

CELEBRATIONS

HOW TO MAKE AND SEND A THOUGHTFUL MILITARY CARE PACKAGE

Want to send a care package? Here's what to know



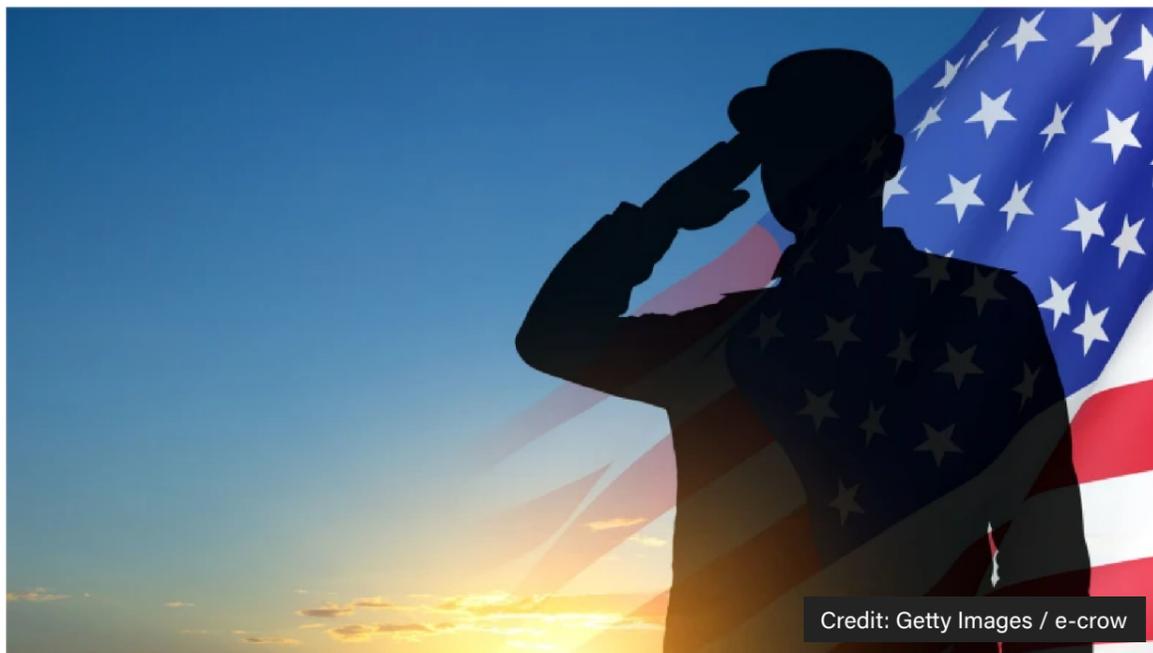
Written by [Kaleb A. Brown](#), News Staff Writer who ties events you care about to products you need.
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Veterans Day is a holiday dedicated to honoring the work of our country's veterans and what better way to show your appreciation than by making and sending a care package to a deserving service member?

If you haven't made a care package before and are looking for information on how to get started, you've come to the right place. We've consulted with veterans to give you the best insight straight from the source. Here's everything you need to know about making and sending a great care package that's sure to light up a veteran's day.

What is Veterans Day?



Credit: Getty Images / e-crow

First established as Armistice Day to honor World War I veterans, now Veterans Day honors all military veterans.

Veterans Day is a federal holiday meant to honor United States veterans and active-duty military personnel. In 1919, the day was established as "**Armistice Day**," commemorating the end of World War I and honoring all those who fought in it. In 1954, the day was renamed "Veterans Day" and expanded to honor all servicemen. It is

observed annually on November 11 because of its origin as Armistice Day, as the **aforementioned armistice** was signed on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month of the year 1918.

When is Veterans Day 2023?

Veterans Day is observed annually on **November 11**, which falls on a Saturday this year.

What is a care package?

A care package is a shipment filled with various items to make deployment a little easier. These can range from hygienic items, like soap, to thoughtful reminders of home, like pictures. At the end of the day, it's really the thought that counts to show you love and miss them.

How do I send a care package?

To make sure your care package reaches its intended destination, you'll need to make sure you have the service member's correct name and address. If they're stationed **overseas**, the process becomes a bit more complicated, as you'll need your service member's name, rank, unit, address (including Fleet Post Office or Army/Air Post office information), and zip code. You'll also want to make sure your care package isn't too big—according to the **Soldier Project**, your package cannot exceed a circumference of 108 inches. Make sure to contact your service member's unit to check for any additional size restrictions.

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What should I put in a care package?

A thoughtful message



Credit: Getty Images / Pikusisi-Studio

A written or audio recorded message should be the central item in your care package.

The focal point of a care package should be a message. It needn't be long—just something to tell your service member that you miss them and that you appreciate all they do for this country. You can send them a thoughtful, handwritten letter using a pen and paper. If you don't fancy yourself a writer or if you think an audio-visual message will be more impactful, you can send them a voice recording using a **recorder** or a DVD if you prefer a video message and you know they have a DVD player.



