



# VFW Spreads 'Tons' of Holiday Cheer in Chocolate

Dec 22, 2009

**KANSAS CITY, Mo.** — 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.

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.

"VFW members understand how difficult it is to be away from home, especially during the holidays. This is just a small token of our appreciation for everything our service members have sacrificed to keep us free," said Mike Penney, director of VFW National Military Services.

According to Keller, it took 329 volunteers and 1,180 hours to complete the project this past weekend, resulting in 22 thousand chocolate filled gift bags and stockings. "We couldn't have done it without the VFW...you were our lead and got the word out for us...you really came through for us here. We felt every bit of love, support and prayers from afar. Please pass on the Top 3's sincere gratitude and thanks to all."

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