

THESE KIDS CARE!

Tiogue students make packages for deployed US troops

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COVENTRY— Members of the National Guard visited third and fourth grade students at Tiogue Elementary School on Friday to thank them for creating care packages for the 169th Military Police Company, currently serving in Afghanistan.

Principal Louise Seitsinger explained that the school wanted to help support the military children in the school. She said right now Sgt. Dean Assalin, the father of third grader Melody and fourth grader Holly, is serving overseas with the 169th.

Sgt. Assalin's wife Candice explained that this is the second deployment her husband has seen; his first was to Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, and putting together care packages is a great way to show support for the troops.

Five soldiers from the National Guard spoke to the two classes about deployment and how the troops overseas really appreciate the care packages they receive.

Staff Sgt. Dean Coutre told the students that the temperature in Afghanistan mirrors Rhode Island's during the winter months and that soldiers appreciate receiving packages with hand and feet warmers.

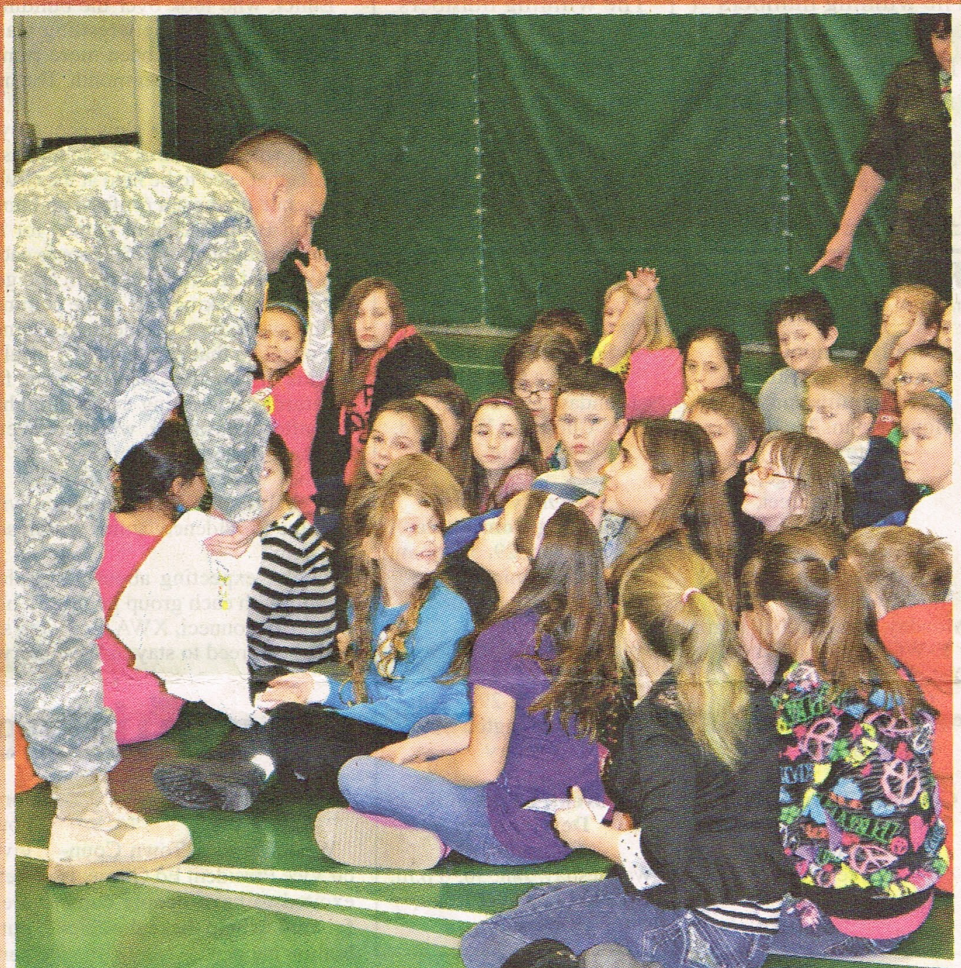
Other items that can be included in care packages are flavor packets for water, breakfast bars, beef jerky, trail mix,

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TOP: Master Sgt. Daniel Thibault handed out sweatshirts after students correctly answered questions at Tiogue Elementary School in Coventry Friday afternoon.

RIGHT: Care packages were assembled for members of the 169th Military Police Company, currently serving in Afghanistan.

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Care packages mean a lot to soldiers deployed overseas

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cashews, gum, Twizzlers, Chapstick, Icy Hot patches and pocket size Kleenex.

Third Grade Teacher Tara D'Aleno said she was able to get the Dunkin' Donuts in West Greenwich to donate cups and lids to include in the packages as well. She said she stuffed the cups with coffee K-cups, hot chocolate K-cups and ground coffee. Also, the students wrote letters to the sol-

diers and those were included in the cups as well.

She said anybody else wanting to donate must turn in their items by Feb. 1.

To teach the students a little bit about what the military police do, Staff Sgt. Dennis Parent gave them a lesson on various items such as Meals Ready to Eat (MREs), the uniforms or fatigues, and what their duties are while deployed to Afghanistan.

Master Sgt. Daniel Thibault, the li-

aison between troops in the United States and troops deployed, explained to the students that the uniforms the soldiers wear while deployed are different than the ones worn back home.

He said these uniforms match the environment and are more sand colored, which is good in the dark and light. He said the uniform is also fire resistant and has a built-in bug repellent because of sand flies.

He explained to the students that many times when soldiers are de-

ployed they remain at an outpost away from the base. To help them if they become hungry, many soldiers carry the MREs, which sustain a soldier for the day and provides 2,000 calories. Many of the MREs include chocolate chip cookies, various lunch foods, cheese and crackers and a beverage.

Master Sgt. Thibault explained that the military police are typically out patrolling in humvees in the mountains and having an MRE becomes

handy.

He told the students that the 169th company in Afghanistan right now is responsible for doing security missions, along with standing at guard towers and gates to check to make sure people are carrying proper identification and no contraband.

"When I was deployed to Iraq we received care packages and letters from students and it was nice having a little piece of home, so I want to say thank you," said Sgt. Parent.



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LEFT: Staff Sgt. Dennis Parent shows Tiogue Elementary students a uniform worn by U.S. troops deployed in Iraq. Some students (above) got the chance to pose for a picture with the soldiers after the event Friday afternoon in Coventry.