

Volunteers pack gifts for overseas soldiers

BY ANDREW SCHROEDTER
STAFF WRITER

The packages should arrive in the troops' hands just in time for the holiday season.

As part of Operation Glencoe Cares - a villagewide fund-raising effort - gifts of beef jerky, hard candy, chewing gum, tiny bottles of shampoo and baby wipes were shipped last week to Illinois National Guard Unit Battery F, 202nd Artillery that is stationed in Taiji, Iraq.

The program, coordinated by the Human Relations Forum and Glencoe's Public Safety Department, seeks to "bring a bit of home" to the unit from Galva, a farming town in southwest Illinois, said Susan Brent-Millner, the forum's chairwoman.

Since October, Glencoe volunteers have collected nonperishable items to send to the unit's members.

Katie Sweeney, Glencoe's animal control officer, said snack foods, magazines, Public Safety T-shirts and crossword puzzles made up a bulk of the donations.

Letters from eighth-grade students at Central School were deposited into each package, weighing between 10 and 12 pounds, as were books donated from the Glencoe Public Library.

Ellen Shubart of Glencoe's Human Relations Forum said the items filled 25 packages.

"It's a way for our community to support the men and women that are fighting," Brent-Millner said.

Sweeney said the packages cost \$292 to ship. A \$150 donation from the Glencoe Fraternal Order of Police covered a portion, and the Human Relations Forum paid for the remainder.

Sweeney said there are still enough goods to fill another 15 to 20 boxes, but the volunteers can't afford the shipping.

Sales of vehicular magnets, yellow ribbons symbolic of troop support, may help in that regard. Shubart said the proceeds will go toward the shipping costs.

The magnets, priced at \$3 and \$5, can be purchased at Village Hall, 675 Village Court, and John's Glencoe Mobil Oil, 635 Vernon Ave. They also can be purchased through the Human Relations Forum from 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Nov. 26 at Park and Vernon avenues.

Bins where donations can be deposited are located throughout the village, including the Glencoe Public Library, Dee Jay Foods and Parkway Drugs.

Operation Glencoe Cares continues through January when a second set of packages will be sent overseas, Shubart said. In addition to travel-size items, such as toiletries and dry food, donations of CDs and DVDs will be accepted.

The Galva unit was deployed to Iraq in November 2003 and isn't set to return to Illinois until March, said a National Guard spokesman said in October.

A complete list of desired items can be found at www.goglencoe.com or by calling the village manager's office at (847) 835-4114.

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