



Support Our Soldiers Xmas Parcel Appeal 2008

Registered Charity Number 1120684



Each year since 2003 Support Our Soldiers have sent Christmas parcels to members of our Armed Forces serving in Iraq, Afghanistan and on other overseas operations.

Last year, thanks to the overwhelming generosity of both individuals and companies alike, over 15,000 parcels were despatched. We're now embarking on our Appeal for 2008 and hope that we can count on your support.

However, to avoid overwhelming the system we will be placing a limit on the number of parcels sent to 12,000. It is very important to note that once this limit has been reached, any further donations, parcels or parcel fillers received will be used in alternative ways but still, of course, for the benefit of our Servicemen and women or their families.

This is our official announcement, as advised by the MOD –

"The MOD has made it clear that every single box donated to our Xmas Parcel Appeal, up to the limit stated, each one a demonstration of the huge public generosity and support for our soldiers, will go overseas to a serving serviceman or woman. However, due to this fantastic support shown generally this year, the MOD has also had to reconsider how such mail is handled. The sheer volume of donations is causing difficulties with personal mail getting through and also impacting on the important supply chain. Representatives from SOS will be meeting with the MOD in the near future to discuss ways in which we can continue to support our soldiers in the New Year and beyond without creating such impacts."

The parcels mean much more than a box filled with seasonal goodies – they represent the support and good wishes of the British public, and show our brave soldiers that we are thinking about them. The following extracts from letters received last year explain a little further...

"It is difficult to be away from home, especially at this time of year and I would like to pass on just how much the support we receive means to us. It means a great deal to us all to know that members of the public are thinking of us. It is truly touching to know we have your support."

"I cannot thank you enough for your Christmas gift box. It brought a tear to my eye that we are so well thought of back home. My boys and I are so appreciative for the effort which goes in to the presents and it makes us proud to serve for the greatest nation of people on earth."

"I'm currently serving on my first tour of Iraq. I'm only 19 and it was the first time I've not been with my friends and family over Christmas. The best thing about Christmas was an unexpected gift from someone who I didn't know. The fact that people really care about us even though we've never met made me and all the lads feel really good. I'd just like to say THANK YOU to the people who sent me and all my fellow comrades these gifts; it's so nice to know you care."

"I wanted to send you a thank you from everyone at 40 Commando for all the things you have sent out. We have been genuinely AMAZED at how wonderful everyone has been back home. I cannot begin to thank you all enough. Thanks to the great British public I think we will have as merry a Christmas as could be expected in Helmand. Thank you all so very much... to everyone who contributed. We won't forget it."

How you can help!

There are a number of ways in which you can help –

- Make a monetary donation
- Make up your own parcels
- Help with packing & wrapping

Making a monetary donation

Our standard parcel costs just £5. This is filled with a selection of seasonal goodies as detailed on the following pages. You can donate £5 for a single parcel, or multiples thereof. We encourage you to send a card or message of goodwill to be included in the parcel.

Cheques or postal orders should be made payable to Support Our Soldiers and sent to:

SOS Xmas Parcel Appeal,
PO Box 70
Shipley
West Yorkshire
BD18 1YE

You can also donate online via our website www.supportoursoldiers.co.uk

Please note every donation is acknowledged and listed on the website but to avoid embarrassment and comparison only names are published. If you would prefer your name not to be listed then please let us know at the time the donation is made.

Please also note that although we have previously included a note in the parcels to say who the donation has come from, due to the volumes that we're dealing with, this will no longer be possible. If you do make a donation online and would like your details to be included, a card or letter must be sent to us under separate cover. This will then be included in a parcel for you. If you donate for a number of parcels feel free to send the same number of cards or letters.

Making up your own parcels

We encourage individuals, groups and associations to join with us and make up their own parcels or collect parcel fillers. Every single item donated really does make a difference! You can see details of our standard parcel contents on the following pages, but other acceptable items are:

Toiletries – Toothpaste, Toothbrushes, Shampoo, Conditioner, Shower Gel, Roll on Deodorant, Razors, Shaving Gel, Talcum Powder, Foot Powder, Cotton Buds, Wet/Moist Wipes, Tissues, Lip Salve

Savoury Snacks – Pringles, Crisps, Nuts, Pork Scratchings, Beef Jerky, Savoury Rice, Noodles, Oatcakes, Crackers, Stock Cubes, Packet Soups

Sweet Snacks - Fruit/Cereal Bars, Fruit Flakes, Dried Fruit, Shortbread, Small Cakes, Biscuits, Small Tins Fruit, Packets Custard, Evaporated Milk, Condensed Milk

Confectionery - Travel sweets, Toffee, Fudge, Mars Bars, etc, Chocolate Raisins/Peanuts, Energy Sweets, Love Hearts, etc, Fruit Pastilles, etc, Lollipops, Mints, Chewing Gum

Clothing - Socks, T Shirts, Underwear

Recreation - Paperback Books, Magazines, Puzzle Books, Sport Programmes, Playing Cards, Travel Games. Jigsaws, Pens, Pencils, Notebooks, Paints, Sketch Books, Batteries

Pharmacy – Imodium, Rennie, Paracetamol, Plasters, Insect Repellent, Sun Screen

There are however some important points to note if you're thinking of making parcels up –

- Under **NO** circumstances are we able to give out address details of Service Personnel.
- For security reasons, we are no longer able to accept parcels at our PO Box address
- Made up parcels or parcel fillers will therefore need to be taken to your nearest representative or local collection point.
- Details of areas covered are shown below and on our website. If an area is not shown then regrettably the only other available option is to make a donation so that a parcel can be made up on your behalf.
- All parcels are opened and checked for both content and weight before forwarding on. Please bear this in mind when wrapping and ensure that we can gain access to the box.

