

DDJC Inventory Integrity Division Spreads Christmas Cheer to Service Members

Each year Defense Distribution Depot San Joaquin, CA's (DDJC) Inventory Integrity Division adopts a family for Christmas. Instead of having a gift exchange for the office staff, they decided to donate the money to a deserving family.

Division personnel donate their time and money to purchase a week's worth of groceries, gifts for all the family members and \$100 cash.

"This year we wanted to do something different," said Supply Tech Karen Corey. "This year we put together care packages for Soldiers in Iraq, and adopted a family of a deployed Soldier."

The effort was headed up by Corey. "It didn't take a lot," she said. "Everyone was so willing. I just organized it."

After the Thanksgiving holiday, they started bringing in homemade cookies, candy, trail mix, chapstick, hand lotion, sunscreen, Kool Aid, playing cards and crossword puzzle books. "We also included red, white and blue patriotic Christmas cards for them to send back to their families," said Corey.

They collected enough to fill about 20 shoe boxes weighing just over five pounds each. Corey also collected \$220, which was just enough to cover the \$218 it cost to ship them to the Army Post Office in New York for shipment to Baghdad. "Everyone was so generous," she said. "I just walked through the office and people handed me money. We had a couple of people who donated \$40 each."

The packages were shipped to a Soldier stationed in Baghdad who agreed to distribute the care packages to other Soldiers.

Additionally, the division adopted the family of a Soldier who deployed to Iraq in March. "Usually each year will go to a community and contact one of the nonprofit organizations seeking a needy family," said Corey. "Each year we will select a different town and go to a different nonprofit organization so

we don't always benefit the same community or organization. Last year we helped a family of five at the Women's Shelter in Manteca. This year we did it a little different. "

Linda Hellman, an Inventory Supply Technician, helped a Manteca family with their taxes. The father was getting ready to deploy leaving behind a pregnant wife and two small children. The baby is now 5-months old. Just before Christmas they will receive presents containing toys and clothes, \$100 in cash and a week's worth of groceries.

"We go to the store on the way there," said Corey. "So we get fresh fruit, vegetables, bread, milk and eggs."

Bill Smith, an Inventory Supply Technician, delivers the items. While he doesn't dress up like Santa, he does decorate his truck. A few days before delivering the items he will outfit his truck with Christmas lights, tinsel and wreaths. "He likes doing it and the kids get all excited when they see it," said Corey.



Assembling care packages for soldiers in Iraq are Inventory staff members, from left; Julie Bongcaron, Priscilla Halog, Rene Olivas, Bill Smith, Gary Jackson, Sheryl Renfrow and Marc Coghill.

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