

Operation Evergreen and Holiday Greetings **to service personnel overseas....**

Preparation is in motion for "Operation Evergreen", a service project developed by the OHIO Christmas Tree Association (OCTA) members in 1995-96. The purpose is to bring a little Christmas cheer to military personnel serving overseas, honoring them for the job they perform.

To succeed in our goals, we would like to enlist the aid of our younger members of society. In light of current events, this project gives youngsters another opportunity to demonstrate their patriotism. Many of the school children may find wishing a 'Merry Christmas' to the parents, aunts, uncles and cousins serving in our armed services an outlet for expressing their personal feelings.

This OCTA project has grown from 30 trees to 170+ this year we have had requests of 300, up to 500 trees. Originally only trees were sent. (real Christmas trees are not normally available to military personnel in overseas countries). A suggestion for including decorations was made and some local schools (near some of our members) were recruited to make ornaments. Every year we have a fantastic response from schools. Currently we are targeting the units in the South West Asian Theatre (Kuwait, Afghanistan, Qatar and Iraq).

One of our OCTA members had a son in a unit that received one of the first trees sent. It made a dreary Christmas a little brighter--He was even more impressed that the items came from someone he actually knew.

All the trees, boxes, ornaments, tree stands, packaging and assembly, transportation and shipping overseas is donated.

This project could be used to augment learning activities on many levels

--Counting and packaging ornaments, measuring length of garland, celebrating holiday traditions, making and giving gifts, patriotism, Social studies, world history, current events, environmental choices, media relations, organization, participation with local military units and bases, National Guard, local veterans groups.

Some of the items which have been included in the past; Garland--30-35' per tree, Ornaments -packaged in units of a dozen, can be cards, ornaments, short essays, pictures of local vets, the children, flags, CD's (homemade) of greetings and Christmas carols--all should have some way to be hung on the tree. Tree toppers-angels, stars, Santas...we could use one for each tree. Tree Stands. Other ideas-tapes, cd's burned with Christmas songs and/or greetings....

If you estimate for every 100 trees--with garland and 48 ornaments each--we could use 4800+ ornaments, 3500 ft of garland, 100 tree toppers and stands!!!. --got any good ideas?

(Donations need to be in hand the first week of November, we cut, transport, pack and ship the trees right around Veterans Day--so they arrive between Thanksgiving and the first week in December!)

If you wish to join in, fill out the information sheet and fax or call me back with your info or any questions you may have...e-mail is OK too. Thank-you for participating

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