



# VFW NATIONAL MILITARY SERVICES

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## UPDATE

### VFW Spreads ‘Tons’ of Holiday Cheer in Chocolate

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Thanks to the efforts of the VFW, approximately 21,000 lbs. of chocolate has been gathered and shipped to deployed U.S. troops stationed at forward operating bases throughout Afghanistan.

VFW Departments and Posts from 38 states participated in the chocolate drive with Virginia leading the effort with nearly 8,000 lbs. Pennsylvania, Montana, Texas, and Illinois shipped a combined 6,665 lbs.

The effort began October 18, when VFW was contacted by Kimberlee Keller, president of Bagram Top 3, a private enlisted organization that provides mentoring to junior enlistees and sponsors morale boosting events for troops throughout the year.



Soldiers pose with the bags of chocolate delivered to their forward operating base on Thanksgiving Day.

Keller simply wanted some chocolate and there was none to be found at the Base Exchange.

She requested VFW’s assistance in Bagram Top 3’s effort to gather chocolate ranging from candy bars to M&M’s, all of which would be assembled in holiday gift bags to be distributed to forward operating bases throughout Afghanistan. “I can’t be the only one that misses chocolate,” her request read.

VFW quickly spread word to its Departments and within a few days the sweet support began pouring in.

According to Keller, it took 329 volunteers and 1,180 hours to complete the project in the final days before Christmas, resulting in 22,000 chocolate filled gift bags and stockings.

“[Assembling the gift bags] was a team effort. We had Army, Marines, Air Force & Navy all assisting...it was incredible. Even some people who were here for a few days waiting on flights to further deploy heard about it and would come to help and even took some chocolate to their locations,” explained Keller.

“In the evening, we would project movies on a large wall, play Christmas music, drink hot chocolate & apple cider (and yes...eat chocolate!). We had a GREAT time! It gave people a lot of joy in knowing they were doing something for others who were in more remote areas. So many new friendships developed and so much laughter...the feedback I’ve received from those who directly hand-carried the chocolate was that the troops were EXTREMELY appreciative...put smiles on their faces!

“We couldn’t have done it without the VFW...ya’ll were our lead and got the word out for us...you really came through for us here...we felt every bit and love, support, and prayers from afar,” she concluded.

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National Military Services is a department of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW). If you have questions about this Update, please contact Michael Penney, National Military Services Director, at [mpenney@vfw.org](mailto:mpenney@vfw.org) or 816-756-3390.