you!" etc.
- The troops love seeing who wrote the letter, so feel free to include a family snapshot or appropriate photo with your letter. Our troops can get very lonely sometimes so seeing fellow Americans who are not in uniform is always a welcome sight and reminds them why they are serving.
- Pictures drawn by children are also very popular to include. It's a poignant reminder of who they are fighting to protect.
- Please refrain from negative thoughts or comments about their deployment, such as, "I hope you don't get hurt." Please also refrain from writing about any political or controversial topics. We send packages to troops from every branch of the military who come from all walks of life. We want to SUPPORT, rather than insult our heroes.
- If you include your email address, or if you're part of a group, your school/work/scout troop email address, you may be surprised to receive a response from a serviceperson. We have a group of Girl Scouts that has remained pen pals with a service person for more than 8 years because they included their email address in letters sent to the troops.
- If you or your group is writing more than one letter, put all the letters into a larger envelope and mail them to: Packages From Home, Attn: Letter Project, 5643 N. 52nd Avenue, Glendale, AZ 85301.
- When we receive the letters, they will each be inspected/approved and then included in packages we send to the troops. Please do not seal your letters, as we proofread each one before sending along with our care packages. Please remember to keep all comments, photos, drawings, etc., positive and appropriate. Any suggestive, negative, or inappropriate letters or photos will not be sent. Approved letters will go into a carefully packed package, along with food snacks, games, or toiletry items.

Thank you for taking the time to write letters of encouragement to our troops!