

## **Our Shoeboxes for Troops in Afghanistan**

My dining table is covered with 'goodies', I have lots of empty shoeboxes and I have some new contacts for troops recently deployed to Afghanistan. More contact names will follow but I can start packing and sending boxes! I must stop sending again in mid-November to allow family Christmas boxes to get through to their loved ones on duty in Afghanistan over the Christmas period. I will resume sending again in mid-January 2012.

By the time you read this, boxes will be on their way to 2nd Rifles and 1st Royal Logistics – and, hopefully, some will have already arrived at their destinations.

I have received this message from one of the troops who has recently returned to his base in Germany:

*'This will be my last letter to you and I really want to express my sincere thanks and heartfelt appreciation for all that you did for us on our tour. I can't really express how much I do appreciate your help. Your parcels went a long way to keep our spirits raised. Our departure date is 27th September. The regiment taking over from us is my old regiment: they share the same base with us in Germany. The last time I came to Afghanistan I was with that regiment. I know they will be delighted and thankful to receive a parcel from you.'*

Our troops in Afghanistan are very grateful for any items which we send as it reassures them that we are thinking of them, but they are especially grateful for anything to help ease dry or sore lips and skin, and dry mouths and throats.

Each box I send has to weigh less than 2kg and must not contain any aerosols. I am currently including:

A tube or pot of E45 cream: to ease sore shoulders where their heavy kit cuts in  
Lipsyl  
Shower gel [wrapped in a freezer-type bag in case of leakage]  
Cup-a-soups  
Tea bags [I split the large boxes into smaller plastic bags]  
Small jars of coffee Biscuits  
Chewy sweets, Mints and Chewing gum  
Crisps, Mini Cheddars or other savoury snacks

If there is enough space I also include any combination of face wipes, toothpaste and toothbrush, Butterkist popcorn or peanuts. As the weather is still very warm in Afghanistan, I am including fly papers in nearly all of the boxes. They catch baby locusts, flies and mosquitoes so make life a little easier for our soldiers. I wrap the papers in a sealed plastic bag [a sandwich size bag is ideal] so the smell does not taint any food in the box.

I continue to be very grateful for all your kind donations, especially as we are all experiencing constraints due to the current financial climate. I am also especially grateful to members of the Burwash Ladies Group who have a collection in aid of the boxes at their monthly meetings. I am also very grateful to Ruth Wiltshire who collects items at her care home in Heathfield, and for the very welcome cheque following the recent Pilgrimage organised by Frank Sanderson and Eddie Le Besque to the battlefields.

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