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There's no such thing as 'just any soldier'

By Michelle L. Gordon, USAIC Public Affairs

In the Public Affairs Office, we receive lots of phone calls from well-meaning people who would like the name and address of a deployed Soldier so they can send a care package. Contrary to popular belief, we are not allowed to divulge that information, and the Army can't "just put the box on the next plane headed to Iraq."

To send letters or packages, you must know the name and address of a deployed Soldier.

A new Web site, [AnySoldier.com](#), provides the names and addresses of more than 4,000 deployed service members who have registered their information for public release.

It was created in 2003 by Marty Horn, an Army veteran who was sending care packages to his son, Sgt. Brian Horn, who was deployed to Iraq. About halfway through the deployment, Marty learned Brian had been handing out a lot of the stuff he received to his fellow Soldiers. The Family began sending boxes addressed to Brian, but with the added line of 'ATTN: Any Soldier,' so he would know those boxes were to be passed around.

The Web site is organized and easy to navigate. The site includes all branches of the military. You can pick a name at random or use the drop-down menu to narrow your list by categories, such as last name, gender or deployed country. Each service member also has a blog on the site where he posts requested items, pictures and unit updates.

To request the contact information of a service member, submit your name and contact information, and the information will be e-mailed to you. There are also instructions for teachers and companies wishing to send items to multiple service members.

From the "units from Georgia" list, I learned that Staff Sgt. Armistead is the point of contact for his unit of 12 Soldiers. On Nov. 22, he stated that morale was low due to the upcoming holiday season. He also said anything people send is appreciated, but Starbursts Fruit Chews would be great. Good to know. Another Soldier, Pvt. Reed, requested all types of batteries and phone cards.

The list goes on, and the requests vary from white socks to refrigerators. I spent an hour or so looking around, and I wanted to pack boxes for everyone.

I plan to direct future calls for Soldiers' addresses to [AnySoldier.com](#), but I will also remind the callers that service members are deployed for more than just the holidays. Soldiers like Armistead and Reed aren't scheduled to leave Iraq until summer. So yes, please send them a care package now, but also continue to send items until they come home. It may seem like just a box of socks, batteries and phone cards to us, but to them it means someone cares and appreciates what they're doing.



Cheryl Rodewig After Christmas shopping at the Px Sunday evening, Soldiers could have their presents wrapped and shipped to their homes.

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