



Photograph by Ralph Mayer

Candy In Combat Zones

Staff Writer Kelli Fontenot reports how candy offers military men and women great encouragement, a simple reminder of home and a way to bridge the gap with locals in combat zones.

IN AREAS OF CONFLICT, candy serves as a welcome boost of energy for hard-charging soldiers, a valuable reminder of home and a bridge-builder to the local population.

In a massive show of support, suppliers, retailers, individuals and volunteer organizations send out millions of care packages and cases of candy to U.S. troops each year. John Hanson, senior vice-president of marketing and communications at the United Service Organizations (USO), reveals it sent almost two million care packages in 2009.

"Chocolate and candy have been a part of the military experience for a long, long time," he says, noting candy ties in with the overall purpose of care packages, which he says is to let troops know U.S. citizens are thinking about them and hoping for their safe return.

He says the USO looks for items that stand up to the conditions in combat zones and provide a lift to soldiers both physically and mentally.

As an example, Hanson says the USO has a great partnership with the New England Confectionery Co., Inc., which introduced Red, White and You Sweethearts for soldiers' care packages.

"We got a huge response from people when we started putting in the Necco Sweethearts," he says, noting the organization received feedback from parents based in the U.S. who were hearing from their sons and daughters in the trenches.

"And then, here in the U.S., they started seeing the retail displays of the Red, White and You Sweethearts, so it had a double effect," he says. "People were talking back here, and it really raised the awareness of the hearts and the Red, White and You effort."

Aimee Scott, brand manager for Sweethearts, says Necco has been a partner of the USO for the past year, sending more than

400 cases — 86,400 one-ounce boxes — of the products for use in care packages.

"The response from people and the troops has been really overwhelming," she says. "One of my favorite letters is from a mother who writes, 'My daughter is in the U.S. Army. I received an email today, February 27, 2009; she was hoping I could find the Necco Sweethearts shaped candy. Can you help me? She's been in Iraq since September 2008.'"

The candies are stamped with expressions including "Miss You," "Home Safe," "My Hero," and "Brave One," Scott says.

"There's no doubt that a brand like Sweethearts evokes some kind of emotional response," she explains. "Everyone remembers getting a box on Valentine's Day, so to take that moment and deliver it to someone who is so far from home, it's amazing how a little candy that has an expression on it can make someone so happy."

Also supporting the troops, Mars Chocolate North America donated approximately 10,000 pounds of chocolate to U.S. troops overseas in 2009, spokesperson Ryan Bowling says. Currently, the company is shipping a three-month supply of its new Pretzel M&M's to the top 10 USO airport locations for soldiers to enjoy while they travel and await deployment overseas, he explains.

Additionally, the company provides product and financial donations to the Wounded Warrior Project, whose mission is to honor and empower wounded service people, and to the Fisher House, which provides free and low-cost lodging to veterans and their families receiving treatment at military medical centers. The M&M's Character Vote promotion also benefits the U.S. military, with Mars donating up to \$10,000 to the Fisher House.

In another USO partnership, the

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Wm. Wrigley Jr. Co. is providing gum for the Operation USO Care Package Program, according to Jennifer Jackson-Luth, senior manager, marketing communications at Wrigley.

Since 2003, Wrigley has donated more than two million packs of gum to the USO, she says.

Beyond the USO, non-profits across the country send care packages to soldiers. Treats for Troops ships to military men and women overseas and specializes in getting candy to those without access to a PX, says Jim King, of the volunteer organization. Candy is included in every box thanks to donations and support from suppliers, he says.

"We get tractor trailer loads every month from American corporations, and not a single one has asked for a tax receipt," he confides.

The generosity of companies such as Kraft Foods Inc. and Lance, Inc. allows the organization to send items fun-size packs, which are said to be coveted because they are easy to stuff inside military gear, away from the elements.

"The great big bags of M&M's are useless on the front lines, but the small packs are a godsend," King says.