Digital Voice Recorder

Aiworth's 72-gigabyte digital voice recorder is great for recording a high-quality, heartfelt message.

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Mementos that remind them of home

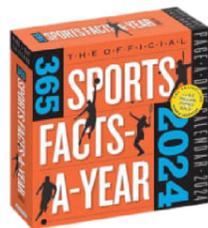
Being stationed far away from home for extended periods of time can make veterans homesick. As someone who's making a care package, you have the power to give them a little dose of home to make them feel better. Include things that remind them of home and let them know that no matter how long they'll be gone, the places and people they love will still be there to greet them upon their return.

In your message, you can keep them up to date on everything happening at home. "Even the most mundane, boring topics are still the best," says Jim Ryan, Lead Affiliate Strategist at Reviewed and United States Air Force Security Forces veteran. "It reminds them of what they have to go home to."

If they have a pet, a sweet memento you can include is a toy that their pet loves, which will let them know that their best friend is still doing well even while they're away.

Sending pictures of people and places they love is a surefire way to make them smile. The photos will be particularly special if you take the time to write messages on the back. You can print photos online at stores like **Shutterfly**, or in-store at pharmacies like **CVS** and **Walgreens**.

A tearaway calendar is a nice addition as it will give them a way to count the days of their deployment until they're heading home. There are many calendars to choose from, so choose one that matches their interests. For example, if your service member is a sports fan, they may enjoy the **2024 Sports Facts Calendar**.



2024 Sports Facts Calendar

The pages of the sports facts calendar offers 365 facts, one per day of the year.

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Snacks

While sending full meals or other perishable items isn't a good idea, your service member will appreciate being sent some of their favorite snacks. Chocolate, beef jerky, crackers, cookies and trail mix are just a few of the snacks you might consider putting in your care package. If you're packing crushable food, make sure it's packed as tightly and securely as possible to mitigate the risk of destroying it during transit.

Entertainment



Credit: Reviewed / Bierdorf

Something to help pass the time, like this Bierdorf playing card set, makes for a great addition.

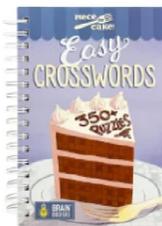
While serving in the armed forces is a full-time job, your service member will have some downtime. With this in mind, you can include entertainment in your care package as well. Some items to consider are easy-to-pack games like a **card set** or a **crossword puzzle book**. Plus, they won't break the bank.



Bierdorf Playing Card Deck

This 54-card standard deck has non-slippery cards and is easy to shuffle.

BUY NOW
at Amazon



The Crossword Book

The Crossword Book has 350 puzzles, many of which can be finished in a single sitting.

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at Amazon

Another great source of entertainment is a portable **DVD player**, along with some of their favorite movies. Ryan notes that not everyone receives care packages, so these entertainment options are a great way to make sure everyone that is stationed feels included.



Portable DVD Player

This 11.5-inch portable DVD player from DBPower has a built-in rechargeable battery and 9-inch swivel screen.

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Hygienic items



Credit: Getty Images / Olga Peshkova

Hygienic items can sometimes be hard to find on deployment, so a delivery may be welcome.

Army stations are typically not glamorous, and the job is very physically demanding, so it would make sense that several veterans at Reviewed commented on how much they appreciated being sent useful items like soap, body wash, and shampoo. They work up a sweat each and every day, and these items can be hard to come by during deployment. All this to say, hygienic items will brighten up your service member's day and possibly the days of other members in the unit if they're shareable. Make sure you find out what brands and scents they like the best. Bug spray and sunscreen can also go a long way in making their days a lot more pleasant by keeping bug bites and sunburns to a minimum. An item that might be surprising is **baby wipes**. Ryan says that they were a hot commodity when he was deployed as they're great at getting camo off without peeling your skin.



Baby Wipes

These hypoallergenic, fragrance-free Mama Bear baby wipes are made with 99% purified water.

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What should I not put in a care package?

It's important to note what not to pack, as sending even one restricted item can cause your entire package to be confiscated, thus wasting all the time you took to put it together.

You'll want to avoid including items prohibited by the military. These items include alcohol, carbonated drinks, cigarettes, cannabis, explosives, and lithium batteries (this means you'll want to ensure any electronics you send don't contain lithium batteries).

You'll also need to pay attention to the United States Postal Service's **restricted list**, as most of the items listed cannot be sent via air. These include perfumes, hand sanitizer, and nail polish.

Another type of item you'll want to avoid sending is perishable food, as it's possible to be spoiled by the time it reaches its destination. Keep in mind that packages may be inspected prior to reaching your service member, so don't pack anything you don't want others to see. Lastly, it's advised not to include glass items that may break during transport.

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