

# Suggested Items for Inclusion in Care Packages for Soldiers in Afghanistan

*By Chaplain Daniel Sparks, U.S. Army (30 March 2010)*

The items below are suggested for inclusion in care packages for Soldier deployed to Afghanistan. These are only recommendations, but they are based on personal experiences and observations.

The items below would benefit most Soldiers. If you have a family member or friend who is deployed, please ask him to name specific items he'd like, as they may vary from this list.

## Food/Snacks

- Applesauce
- Candy
- Cereal (individual serving packages)
- Chips
- Coffee/creamer/sugar/stirrers
- Cookies
- Crackers (cheese, peanut butter, etc.)
- Doughnuts
- Dried fruit
- Drink mixes
- Fruit cups
- Fruit Rollups
- Granola bars
- Gum
- Jello cups
- Jerky
- Muffins
- Nut/fruit bars
- Nuts
- Popcorn (pre-popped)
- Pop Tarts
- Pretzels
- Pudding cups
- Raisins
- Ramen noodles
- Rice Krispies Treats
- Salsa/queso dip
- Sardines
- Snack cakes
- Sunflower seeds
- Trail mix
- Tuna (moist packages)
- Vienna sausages

Chocolate should only be sent from October through February as it may melt in transit during other months.

Do not send food items that require cooking. Unless requested, do not send microwaveable items. Foods that simply require warming (on a hot plate, for example) are appropriate.

## Toiletries

- Baby powder
- Body wash
- Conditioner
- Dental floss/picks
- Deodorant
- Facial tissue (travel size)
- Foot powder
- Hand sanitizer
- Lip balm
- Lotion
- Mouthwash
- Nail clippers
- Q-tips
- Razor blades
- Razors
- Shampoo
- Shaving cream
- Soap (bar)
- Toilet paper (travel size)
- Toothbrushes
- Toothpaste
- Wet wipes

Gillette Mach 3 razors (standard and disposable) and razor blades are especially appreciated.

Unless otherwise noted above, toiletries in both standard sizes and travel/trial sizes are appropriate.

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## Games

- Air pumps/needles for balls
- Basketballs
- Clue
- Dartboard/darts supplies
- Dominoes
- Footballs
- Handheld video games
- Monopoly
- Phase 10
- Ping pong supplies
- Playing cards
- Poker chips
- Risk
- Scattergories
- Scrabble
- Skip Bo
- Soccer balls
- Sorry
- Taboo
- Trivial Pursuit
- Uno
- Video games (computer, Xbox, etc.)
- Volleyballs
- Yahtzee

## Miscellaneous

- Books (religious and secular)
- CDs
- DVDs
- Holiday cards (blank)
- Magazines (recent issues)
- Postcards (blank)
- Puzzle books (crosswords, sudoku, etc.)
- Stationery

## Send Only if Requested

- Civilian clothing
- Cotton swabs/pads
- Energy shots/gels
- Eye drops
- Feminine hygiene products
- Jigsaw puzzles
- Laundry detergent/bleach
- Liquid hand soap
- Microwaveable foods
- Nail files
- Newspapers
- Rice cakes
- Safety pins
- Tea bags
- Vaseline

Please do not send bulk generic letters or Christmas cards unless specifically requested by a Soldier. Constraints on time and logistics may prohibit distribution of these items.

## Do NOT Send

- Alcoholic beverages
- Bandages
- Condiment packages
- Foods that require cooking
- Hair bows/pins
- Hair spray
- Old magazines
- Perfume
- Pornography
- Rocks
- Soil
- Sunscreen
- Tweezers

Yes, people have sent all of these things in the past! Please only send items that are meaningful and useful. If in doubt, ask the Soldier before you send the package.