Reminding Soldiers Of Home

The Hershey Co. has also received letters of thanks from military groups, soldiers and their families in response to care packages containing its products, according to Anna Lingeris, public relations manager.

"We're more than happy to support them in any way we can," she notes. "We hope when they receive our packages, it helps them realize we really care."

For example, the company recently donated Hershey's chocolate and Reese's Pieces to help raise money for a man who climbed Mount Everest to benefit the Navy Seal Warrior Fund.

The company is also a sponsor for Operation Gratitude, which holds annual Halloween candy drives and collected 119,000 pounds of leftover candy to send to troops this past November, according to Carolyn Blashek, founder.

"Hershey has been a huge donor to us for many years," Blashek says. "We do two big drives: one's our patriotic drive in the spring and then the holiday drive in the winter. Primarily, packages are going to Afghanistan and Iraq, now more than ever, but also to ships in the Persian Gulf and a few other hostile territories."

Candy is an essential part of the care packages from a soldier's perspective, she says.

Tom Neff, a Navy Civil Engineer Corps Officer, who was stationed at Camp Fallujah and Al Asad in Al Anbar Province, Iraq, for six

months, tells **Candy & Snack TODAY** he bought candy items from the exchange. He looked specifically for his favorite snacks, Reese's Peanut Butter Cups and Doritos.

"The PX at Camp Fallujah was kind of small and had a limited selection, but at Al Asad, which is a huge base, there was a much larger choice of snacks and candies," he remembers.

When serving, Neff was always glad to receive items from the U.S. He says: "When you see Hershey's and Reese's lining the shelves of stores in Iraq, it reminds you of home and why you are there doing the job that you are doing."

C-stores, shopettes and service stations are included as exchanges, while commissaries do their business and give the profits to worthy causes, according to Joe Muck, former military sales manager for Lindt & Sprüngli (USA), Inc.

"The money the exchanges make goes back to the troops through the Morale, Welfare and Recreation programs," he explains. "If a family needs assistance, the programs take care of them through the profits they make."

Jeremy Coupe, Sgt., 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines, served in Iraq from 2005 to 2006 in an area where there was no stationary PX. Instead, a truck came through once a month carrying necessary items, he says. Most of the candy he consumed while serving there was sent in care packages from family members and organizations in the U.S. He notes Jolly Ranchers were his favorite.

"If it was something that I really, really liked, I'd try to hide it from my squad," he laughs. "But for the most part, we'd share everything, because everybody would get things sporadically."

Receiving packages from schools and organizations offering support was a humbling experience, he remembers.

"I can't count how many times I just got random packages from people I didn't know," Coupe adds. "It was a very odd, but awesome feeling."

One veteran, Sgt. Jason St John, with the U.S. Army

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'Once the candy gets there, the troops obviously consume it themselves, but they also give some away to the locals.'

NATHAN BARBANEL
Danthan Military Distributors, Inc.



Soldiers pause for a moment to thank Atkinson Candy Co. for care packages sent into their area of operation.



Ferrara Pan Candy Co., Inc. products are enjoyed by U.S. troops in Iraq.

CANDY'S RICH HISTORY ON THE FRONT LINES

U.S. TROOPS, reaching as far back as the French and Indian War, have enjoyed candy in the field. Suppliers have played a significant role in supporting troops in areas of conflict, with confections being both official rations and part of care packages.

Candy's historical ties with troops include Benjamin Franklin securing 120 pounds of chocolate for General Braddock's Army during the French and Indian War.

Shortly afterward, in the Revolutionary War, chocolate became a staple of rations, and early forms of chewing gum were also popular.

Hoarhound candy and jelly beans were favorites among American Civil War troops, along with peppermint humbugs and sticks, lozenges, and hard candies. Necco Wafers, manufactured by the New England Confectionery Co., Inc., were also available.

