

Nebraska group sends care packages



Auxiliary 1347 in Grand Island, Nebraska, knows that a little teamwork can go a long way. Even as far away as Kuwait.

For Veterans Appreciation Day at the Nebraska State Fair, Auxiliary members partnered with the Central Community College's Veterans Community Task Force (VCTF) to assemble care packages for active-duty units deployed from Nebraska.

The project, called "Operation Nebraska Cares" was at the "Landing Zone" in the fair's event tent, where veterans and service members are linked with community resources. The goal was to collect 146 care packages, since the state fair turned 146 in 2015.

Instead, volunteers assembled more than 300 care packages – more than double their goal! In the six weeks prior to the State Fair, VCTF hosted numerous collection events in Grand Island and Kearney at Central Community College locations, Grand Island Public Library, Hastings, Hy-Vee, Pump & Pantry and Walmart.

Traditionally, the fair's final day is Veterans Day and includes a recognition program, parade and the Landing Zone. The tent was stocked with tables full of donations from the collection events as well as donations from numerous VFW Posts

and Auxiliaries throughout the Department of Nebraska. They invited fairgoers into the tent to sponsor a care package, write letters to deployed service members and have their picture taken to be included in their care package. They received assistance from 4-H members in packing the boxes.

Approximately 19 groups, including the VFW Auxiliary, comprise the VCTF. Their mission is to advise and advocate for past, present and future military members and their loved ones, connecting them to the proper resources and addressing gaps in services.

"As a veteran myself I think this is important, and I see time and time again, veterans run into challenges or barriers of not knowing where to go or what resources are available to them and their families in central Nebraska," said Travis Karr, director of Veteran & Military Services, Central Community College. At the Landing Zone, "(veterans) come in to share stories of when they were in the service and they might be talking to someone from the VA, so then going to the VA is not that scary anymore."

VCTF has gotten several notes of thanks from soldiers who received the very personalized care packages that contained everything from bottles of Gatorade to ramen noodles.

half a world away



"Thank you so much for the care package. It has been rough being away from home and Nebraska so long. We have been gone since February of 2015. My wife, daughter and I are from Blair, Neb. I have been in the Army National Guard now for 14 years and this is my fourth tour. God bless you for the work you do and the wonderful care packages. They do make a difference." – **Aaron W.**

"I have to say that they are absolutely wonderful. It's obvious that whoever helped organize this event has been deployed before, or you have an entire group of veterans at your disposal. We are highly grateful for the time and effort put forth by your group to make this happen. It was a fantastic morale builder." – **Jesse M.**

"Thank you so much for the care packages you sent us. The time, effort and funds to put all these packages together and mail them is greatly appreciated." – **Lucas G.** ✖ AC



Malika's Grandfather cried when he learned his service in Korea provided the opportunity for his granddaughter and her children to be helped at the VFW National Home for Children.

DID YOU KNOW?

As a member of the VFW Auxiliary, you and your family, your children's family and even your grandchildren's family are eligible to be helped while living in the National Home community.



VFW NATIONAL HOME FOR CHILDREN
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