Again we encourage you to include cards or messages, with your contact details. Whilst we can't promise a reply, in most cases the recipients do write to express their thanks.

Helping packing and wrapping

To pack and wrap the parcels is a huge task and the SOS teams do their best to enlist the help of as many volunteers as possible with this. A full list of the areas covered by our teams is detailed in the information section. Should you live in or near any of these areas and can spare an hour or two to help out then please do get in touch with your local co-ordinator.

Other Information

Closing Date

The last date on which we can post parcels out is **Friday 5th December 2008**.

To meet this deadline the Appeal closing dates will be as follows:

Donations made by cheque or postal order – To be received by **Friday 28th November** latest

Donations made by cash or online – To be received by **Sunday 30th November** latest.

Made up parcels or parcel fillers – To be received by **Sunday 30th November** latest

We cannot guarantee that any donations, parcels or parcel fillers received after these dates will be sent out for Christmas. They will however be used during 2009.

Prohibited Items

The following items are strictly forbidden and any parcels containing such items will be stopped and destroyed –

Alcohol, Aerosols, Christmas Crackers, Party Poppers, Lighters/Lighter fuel, Matches, Pornographic (even slightly) Magazines/Books

These are the more common items only – a full list of all prohibited items can be found on the BFPO website – www.bfpo.org.uk

Should any prohibited items be received by SOS these will be confiscated. Alternative items may be included in their place but this cannot be guaranteed.

Who the parcels are sent to

Parcels are sent primarily to those serving in Iraq and Afghanistan but we also cover other overseas operational areas including Bosnia, Kosovo and Cyprus.

We already hold a number of contacts but also ask families visiting our website to nominate (with permission) their loved ones currently serving overseas.

We then select from all names provided to ensure that we cover as many units/regiments as possible, across all Services. Those who take receipt of the packages know that they're to be distributed, and wherever possible that they should go to those who don't have family or don't receive packages/mail on a regular basis. We also send to the Padres or WOs who again distribute to those most in need of cheer.

Around 10% of our parcels are made up specifically for the women who are sometimes forgotten! The base items remain the same, but the toiletries, books and presents change.

The SOS Parcel 2008

Thanks to the generosity of many companies, large and small, a number of the standard parcel items have already been donated. This means that this year each package will contain more items, and there will be an improvement in quality too!

Every £5 donation will therefore cover a standard parcel made up as follows:

- Santa Hat
- Selection Box
 - Xmas cake
- Xmas or sponge pudding
 - Pack nuts
- Pack crisps/snacks
 - Pack raisins
 - Candy cane
 - Lolly
- Packet shortbread or biscuits
- Coffee or chocolate sachet
- Small jar jam or marmalade
- Packet of chewing gum
 - Pair socks
- Toiletry item (s)
- Pack tissues
 - Book
 - Note pad
 - Pen
 - Balloon
- Individual present
- Greeting card



These items fit perfectly into a standard size shoebox and fall within weight and size restrictions. Picture for illustration purposes only – contents may vary slightly.

Contact Details

Below are details of the areas currently covered by SOS representatives and their contact information. If any area is not shown then we do not have a representative in that areas so please don't email us to ask - there are no representatives other than those listed!

Aberdeenshire – Aby	aby@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Accrington – Nicki	nicki@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Andover – Alison	alison@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Ayr – Agnes	agnes@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Barmouth – Wendy	wendy@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Barnsley – Joy	joy@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Belper – Helen	helen@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Bingley – Judith	judith@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Bingley – Karen	karen@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Blackpool – Mel	mel@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Bradford – Bev	bev@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Bridgwater – Sam	sam@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Bristol - Kim D	kimd@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Bromsgrove – Maria	maria@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Caldicot – Mike	mike@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Chepstow – Christine	christine@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Chester – Marie	marie@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Chichester – Hilary	hilary@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Crawley – Kate	kate@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Devon & Cornwall – Peter	peter@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Doncaster - Jo A	joa@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Droitwich – Irene	irene@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Dundonald - Sam L	saml@supportoursoldiers.co.uk

Ely – Tracy	tracy@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Falkirk – Yvonne	yvonne@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Gillingham – Debbie	debbie@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Gillingham – Tara	tara@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Gravesend – Tessa	tessa@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Great Yarmouth – Lisa	lisa@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Guildford – Linda	linda@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Guildford – Maureen	maureen@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Helensburgh – Louise	louise@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Hereford – Liz	liz@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Ipswich – Danni	danni@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Irvine – Elaine	elaine@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Irvine – Tony	tony@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Keighley & Skipton – John	john@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Leeds - Karen B	karenb@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Leeds -Lynn R	lynnr@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Leicester – Amanda	amanda@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
London – Jacqueline	jacqueline@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Luton - Louise J	louisej@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Newcastle Upon Tyne – Kim	kim@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Nottingham – Laura	laura@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Penzance – Sue	sue@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Pirbright - Heather H	heatherh@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Plymouth – Becki	becki@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Preston – Brian	brian@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Rugby –Dawn	dawn@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Sefton - Emma C	emma@supportoursoldiers.co.uk

Sheffield – Jo	jo@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Stevenage – Julie	julie@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Stoke on Trent – Pauline	pauline@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Sunderland – Joyce	joyce@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Taunton – Lynsey	lynsey@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Todmorden – Vicky	vicky@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Truro - Marie H	marieh@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Walsall – Mary	mary@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Weymouth – Sonia	sonia@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
Wirral – Michelle	michelle@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
York – Cherrill	cherrill@supportoursoldiers.co.uk
York – Rebecca	rebecca@supportoursoldiers.co.uk

Thank you for your support!