In World War I, Red Cross canteen workers distributed chocolate bars, packs of gum and hard candy. The U.S. Army bought 40-pound blocks of chocolate, which were chopped into smaller pieces and distributed on the front lines. Emergency rations included three one-ounce chocolate bars packing in tins that would fit inside soldiers' pockets. Percy Pigs, a brand of gelatin-based gummy candy, was also a favorite of troops on the Western Front.

Chocolate bars were again included in ration packs during World War II, and the infamously unpopular Field Ration D contained a mixture of chocolate, sugar, oat flour, cocoa fat and skim milk. Later, K-rations were introduced with thick blocks of chocolate intended to be high in energy value, along with new C-rations, which could include caramels, chewing gum, hard candies and candy-coated nuts.

Some suppliers worked to develop confectionery specifically for the troops. For example, M&M's packing in small tubes were introduced in 1941 and became part of ration packs for the Armed Forces, according to Ryan Bowling, spokesperson for Mars Chocolate North America.

"Today, M&M's are still a part of military field rations," he says. "We are thrilled that many of the troops enjoy our products and we hope to provide them with a little taste of home."

In 1943, The Hershey Co. developed Hershey's Tropical Chocolate Bars, which were heat-resistant. One P-47 Thunderbolt fighter bomber even bore the image of a Hershey's chocolate bar and was named the Hershey Hellion.

The company produced some 24 million ration bars per week during the war.

The Wm. Wrigley Jr. Co. went a step further in supporting the military and its brand reputation during WWII by taking its Spearmint, Doublemint and Juicy Fruit gum off the civilian market, and only distributing it to the U.S. Armed Forces. According to Jennifer Jackson-Luth, senior manager, marketing communications, the company wanted to ensure top-quality supplies for the troops.

American G.I.s overseas chewed an average of 600 sticks of gum per year during the war, compared with 100 per capita in pre-war civilian consumption, she notes.

In addition, the U.S. dropped Wrigley gum over the Japanese-held Philippine Islands in early 1944. Packs were decorated with intertwined U.S. and Philippine flags and



Photograph by Jim Major, ProPress, Inc.

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Marksmanship Unit, tells **Candy & Snack TODAY** that tough situations made him daydream of life's little treats, and receiving packages from family members was a valuable pick-me-up.

"Remembering when those packages came in really evokes a smile," St John says. "Everything was shared, making sure that all were treated to the reminder of home."

In the field, non-chocolate candies are a favorite, says Navy Corpsman Grant Brown, currently serving in Afghanistan.

"I still love Sour Patch Kids and love to eat them when they're available, but what I've craved the most this deployment were hot cinnamon candies such as Atomic Fireballs, Red Hots and Hot Tamales," Brown says.

Ferrara Pan Candy Co., Inc. sends cases of Atomic Fireballs and Jaw Busters to soldiers who request candy in areas of combat, according to Lou Pagano II, vice-president of market development.

"We've received letters back thanking us, and that's worth more than anything," Pagano says. "Some of them would use the Atomic Fireballs to stay awake because they'd be on patrol and some of the shifts would be 12 to 14 hours. Other people tell us they remind them of home and brought them a little peace in a place that's not very peaceful.

"It's to help show our appreciation for the troops, for the sacrifices that they make for our country. It's a small way that we can thank them," Pagano says.

Using Candy To Build Bridges

In addition to candy's popularity with troops, the impact it has on the local population is tremendous, Treats For Troops' King explains, because soldiers offer the treats to kids who have often never tasted candy.

"We have a story of a Seal unit that was on patrol in a little village in the middle of nowhere in southern Afghanistan," says King. "The team gave a couple of kids some candy and a Beanie Baby."

The next day, he continues, a little girl was sitting in the middle of the road while a Humvee was waiting to get by. She was agitated and was pointing to where someone had hidden an Improvised Explosive Device.

"She was trying to warn the Seals because she didn't want them to drive over it," King says.

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Nathan Barbanel, president of brokerage Danthan Military Distributors, Inc., agrees candy has been a bridge-builder between troops and local populations.

