

Operation PC Cares ships packages to troops at war

Written by Chris Lee

Beef jerky, face/hand wipes, hard candies and rice krispie bars were just a few things getting packed into boxes ready for a long trip overseas.

Mary Tomky, Shirley Kadlec and Joyce Krueger were busy stuffing items into boxes Saturday, Jan. 30. They weren't getting birthday or Christmas presents ready, they were getting packages ready to send to Phillips County soldiers serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Two of the packages were going to Carl Adams and Cody Rauch. Adams is married to Krueger's granddaughter Jennifer Adams. Another package was ready to ship out to Rick McIntosh whose address had yet to arrive. Jon Kleve has been receiving packages, however he was deployed the second week of January and will not have an address.

Operation PC Cares is a program that began in 2007. Tomky said some businesses came together as well as individuals who donated money to purchase a bunch of magnetic ribbons. The ribbons were sold beginning July 4, 2007 to raise money for the Operation PC Cares project.

The first packages were sent Sept. 1, 2007. Funds from the ribbon sales have long been exhausted but donations of items and monetary donations have kept the project running.

Although it doesn't seem like much sending just two packages, the recipients truly appreciate them. Tomky said she receives e-mails thanking them for the items.

As many as nine packages have been sent to soldiers at one time. In January and March of 2008, enough items were collected to send to that many soldiers.

Other items such as frisbees and hard candy are sent to soldiers so they can hand them out to children they meet. Kadlec said the children really like the hard candy. Stuffed animals, puzzle books and yo-yo's are just a few of the other items children enjoy, Tomky said.

Although he was unable to help Saturday, Levi Kurtzer of Haxtun has been very involved with the project. The 12-year-old has been very enthusiastic and helpful with the program, Tomky

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said.

Tomky, Kadlec and Krueger said if anyone knows of Phillips County servicemen/women currently serving in either Iraq or Afghanistan to let them know.

Donations are always welcome to help the project. Items may be dropped off at the Chamber office. Tomky said packages will continue to be sent as long as funds are available for additional items and postage.

The list of items that are sent is long but includes things such as deodorant, snack mixes, toothpaste and toothbrushes, games, magazines, newspapers, ink pens, books, hot cocoa mix, soup mix, playing cards, among many other things. Contact Tomky at the Chamber office at 854-3517 for a full list of items.