

The Wartime Care Package

The Civil War was an unusual time in our country. It was the only time when only American blood was shed. When Americans fought Americans, brother fought brother and Father fought son.

It was during this time that many new beginnings were seen. The advent of Christian Commission, Sanitary Commission, The Young Men Christian Association (YMCA) and Ladies Aid Societies. The one thing these groups had in common was that they were established to help elevate the lot of the soldier during war. One of those ways was to package items from home and send to the soldier at the front in hopes that they would receive the package undamaged.

Today's families deal with many of the same problems. What can I send? How do I package it? How do I know they will get the package? Where do I send it? If I don't have a family member serving can I still send a package? We are going to attempt to answer some of these questions today.

What can I send?

Most of the time if you think about what you would normally mail in a package you will be fine. OF course, items that could spoil or break in the package are not acceptable items. Home made treats have some rules. Anything with raw eggs, and fresh fruits and vegetables are not going to make it. Glass jars will break, so nothing you have home canned or purchased in jars. Other wise, most items are fine and much appreciated. Just package well.

Family members will probably have some other items that they know their loved one will like. One of my contributors explained that, "being in the field is kind of like being in prison in that bargaining items are extremely important. If you have what others want, you will be able to get what you need. The list provided will ensure that even if the military member doesn't like all the items, they will want for nothing. If this stuff was sent to a "new guy" in the unit who had few friends...he or she would suddenly discover more friends than he ever knew he had."

- Baby Wipes - great for taking a field bath - packets are better than tubs
- Beef Jerky/Slim Jims
- Energy Bars (Power Bar, etc.)
- Hot Sauce (Tabasco, Red Devil, etc.) - wrap glass bottle in duct tape and place in doubled zip-lock bags
- Sunflower seeds
- Peanuts
- Seasoning Salt (Lawry's, etc.)
- Atomic Fireballs / Jolly Rancher hard candy
- Powdered Energy/Electrolyte Replacement Drink Mix (Gatorade, etc.)