

Making Spirits Bright

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Do you have a deployed soldier on your Christmas list? There won't be a "ho hum" holiday for your soldier with these great holiday care package ideas! I've captured the spirit of the season through items that relate to the sights, sounds, smells, and the tastes of the holidays. Add your own touches for a sure fire way to make your soldier's spirit bright!

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas...

- Santa hat
- Stuffed reindeer
- Christmas movie
- Kid's craft – paper snowflakes
- Fake snow
- Fake tree
- Lights
- Handmade ornaments
- String popcorn and cranberries
- Tiny wrapped packages (use gum, mints, or small items to go under the tree)
- Advent calendar
- Picture book (include pictures from past holiday gatherings)
- Small wrapped items to the theme of the "Twelve Days of Christmas"
- A box of Christmas Cards stamped and addressed to the soldier's family

Just hear those sleigh bells ringaling....

- CD of you (and your children) singing Christmas carols
- CD of Christmas music
- Jingle bells

Jack Frost nipping at your nose...

- Holiday scented candle (pine, cinnamon, baking)
- Holiday scented oil
- Pine cones (scented)

Now bring us some figgy pudding...

- Fresh baked cookies
- Eggnog
- SPAM (Christmas "ham")
- Sausage and cheese
- Holiday RITZ crackers
- Mixed nuts (in shell) with a nut cracker
- Candy canes
- Christmas boxed chocolates
- Advent calendar
- Holiday coffee & creamer
- Hot cocoa or cider

I'll be home for Christmas...if only in my dreams.

Don't forget that though your soldier is far from home and needs pampering, you and your children need something to feel connected to him/her too. Craft a tradition for your family such as

buying an ornament each year, writing a letter to Santa Clause, hanging a special stocking, or reading a special story and make sure you do it regardless of anyone's location. Make every effort to share this tradition across the miles by video-taping, calling, or even having your soldier available via webcam to participate.

Here comes Santa Claus...

Keep in mind special ways to create the perfect "Holiday Gift Delivery System or HGDS", as Bob Gilead from www.CamoSock.com calls it. Stop by his site and pick up a perfect HGDS in the shape of a stocking made from the fabric of your soldier's service branch. Be creative and find interesting things online such as a Christmas tree in a tube (search eBay they're easy to find). Most of all have fun, get the entire family involved, and put your heart into it. 'Tis' the season, but to your soldier you're the reason *any* gift is special.

Merry Christmas to all! And to all, a good night!