

MILITARY LIAISON

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As the TFRW Military Liaison, I have been asked about various projects that our various clubs might adopt. You have received some information but now I want to expand on this issue.

1. The Army & Air Force Exchange Service's (AAFES) "Gifts from the Homefront" program reduces mail expenses and ensures that virtually all funds earmarked for the troops go to the troops. For a flat shipping and handling charge of just \$4.95, your club can send as much as you want through a lightweight gift certificate that can be redeemed for anything in the Base Exchange or Post Exchange. There are exchanges in established troop compounds and naval ships around the world. "Gifts from the Homefront" can be sent to deployed troops by logging on to <http://www.aafes.org> or calling 1-877-770-4438. They can be distributed to "any service member through the Air Force Aid Society, American Red Cross, Coalition to Salute America's Heroes, Fisher House, Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society, Operation Homefront, Operation Interdependence or USO.
2. Take a Soldier to the Movies. The contact person is Kathy Hintzke, soldiertomovies@hintzke.com. Her volunteers use the money collected to send DVDs, batteries for the DVDs, microwave popcorn, cookies, artificially sweetened powdered drink mixes, such as "On the Go," "Kool Aid Single Packs," etc. These can be added to the troops' water bottles. They send movie style candy such as Milk Duds, Twizzlers, Mike N Ikes, etc. and notes and letters to the troops. By the way, they ship items to all of the services, not just the Army. So, you can send money to this organization or you can make up your own kits and send them to deployed relatives or friends of your members! If you do not have a person or a unit to send items, let me know.
3. Army Emergency Relief (AER) was established 66 years ago to help relieve distress of Soldiers and Family members in time of financial need. This organization is for families of deployed soldiers. Often emergencies arise while the soldier is deployed and this is one organization families can turn. Their assistance range from emergency needs, to children and spouse scholarships, support to survivors of Fallen Soldiers as well as grants to widows and Wounded Warriors. Clubs can contact a local AER Office or AER HQ at 1-866-878-6378 to see how they can help by donating money to this emergency relief fund. More information can be obtained as to all of the services they provide.
4. "Guardian Angels for Soldier's Pet" is an all volunteer 501c3 Nonprofit organization whose goal is find a temporary home for the pets of military individuals who have been notified that they are about to be deployed to fight the war on terror and have been unable to find a temporary loving and caring foster home for their pet(s). The organization has several requirements of the military person to complete so the "foster parents" know the pet has current medical records, has a veterinarian, will assist with the cost of food, is spayed/neutered, etc. It is possible that the ladies from your club may be the first organization in your area to provide this service. Nevertheless, those ladies who do volunteer to be foster parents will provide a tremendous service to the soldier. There have been cases where the soldier had to give up their pet due to a deployment and you pet-lovers out there know how heart-wrenching that has to be. This organization is based out of Arkansas 501-760-3875; website is www.guardianangelsforsoldierspet.org

As I receive more information concerning the variety of ways your clubs can help the soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines who are deployed, plus their families, I will send it to you personally or publish the information in the TFRW Newsletter. Let's not forget are veterans! There are programs to help the young and older veterans of our country. They served us well and we will not forget them! You may contact me at svenl@flash.net for more information and assistance.