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Community



Greater El Paso-area Girl Scouts unload their signature cookies at the Departure/ Arrival Airfield and Control Group facility at Biggs Army Airfield May 25. In an example of the continuing partnership between Fort Bliss and the Girl Scouts of the Desert Southwest, the girls were on hand to deliver almost 10,000 boxes of cookies that will be shipped to deployed servicemembers in a gesture of love and support from the homefront. Photo by David E. Poe, Monitor Staff.

Regional Girl Scouts deliver cookies, support for deployed servicemembers

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For deployed servicemembers, a care package can be a piece of home. When that piece of home is covered in chocolate, it may be that much better. In an appreciated show of support, the Girl Scouts of the Desert Southwest delivered almost 10,000 boxes of their signature cookies to Biggs Army Airfield's Departure/Arrival Airfield and Control Group May 25.

The cookies will be transported with future deploying units to theaters of operation throughout Southwest Asia and beyond.

During the Scouts' cookie sale season, which ended last month, the troops took part in what the Girl Scouts of America call the "gift of caring" program. When customers purchased cookies for themselves, they also bought boxes for the military that were delivered by the scouts to the DAACG in a tractor-trailer. Fort Bliss Soldiers and civilians were on hand to help unload the sweet goods and thank the scouts for their generous gesture. Spc. Ronald Smith, a Soldier from Garrison Command's Headquarters and Headquarters Company, was one of those Soldiers, and he said he was touched by the Girl Scouts' show of support.

"It feels good to know they care about us," said Smith. "A lot of Soldiers don't have family here so this is great."

Though he's yet to deploy overseas, he said he imagined the cookies will be well received by his fellow Soldiers in theater.

"Girl Scout cookies I'm sure will be great for morale," said Smith. "It's also a good piece of Americana to send to the guys over there."

Garrison leaders were also on hand for the impromptu meeting. Though the scouts have consolidated their organizational structure over the years, troops from the Desert Southwest have had a partnership with Bliss for more than 10 years. Col. Joseph Simonelli Jr., Bliss' garrison commander, said the "gift of caring" program is just another example of the tremendous military support found in greater El Paso and the Southwest.

"With a big smile, the scouts ask their customers if they'll buy a box for a Soldier," said Simonelli, "and from the people I talk to, they tell me they don't buy one box, but instead two or three, so we're really grateful for the Girl Scouts of the Desert Southwest and the special relationship we have with them."

According to the Girl Scouts of America, during cookie sale season, "girls practice useful life skills like planning, decision-making and customer service. During cookie activities, girls are members of a team working towards a common goal, with each girl striving to do her best." Renee Prince, the product sales director for Girl Scouts of the Desert Southwest, said sending these cookies on to deployed servicemembers provided an additional life lesson for her scouts.

"It's to give back to their community," said Prince, "not just locally, but worldwide. Our Soldiers are out there for us."

Ten-year-old Keeley Burton said she and her friends in the Girls Scouts enjoyed

delivering the cookies and hoped they will mean as much to the servicemembers as it meant to them.

"It was really cool that we all got to come here and show what we did to support the Soldiers who go out and fight for us," said Burton.

For more information on the Girl Scouts of the Desert Southwest, visit www.gsdsw.org or call 566-9433.

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