"When they give out candy, it is basically a tool to bridge the gap, to build friendships and relationships with the local population. It's a very powerful tool because kids love candy," Barbanel says. "It helps promote a more positive attitude toward our servicemen and women."

Operation Gratitude's Blashek confirms that military men and women both eat the candy themselves and hand it out to the local residents.

"That's really how we're contributing to the overall mission," she explains. "The troops in Iraq are going in and becoming part of the community, getting to know the people and developing trust, so people will want to join forces with the Americans to battle the enemy. One of the ways the troops start out in doing this is by befriending the children, which leads to conversations with the families."

Sgt. John Modzelewski, a veteran with the National Guard, says his squad occasionally handed out candy to locals while he was in Iraq in 2004.

"That was one of our favorite things to do, actually," Modzelewski tells **Candy & Snack TODAY**. "It's a good way to win their minds and hearts. Any extra candy we had, we'd give away."

Modzelewski says he received packages from both his family and from organizations such as the USO.

"Gum was really easy to get, but when you would get chocolate in the mail that actually survived the trip, it was pretty



More than 80,000 one-ounce boxes of Red, White and You Sweethearts, from the New England Confectionery Co., Inc., have been included in USO care packages during the past year.

CANDY'S RICH HISTORY . . . CONTINUED

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MacArthur's phrase "I will return" as a signal of optimism.

Tootsie Roll Industries, Inc. has supplied Tootsie Rolls for standard-issue rations since WWII. During the Korean War, the candy came to the rescue of a Marine Division and two Regimental combat teams of the U.S. Army. One veteran wrote to the company describing the 1950 Chosin Reservoir Korean War battle, when temperatures sank as low as 25 degrees below zero. The troops were unable to build fires to warm food, and they discovered several boxes of Tootsie Rolls that had frozen solid, but were still edible. The veteran said the candies gave energy and satisfied hunger, helping his buddies remain strong and continue fighting.

Heat has been the issue in more recent conflicts, and in 1991 during the first Gulf War, Mars developed heat-resistant Mars bars in custom packs, Bowling notes.

Today, suppliers across the country are working with organizations such as the USO and Operation Gratitude to send candy to troops worldwide.

The industry's current efforts boost morale on the front lines, and help win local hearts and minds. **CST**

amazing. When you would get a Hershey bar, it was really cool," he says. "It definitely boosted morale."

Modzelewski notes he also went to the PX to stock up on Altoids and buy an average two bags per month of Reese's Peanut Butter Cups and Hershey's Kisses while he was in-country.

He notes locals loved anything that was American, especially chocolate.

Favorites In Combat Zones

Regarding troops' favorites, the Army and Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) stocks only its best-sellers in areas of conflict, according to Kathy Wulff, senior buyer.

"We keep the stock assortment narrow because of the logistics and storage challenge," she adds.

In Iraq and Afghanistan, AAFES is responsible for providing soldiers with products they want and need. With the administration increasing American forces, candy buyers for AAFES will have challenges to face this year, Wulff says.

"Troop surges make managing inventory challenging," Wulff tells **Candy & Snack TODAY**. "We work closely with our team members in Iraq and Afghanistan to ensure we have

inventory where the troops are located."

For Wulff and AAFES Buyer Randy Demster, the troop deployments mean research, strategizing, and of course, higher product volume.

AAFES shoppers spend more than \$200,000 per week on candy in combat areas, Demster says. When choosing products, he says he considers market and industry trends, price point, shelf space, sales of similar products and customer needs.

"Our customers appreciate the fact that AAFES is there for them. AAFES employees in contingency areas are volunteers and conditions aren't always the best," Wulff says.

Soldiers want chocolate, she explains, adding it's considered a comfort food. "Sometimes a Snickers candy bar can be a real boost for morale," she says.

Muck says chocolate might be one of the most coveted items, but transportation issues often determine which candies make it to the trenches.

"In the field, the guys have meat snacks and confection items that don't melt, like hard candies," he explains.

