



Guidelines for Teachers and / or Adult Youth Project Sponsors

Supporting the troops is a gift we give ourselves as they serve on our behalf! We support our men and women in uniform asking nothing in return except the honor of letting them know they are appreciated and never forgotten!

Guidelines for Teachers and / or Adult Youth Project Sponsors:

Students / Children are never to be given direct contact with deployed U.S. Service Members. You may give students the name and unit name of your assigned Service Member(s), but do not provide the entire mailing address that includes the APO or FPO address zip code number. **Under no circumstance are students to be given direct mailing contact information to the troops.** Students are not to be given the email addresses of deployed U.S. Service Members.

Schools / Youth Groups may adopt a platoon or an individual soldier or participate in a pen pal endeavor.

Students are not to be given direct contact with the troops. Children under the age of 18 should never be given troop contact information that allows them to support the troops without supervision. Students for example, can help to prepare the care package boxes and then the boxes left open so that students can drop their cards and letters into the boxes or envelopes should it be a pen pal endeavor. Once the boxes are filled, teachers / adult sponsors / parents should prepare the mailing labels and the custom forms and perform the direct mailing of the boxes. **Students are not to send their personal home mailing addresses, email addresses or phone numbers in their cards and letters to the troops.**

Teachers / Adult sponsors, please prepare an over-all letter of introduction that should accompany your students' / children's cards and letters. Adults / Teachers can include their personal email addresses in the letter of introduction so that the troops can respond to the children directly to an adult. Please include a return address of the adults sponsor's or teacher's choosing. Email communication has been reasonably stable in Iraq and very stable in Afghanistan.

Please inform children that their tribute to the troops must contain proper language. The Troops must be addressed by their rank and last name or referred to as "sir". Male and female Service Members can both be addressed as "Sir". The purpose of this project is to send the troops words of praise and goodwill asking nothing in return. **We ask that you participate in this program in the spirit of American patriotism knowing that your soldier(s) may not be able to correspond with you. Student participation is an excellent way to teach patriotism and giving for the sake of our troops asking nothing in return except the honor of celebrating our Nation's tradition of supporting our men and women in uniform.**

This is an excellent opportunity to teach the importance of GIVING!

The troops enjoy hearing the news from home so ask children to write about news items in their areas of the country, information about their school, classes, sports events, their favorite hobbies, interests and discussion regarding their future goals for life. **Children's drawings is a tremendous treat for the troops!**

Do not send photos of the students unless written parental permission has been acquired. You can send photos of your school in general and photos or newspaper photos of the community.

You may send your assigned Service Member(s) care package items and / or cards and letters. Mailing instructions are included in this letter. We highly suggest using the flat rate priority mail boxes that can be obtained from any local post office. Regardless of the weight, flat rate priority mail boxes can be shipped to over seas military installations for a flat rate of \$7.70.

Items most requested by the troops are as follows:

Beef jerky, cookies, hard candy (do not send chocolate in hot weather), gum, disposal razors, socks, music CD's, current popular magazines, and stationary. You can find a more comprehensive list of care package items by visiting www.adoptaplatoon.org.

Please let your Service Member know that you have been linked via the AdoptaPlatoon™. Let the troops know that their mailing address and personal information is being safeguarded. Due to security issues, we cannot provide specific information as to when your soldier(s) will redeploy home. We do not know how long deployment rotations will last.

Even though returned mail is rare, should a letter or package be returned, please let us know and we will attempt to solve the problem. Send the name of the soldier and mailing address that you have been given when contacting us regarding returned mail. **We do not have the ability to check to see if your packages have arrived.**

We ask that you participate in this program in the spirit of American patriotism knowing that your soldier may not be able to correspond with you.

