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Sharing the cookie magic: Local Brownies send boxes abroad



By Cheryl Keffer
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Thin Mints, Tagalongs, Do-Si-Dos, Samoas – the names alone might stir up a longing for that box of Girl Scout cookies stashed at the back of your freezer.

But what if you weren't anywhere near your home?

What if you were stationed in Kosovo?

Yes, that's right – the United States still has troops in Kosovo, and Baltimore's Sgt. Carolyn Gallagher is one of them.

Lucky for her that Brownie Troop 585 out of St. Michael Lutheran in Perry Hall adopted a few soldiers through anysoldier.com and sent them a big ol' box of Girl Scout cookies.

"You should know that those cookies in particular rate very high around here," Gallagher wrote in an e-mail to Troop leader Laurie Wagerman.

"Oreos and Chips Ahoy just can't compete with girl scout cookies."

Gallagher, who works as a medic in the ground ambulance unit at Camp Bondsteel Kosovo, is in the Maryland Army National Guard.

She said it didn't take long to hand out the cookies to her fellow soldiers, who were grateful for the generosity.

"Even the sugar free brownies were a big hit," Gallagher wrote. "They all send their thank you."

Troop 585, consisting of 20 girls ranging from kindergarten to third grade age, sent the treats as part of the Girl Scout's service project "Gift of Caring."

Eighty-three boxes of cookies went to three Maryland soldiers (and their units if they wanted to share!).

Jean Borne, one of the Troop's four leaders said that the girls simply "wanted to bring a little bit of home to our troops overseas."

Brownies from Troop 585, along with sending boxes of Girl Scout cookies to troops, is making blankets for Project Linus, an organization that "helps every child feel secure in the world."

Photo by Thom Perry

Here's the full letter from Srg. Carolyn Gallagher:

Hello Laurie Wagerman and Brownie Troop 585;

This is your adopted soldier, SGT Carolyn Gallagher from Anysoldier.com. I want to thank you all so very much for sending me that box full of Girl Scout cookies. You should know that those cookies in particular rate very high around here. Oreos and Chips Ahoy just can't compete with girl scout cookies. It didn't take long to distribute them to my fellow soldiers who were very grateful for your generosity. Even the sugar free brownies were a big hit. They all send their thank you.

It's so wonderful when we receive boxes and gifts from back home, especially us in this little country of Kosovo that many have all but forgotten about.

A little about me, I'm in the Maryland Army National Guard deployed to Camp Bondsteel Kosovo where I serve as a medic in the ground ambulance section of our hospital. We go out and pick up those soldiers who may be feeling sick or has injured themselves and bring them back to the hospital. You can say we're the 911 of Camp Bondsteel. When nobody on the outside needs us, we help out inside the hospital. Aside from being a medic, I'm taking online college courses and am working towards my degree in healthcare management. In my spare time, when I have it, I like to go out on the many humanitarian missions we have.

We go to orphanages, schools, poor communities and we open up day long clinics in the poorer sections of Kosovo. I help out where ever they need me but I really enjoy distributing humanitarian goods to the Kosovars, mainly the children who are about as old as many of the girls of Brownie Troop 585.

Back home in Baltimore, when I'm being a civilian, I work at St. Agnes hospital in the pathology lab studying tissue specimens for abnormalities. It's a little different than the work I do here but either way, I'm helping somebody who needs it.

Thank you all once again for sending those delicious girl scout cookies. I've sent along a picture of a few of the soldiers who enjoyed your cookies. ... I've included a few pictures of our last humanitarian mission that took place ... March 23rd. ... On this day, we went into a very poor section of Kosovo and began handing out boxes clothing, shoes, school supplies, stuffed toys and of course candy to the locals, mainly the children. They were so happy to get them because they have so little. It's a great feeling when you can do something nice for somebody. You all should feel very good about yourselves, you help several soldiers out when you sent us those cookies.

Your friend,
SGT Carolyn Gallagher



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