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SPECIAL DELIVERY

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Click this picture to view a larger image.

Red Shirt Friday Group members Ron Hughes, left, and Frank Muller mail another batch of care boxes to U.S. troops overseas.

The Pilot/Ryn Gargulinski

By Ryn Gargulinski

Pilot staff writer

It's 112 degrees in a blistering, humid tent. Sweat skids down the neck. Bugs scuttle in the muck.

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Vacation Guide

Something crawls into a boot.

No, it's not a nightmare. It's just a day in the life of an American soldier in Iraq.

It is a day that is thankfully enhanced, the soldiers say, by the dozens of care packages they've been receiving from the Brookings-Harbor Red Shirt Friday Group.

Since late June, the group has sent out 51 boxes, anywhere from six to 16 every Friday from the Brookings post office, according to group member Frank Muller.

They have doled out \$540 worth of phone cards, \$413 worth of postage, \$260 worth of necessary items and huge piles of goods donated by various members of their group.

He said the total so far is something like \$2,000 worth of items.

"We started with five people and last Friday we had 21," said group member Ron Hughes. "We started because all we want to do is support our troops."

The goods they've sent have ranged from crossword puzzles to peanut butter – even to a chunk of driftwood.

"I gave the piece of driftwood to Cpt. Johnson," wrote Sgt. Kevin Cox in a thank you e-mail to the group.

"He is from Oregon, says he knows where Brookings is and has been there."

Cox and his unit are stationed in east Baghdad.

Hughes, a Vietnam veteran, said he never once got a care package while he was overseas.

"I know how I was treated when I got home," he added, "and I don't want that to happen to them."

The Red Shirt Friday Group is also ensuring the soldiers' time overseas is as comfortable as it can be, Hughes said.

They get the names of troops from www.anysoldier.com and go from there.

"It has Army, Marines, Air Force, Navy and Coast Guard," said Frank Muller, a Vietnam vet who spent his tour in Georgia training troops in radio teletype.

"We target each group, both men and women. We don't leave anyone out."

They recently learned some soldiers are training dogs – so a new item of

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dog treats just made the list.

Muller also mentioned how they adopt some troops, such as that of the grandson of one of their members, who get regular packages about once a month or so.

Veterinarian Jeff Tribble, who had a huge "Support our Troops" sign outside the animal hospital, donated "a whole bunch of money" for items, Muller said.

The post office, too, has been helping out by providing boxes and custom declaration forms.

"We just want to keep it going, we want people to bring stuff in," he said.

The place to bring items is the Voodoo Lounge, located at the Port of Brookings Harbor, on – when else?– Friday.

The group meets weekly around 5 p.m. Or anyone can drop things off anytime.

"We'd like to get more people to participate," Hughes said, "if they feel up to it."

For more information, contact Muller at (541) 412-7545, Hughes at (541) 661-5107 or their Web site at www.brookings-harbor-red

[shirts.org](http://www.brookings-harbor-red).

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