Mailing information and Instructions: The Department of Defense does not accept mail addressed to "any service member." Use the U.S. Postal Service when mailing packages and flat mail to the troops. You can mail all packages by Priority Mail or by Parcel Post or a new flat mail box rate described below. Parcel Post can be cheaper but it also takes longer to arrive since they do not travel by aircraft within the U.S. prior to overseas dispatch. Please follow all restriction guidelines. Do not send anything of great value or items that are breakable. All packages sent to military addresses must have a custom form (available at your Post Office). Priority mail and flat rate boxes and other shipping supplies can be ordered free of charge by calling 1-800-222-1811. Please note that when ordering supplies by phone, it takes at least 2 weeks for the mailing supplies to be delivered. The priority mail boxes come in various sizes and can be seen by visiting the USPS online: <http://www.usps.com>. For priority mail shipping, you pay domestic mailing charges regardless of the deployment location. Rates for priority mail shipping are zoned and the cost differs depending on your zip code. The average cost is \$5.40 for anything up to 2 lbs., \$11 for anything between 2 and 5 lbs., and \$16.30 for anything between 5 and 10 lbs. Visit the U.S.P.S. website to see box sizes and other information

Flat rate boxes are now available from the U.S. Postal Service in two different sizes. Maximum weight is 70 pounds shipped for \$7.70. Priority Mail Flat rate boxes come in two sizes: "Item No: O-FRB2" is 12" X 3.5" X 14" and "Item No: O-FRB1" is 11" X 8.5" X 5.5".

You can also order "MILITARY MAILING KITS" by calling 1-800-610-8734 and requesting CAREKIT04. The kits provide mailing supplies for up to 5 care package mailing boxes plus envelopes and custom forms. We highly suggest however that if you can use the flat rate box sizes for your mailings, that you do so because it saves money!

Important note: Add the AdoptaPlatoon name in the return address when mailing boxes / packages. Add the name AdoptaPlatoon, followed by your name and mailing address. Example:

**AdoptaPlatoon
Mrs. Kate Smith,
Oakland School District
123 Oak Drive
City, State, Zip Code**

Adding the AdoptaPlatoon name in the return address will further safeguard your package from being returned. Visit the following USPS website page for answers to many common question regarding mailings to deployed U.S. Service Members.

<http://www.usps.com/supportingourtroops/supportingfaqs.htm#H14>

Depending on their location, Service Members do not pay postage on their mailings, so please do not send postage stamps. Cushion your packages with plenty of crumbled newspaper. Do not use foam peanut packing material. If you use popped popcorn to secure the contents of your package, place the popcorn in zip lock type plastic bags so that the corn does not spill out when the box is opened. Use plenty of shipping tape to secure the package. Put ALL food in zip lock plastic bags in case the containers burst in transit. Our soldiers say, "When preparing packages, assume it will be handled by a herd of elephants!"

Mail Restrictions: Each country has custom regulations that apply to all incoming mail. These may include prohibitions on certain kinds of food or entertainment products. Military ZIP Code restrictions may change as military units move to different locations. You will find all restrictions for overseas military ZIP Codes in U.S. Postal Service bulletins:

<http://www.usps.com/cpim/ftp/bulletin/2003/html/pb22101/apofpo.html>

Mailing RESTRICTIONS are provided by your local post office or can be seen on the USPS on line. Bulk quantities of religious materials contrary to the Islamic faith cannot be sent to military instillations located in Muslim countries. Religious items for the personal use of the addressee are permissible. Pork or pork by-products cannot be sent to Muslim countries.

CARE PACKAGE IDEAS:

There are certain care package items our deployed Service Members want and need most. Please visit our website, www.adoptaplatoon.org and click on **CARE PACKAGE IDEAS** to obtain a comprehensive list of items most needed and requested by the troops. Checking our "Care Package Items" list on the website will ensure that you know what to send!

Do not send anything in glass containers. Place all cans and liquid items in zip lock type bags in case the box is crushed in route and the item spills out.

Should you need to contact the AdoptaPlatoon for any concern, please call Ida at 956-748-4145. Please know that hundred of calls are received and we ask that you only call when there is a concern or a problem.

We thank you for considering participating in the AdoptaPlatoon and ensuring that our deployed Service Members are not forgotten, promoting patriotism, teaching the art of giving, and being among those who defend the freedoms of our country.

God Bless our Troops serving around the world.

Sincerely,
AdoptaPlatoon Soldier Support Effort

**www.adoptaplatoon.org -
A 501(C)-3 Non-profit Charitable Corporation Serving our Deployed Heroes!**

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If you have received this message and are not the intended recipient(s), please notify the sender by telephone at 956-748-4145 or reply email to info@adoptaplatoon.org or ground mail at:

AdoptaPlatoon™

P.O. Box 1457

Seabrook, NH 03874

YOUTH INFORMATION KIT-NOVEMBER 20, 2005 6-52:00 PM-ida