

# Remembering Our Military

**T**he 60th Charleswood Legion Beaver Colony is very keen on doing their part when it comes to community service. As we are sponsored by the Charleswood Legion Branch 100, we have made doing

something for the military community an annual activity. In 2005 it was participation in a veteran appreciation campfire, and the year before it was pillowcases for soldiers overseas.

## Operation Happy Christmas

For the year 2006 we chose to make Christmas cards for the troops serving away from home over the holiday season, which, in honour of the military, we dubbed "Operation Happy Christmas". This activity came right after Remembrance Day ceremonies at Oak Park High School, where the newly fallen were honoured. Because these names and faces were so fresh, we specifically requested our cards go to soldiers in Afghanistan, but we know they will end up where they are most needed.

Armed with paper, crayons, glue, ribbons, and a few other assorted craft items, the Beavers created some amazing cards, with no two looking anything alike. An inside insert was provided with the message, "Thank you for all that you do. Have a safe and happy Christmas". Each Beaver traced his/her hand, printed his/her name, and some Beavers even added extra embellishments to their cards.



**Thoughtful gestures like Operation Happy Christmas make everyone smile.**

As a leader, I personally feel it is very important that our youth are given the opportunity to do these kinds of activities. It teaches the youth that they can make a very big difference in a stranger's life with a very small act. Part of the Beaver Promise is to help take care of the world; what better way to do just that, than to bring a smile to someone taking care of our country and all it stands for!

— Joanne "Rainbow" Stapleton, 60th Charleswood Legion Beaver Colony, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

## Mail to the Military

**I**t should be noted that the military mail system has cut off dates for specific holidays. Christmas shipments from Winnipeg, for instance, have a cut off date of November 21. Soldiers overseas like gifts all year round though, so any "gift" is gratefully welcomed, regardless of the reason or season.

Anything going to military members from the public can go through the closest/local Military Family Resource Centre (MFRC). Anyone interested in doing an activity involving the military can look up "National Defence" in the government listings of their phone book, and call the switchboard to get MFRC listings. Smaller communities can contact the local reserve units or the Royal Canadian Legion for assistance in gaining information.

Photo: Joanne Stapleton

## I Will Remember

This craft for Remembrance Day received a lot of positive feedback. Taking photographs of family members who are or were in the military, or just pictures of military personnel, we created a Remembrance Day lanyard to wear at our Remembrance Day parade. The Legion granted permission to display them after the parade.

Using a 4x6 memo photo refill with the plastic overlay removed, we glued the photo onto the paper insert. Cutting two popsicle sticks the same size as the paper insert, we wrote "I Will" on one popsicle stick, and then "Remember" on the other, then glued the sticks to the paper insert. The plastic overlay was trimmed to cover the picture/paper insert, then the picture was inserted into the plastic overlay. Either place on a lanyard or clip to one's clothing for display.

The youth felt that this craft made Remembrance Day a little more personal for them because they were remembering family and discovering history. We had one youth who had a great uncle who received the Victorian Cross medal at Vimy Ridge. There was all types of service —



from tank drivers to pilots to surgeons to nurses. The youth took great pride in telling us stories of their relatives. Spectators at the parade thanked us for doing this as it brought back memories for them as well. ^

— Scouter Brad Smith, 4th Goderich Scouting Group, Ontario.

Photos: Mary Smith