



Knights of Columbus

Bienville Province



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Sir Knights,

I have been in contact with representatives of the Louisiana National Guard Soldier & Family Readiness section of the Office of Family Programs to help coordinate assistance for our Soldiers who were recently deployed overseas in the Middle East and for their family members back home.

In 2005, our local Assemblies shared a very good working relationship with the Family Readiness Group, providing care packages to Soldiers of the 256th Brigade & other local units during their deployment, assisting their families with unforeseen emergencies, and cooking & providing other services for their unit parties at Christmas & Easter time. We were very proud of our efforts here in Lafayette, as I am sure you were of your efforts across other parts of our State.

Since the Brigade's recent deployment overseas and as we approach a new fraternal year, we sought to set up a program statewide similar to the efforts made back in 2005. This time we hope to have just a little more organization & communication to provide for better & complete coverage of assistance throughout our State for both the deployed Soldiers and their Families.

Suggested programs are: sending care packages to soldiers in nearby units, assisting the Family Readiness Groups with any parties or gatherings they have planned, and helping families or soldiers financially or with labor needs in emergencies.

What YOUR Assembly does and how they do it is completely up to you. At the District level, we are here to help you coordinate and get in touch with your local National Guard units. Our goal on the Louisiana District level is to help ensure that ALL units receive some assistance, not to dictate or make any specific requirements of you in your selected programs.

If your Assembly wishes to send care packages, you will first need to determine what items are most needed by the soldiers. You should contact your local Soldier & Family Readiness Specialist or if you know a soldier or spouse in a nearby unit, ask them. The items desired "in the field" can change frequently as soldiers make requests & receive packages, so you should try to keep your list up-to-date. Once you have a list, you'll want to have a collection drive at local churches, schools, or other places where you can successfully collect items on "your list". Once collected, you'll need to ship the items to the individual National Guard units at your cost. Since the cost of shipping can add up, we strongly suggest that you solicit CASH donations during your collection drive to help pay for shipping costs.

Please DO NOT ask the Soldier & Family Readiness Specialist to help pay your shipping. This is YOUR responsibility.

The unit deployment address will be available from your Regional Specialist and they may suggest or require you to send it C/O (care of) a specific soldier.

For any Christmas parties, Easter parties, or other special gatherings, you will need to stay in touch with the Soldier & Family Readiness Specialist in your Region. By keeping in touch, you will be able to discuss & determine how & when you can assist with parties, meetings, or other gatherings. You may cook their main meal, donate items to provide as gifts for the children or satisfy some other need.

For emergency or crisis assistance you again will need to maintain contact with the Soldier & Family Readiness Specialist. The Specialist will contact you whenever situations arise where a Soldier or Family member really needs your help.

If you have any other ideas besides our suggestions, please use them. We only ask that you keep us informed of the assistance you provide and please make sure you let us know which specific units you are helping. This information will help us ensure FULL COVERAGE of ALL units of the Louisiana Brigade deployed throughout the Middle East.

Attached are two documents with a map providing contact information for each Region of the Soldier & Family Readiness Group and a flyer with more information about the readiness program. Please begin your Assembly's program by contacting the Specialist in your Region (see Map) and discussing their specific needs & what your Assembly can do for them. They should already be expecting a call from you.

Any assistance you provide to Soldiers & their Families is of course eligible for the 4th Degree "To Be A Patriot" Program which we strongly suggest you participate in. The form is attached along with the link for the "fill out & print" pdf form. https://www.kofc.org/un/en/forms/council/to_be_a_patriot_p.pdf

If you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to email or call us. Thank you for considering assisting our Soldiers & their Families and Best of Luck to you as we approach our new fraternal year.

For Our God & Country,

Vivat Jesus!

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