

Cookie Wars/Treats for Troops 2017

Welcome to Cookie Wars! We are very excited about taking Treats for Troops state wide and hopefully making it a competition will increase involvement. Ten years ago Sublette County started Treats for Troops. The idea was to thank and bless the troops serving in our military by sending them homemade cookies. Sublette County 4-H has been shipping cookies and thank you cards to the troops around Christmas time ever since. The troops have sent back lots of notes of appreciation and seem to enjoy the encouragement. Now we would love to have your help in trying to serve more of our military. We look forward to working with you. Thank you.

This is the process that we have followed over the years, and it seems to work well.

1 – Pick a date. Ship the cookies out around Thanksgiving because the troops usually get them a little bit before Christmas that way.

2 – Ask the community for addresses. We normally print an article in the newsletter, an article in the local papers, and flyers to hang up on bulletin boards all over town. VFW and other such organizations haven't been able to give us addresses in the past. Apparently they don't have that kind of information, but you could contact them to see if they can help.

3 – Pick a location where the cookies can be dropped off before the date and where they can be packaged.

4 – Send information to all local members to bring homemade cookies (slightly under cooked chocolate chip, peanut butter, and oatmeal cookies don't crumble as much), help package them, (The cookies need to be vacuum sealed. We use vacuum sealer rolls, cut the bags to roughly the same length as the boxes, seal one end, and place the cookies in the bag without stacking them. This should allow for about a dozen cookies/bag.) and write thank you cards (Be sure to have paper and markers/crayons/pencils for the kids to make cards. Please tell the kids not to thank them for making the ultimate sacrifice. We suggest making the thank you cards generic by addressing them with "Dear Soldier." That way they don't have to be matched even by gender to boxes.). If the kids put their address on the card (with parent's permission), they might get a personal response.

5 – Use two different kinds of boxes for shipping. For troops overseas, use large flat rate boxes (usually about 5 dozen cookies/box). There is a discount for APO/FPO addresses with these boxes as well. For troops stationed in the U.S., use medium flat rate boxes (usually about 3 dozen cookies/box). We use the square medium box, about 5"x 8" x 11." Pack the boxes as full as possible since shipping will add up fast!!

6 – Putting other things in the boxes is fine. Magazines can be put in the boxes (for the troops overseas). However, great care must be taken when choosing the magazines. Some magazines that Americans accept as normal today are considered offensive in many Muslim countries, so please be careful if you choose to send magazines. Personal care items such as little shampoo bottles, toothpaste, and the like are greatly appreciated by the troops overseas.

Other details –

1. Priority Mail Flat Rate (not Express) boxes. These can be shipped more cheaply, both overseas and in the states, than normal boxes. Shipping is still pretty expensive (\$16.75 to APO/FPO addresses for large flat rate and \$13.45 for medium flat rate). You may want to ask for donations for shipping costs.
2. If you have more boxes than addresses, you can send more than one box to the overseas addresses. They will share the cookies with their buddies.
3. There is a customs form to complete for all of the boxes to be shipped overseas. On that form, select "Treat as Abandoned" if non-deliverable. Otherwise the cookies are sent back to you.
4. Shipping all of the boxes takes quite a bit of time at the post office. Be prepared for that. And you may want to give the Post Office fair warning that you are coming too.

Now we realize that you probably won't follow this list exactly to the letter. That is okay. The main thing is that the troops receive the cookies to thank them. Let me know if you come up with any ideas that are easier. Thanks again for participating!