At very high temperatures, products might not endure trips from the U.S. to Iraq and Afghanistan, says Barbanel.

"Afghanistan is landlocked, so if you ship it by ocean, now you've got to figure out how to ship it by land," he says, adding that long shelf life is also important to military buyers.

One candy that stands up to such conditions are Chick-O-Sticks, which don't

break during transport and don't melt in desert heat, claims Atkinson Candy Co. President Eric Atkinson.

"It's good, tasty, fresh quality, U.S.-made candy with flavor profiles that soldiers are used to. The tastes are such that the locals like it, too," he notes.

Atkinson says the peanut-based products provide troops with extra protein and energy, adding that the company has received letters and photographs from soldiers appreciative of its overseas donations.

One soldier came to thank the company in person after he received a 30-pound case of candy while working in Mosul, Iraq.

Atkinson tells **Candy & Snack TODAY**: "Anytime soldiers take time to sit down and send in a request to us, we honor them because they are out there doing the hard work. We just want to try to make their lives a little easier."

Blashek confirms: "It's a treat, and the sugar content certainly provides some

energy boosts when they're exhausted and tired. It also simply brings back memories of home, and that feels good when they're so far away and separated from their loved ones."

Looking back, Wulff says she remembers a photograph that illustrated the role candy plays in a military environment. The image, originally published in Time magazine, was sent to her by a broker for Mars years ago, she says.

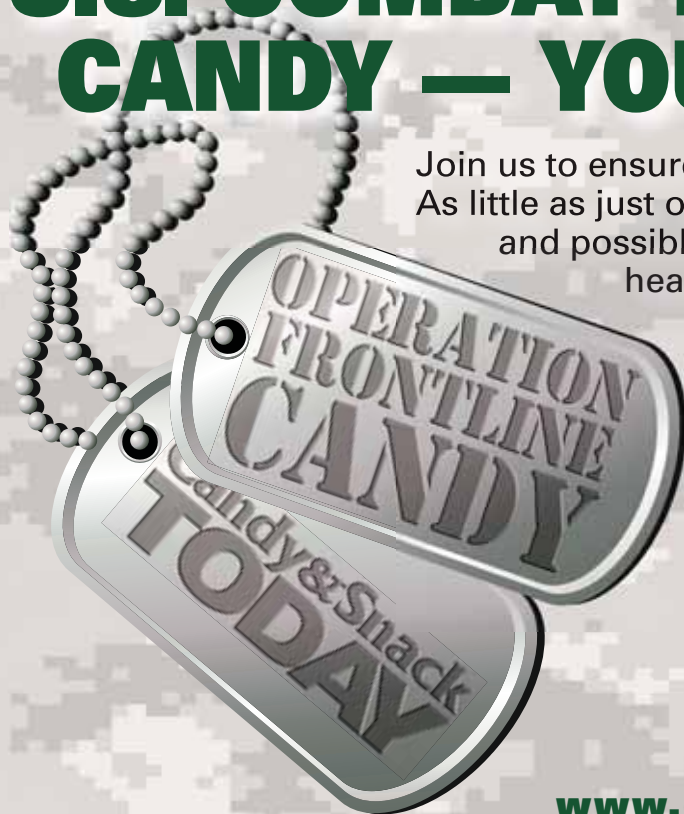
"The photo, taken in Iraq, was of a soldier sitting on the back of a truck, and the truck and the soldier were covered with dirt. The only spot of bright color in that depressing situation was the red package in his hand. It was recognizable to those of us who work with candy," Wulff says. "It was a bag of Skittles."

"A familiar piece of candy brings a taste of home," confirms Demster. "Our customers are away from family and friends for an extended period of time and the little things like candy take on a whole new meaning." **CST**

'A familiar piece of candy brings a taste of home. Our customers are away from family and friends for an extended period of time and the little things like candy take on a whole new meaning.'

RANDY DEMSTER
Army and Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES)

U.S. COMBAT TROOPS NEED CANDY — YOU CAN HELP!



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